



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

## Season of Epiphany

January 17, 2024

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 03

**Rooted and Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit to Re-connect**

### **Fishermen Who Never Fish**

*Mr. Michael Bowerman*

Please read Mark 1:16-18

Two young men, Bible college students, were taking a stroll through Regents Park in London one afternoon when they came across a middle-aged man sitting on a bench, weeping copiously. They felt embarrassed to see a grown man crying but, recognizing that he was in distress, they hesitantly went up to him and asked him what the matter was. Through his sobs, he managed to tell them, "My wife has just been diagnosed with cancer." They felt even more uncomfortable, not knowing what to say to comfort him. They were aware as Bible college students – as Christians – that they should provide some words of encouragement from the Bible, some reassurance of a loving heavenly Father – but they didn't. They mumbled some platitudes and went on their way, their afternoon stroll spoiled by the encounter.

I have often reflected on this episode for – and you may have guessed – one of those students was me! I look back and realize that we failed the man, we passed by an opportunity to reach out with a word from the Lord and perhaps even to share the gospel with him.

That was 60 years ago, and it is my observation that most Christians are as I was: glad to be a Christian but hesitant – reluctant - to share their faith with others. Many of our churches fail to put what we call evangelism on the front burner. We prefer our Christian fellowship, our happy worship services and the comfortable things that we derive from our faith. We hear from time to time teaching about the need to reach out to others with the gospel. We know of some who seem to have a gift of talking to non-Christians about their faith. We sometimes encounter a missionary who has obeyed Jesus' command to go into all the world to preach the gospel, but we don't see this as something that we can do. We have our reasons and our excuses, of course: "I don't know what to say, I am a shy person, we shouldn't try to force our views on others, the other person might scoff or ridicule me or think me weird – I might even lose some friends."

The Bible is very clear. Those of us who are Christians – and we are serious about our relationship with him, serious about our faith – have a mandate to share the good news in our world.

As a boy I remember singing a little song – and many of you will be familiar with it: "I will make you fishers of me, fishers of men, fishers of men. I will make you fishers of men if you follow me." It comes from the passage in Mark 1:16-18 where Jesus called his first disciples, "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

Many years ago, I used to be a Gideon, here in Cayman. I came across an article – it was actually an extended parable – in a training manual put out by Gideons International in Canada. It is entitled, "Fishermen Who Never Fish." (This 'modern parable' is freely accessible on the Internet. For your convenience, we share it with you. It was authored by John M. Drescher, Pastor of the Scottdale Mennonite church in Scottdale, Pennsylvania.)

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year these, who called themselves fishermen, met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. Further, they said, "The fishing industry exists by fishing as fire exists by burning." They loved slogans such as "Fishing is the task of every fisherman," "Every fisherman is a fisher," and "A fisherman's outpost for every fisherman's club." They sponsored special meetings called "Fishermen's Campaigns" and "The Month for Fishermen to Fish." They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing such as the new fishing equipment, fish calls, and whether any new bait was discovered.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however; they didn't fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. All the fishermen seemed to agree that what is needed is a board that could challenge fishermen to be faithful in fishing. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Large, elaborate, and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of fish, the nature of fish, where to find fish, the psychological reactions of fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, after tedious training, many graduated and were given fishing licenses. They were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters that were filled with fish.

Some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great fishing in the centuries past. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce materials solely devoted to fishing methods, equipment, and programs to arrange and to encourage meetings to talk about fishing. A speakers' bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded. They were commissioned and sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home, they never fished. Like the fishermen back home, they engaged in all kinds of other occupations. They built power plants to pump water for fish and tractors to plow new waterways. They made all kinds of equipment to travel here and there to look at fish hatcheries. Some also said that they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt that their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know they were nice, land-loving neighbors and how loving and kind they were was enough.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported that he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and was scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fisher men. He was also placed on the Fisher men's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fisher men sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore

the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master, who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"?

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?

(<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1979/04/a-fish-story>)

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The real challenge comes in the last line – the question, “Is one really following the Master if he isn’t fishing?” So, if you are a follower of Jesus, ask Him to give you a new heart and a new determination to “fish for people” – to share the good news of the gospel with those you encounter.

Let me close with a short prayer which I will make personal: Sovereign Lord and heavenly Father, thank You so much for reaching out in Your love and saving me. Thank You for the many and wonderful blessings that are mine because You have taken me into Your family. I know from Your Word that You have given me the responsibility of sharing the good news with others, and I am sorry that I have often failed to do so even when presented with opportunities. Please motivate me and help me to do so going forward so that I might have the joy of seeing family, friends and maybe others come into the same relationship with You that I enjoy. I ask this for Your honour and in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## News from the North-East Charge (East End – Gun Bay – North Side)

Rev. Rohan Forrester

### Health Fair



On Saturday, December 2, 2023, between 10 am and 12 noon, a Free Health Education and Screening Event was held at the East End United Church Hall. There were Doctor Talks and free



Screenings (glucose, BP, etc.). Home Test Kits, random prizes, and surprises were the added gifts for all who attended. The event was a collaborative effort by the Rotary Sunset Club, Lions Clubs, HSA, DH, Health City Cayman, Cayman Heart Fund, and others to bring more screenings to the East End District.



(L-R) The Hon. Isaac Rankin, MP for East End, The Hon. Sabrina Turner, Minister of Health as well as a member of the HSA team cut the ribbon for the opening of the day's activities.

## Christmas Concert at the East End United Church

Thirty members of the First Baptist Sanctuary Choir and soloists performed at the East End United Church's Carols and Candlelight Service on December 10, 2023.



The 2023 Festival of Christmas Praise featured the retelling of The Christmas Story, The Easter Story, and The Second Coming of Christ in the form of worship and carols. This event is an annual one for the First Baptist Sanctuary Choir and soloists. In addition to their presence, the choir brought members of their church and a monetary contribution to assist in our outreach to the community.



## Christmas Productions



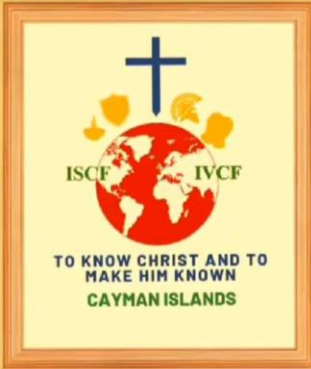
*The Wise Men and the Angels (Gun Bay UC)*

*Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men and the Angels (Gun Bay)*




*Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men and the Angels (East End UC)*





**IS/IVCF CAYMAN ISLANDS**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
 SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2024

**CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL**



**Ash Wednesday**  
**Gathering**

**THEME: HERE I AM, LORD**

**FEBRUARY 14, 2024**  
**6:30 AM – 9:00 AM**

**PROSPECT YOUTH CENTRE BEACH – COUNCIL OFFICE**

**TIME FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**  
**HOLY COMMUNION**  
**FELLOWSHIP MEAL**



**CIRMC COUNCIL MEETING**

The next ordinary CIRMC Council Meeting  
 Will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024,  
 At 9:00 AM  
 At the Elmslie Memorial United Church Hall

**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 especially

- The bereaved
- The sick and ill
- Those going through a challenging time
- Those before an important decision
- Those needing guidance, support, or encouragement
- Those who feel lost and hopeless,
- Those caught in the middle of armed conflicts, persecuted, mistreated, exploited, disenfranchised, or abused.




**CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

**PATIENCE IN THE MIDST OF CHALLENGES**

**FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST**

**Speaker** **REV. DONOVAN MYERS**

**\$35**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2024**  
**TIME: 8AM - 10AM**  
**VENUE: MORRITT'S, EAST END**



on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am

**January 21, 2024**  
**Mr. Michael Bowerman**

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 292 Prospect Point Road  
 P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS  
 Tel: 1 345 947-1963 Email: [rdgs@cicucjei.com](mailto:rdgs@cicucjei.com) or [circinfo@gmail.com](mailto:circinfo@gmail.com)  
 Website: [www.unitedchurch.ky/](http://www.unitedchurch.ky/)