



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

**Season of Lent**

March 7, 2024

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 10

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

## **Jesus High and Lifted Up**

Mrs. Sonia Wallace

Please read John 3:14 -18.

Many people in our world today are expressing unbelief, sarcasm about faith in God and even utter rejection of a need to believe in God. The passage for reflection is Jesus' response to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who was perplexed and doubtful when Jesus answered him. The response highlighted Nicodemus' unbelief and referred to his need to be "born again" meaning a spiritual rebirth. Jesus proceeded to quote from Numbers 21: 4 -9, verses of scripture Nicodemus would have been familiar with.

*"...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."* (NKJV)

Let us examine **four** teachings Jesus conveyed and wants us to know from John chapter 3 and His reference to Numbers 21.

### **First, Jesus teaches that He is the Son of Man and God**

Jesus responded to Nicodemus by twice referring to Himself as the Son of Man. Baker's Dictionary of Theology says the term Son of Man is quoted in the book of Daniel and meant "a heavenly figure, both an individual and an ideal representative of the people of God." It was important that Nicodemus believe that Jesus came down from heaven and therefore could speak of heavenly truths, although Nicodemus would not understand. Today, we have Jesus' words in the Bible that reveal heavenly truths that He wants us to know.

However, in his unbelief, Nicodemus lacked faith in God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is ..."* We must come in faith believing Jesus is God, and He became Man in the flesh. It should be noted that Jesus was not turned off by Nicodemus' lack

of faith, instead, He gave him His full attention, started His response with that which Nicodemus (a teacher) already knew about early Jewish history and testified to the truth that He is God.

### **Secondly, Jesus teaches about God's judgment verses God's mercy.**

Jesus uses the passage Numbers 21:4-9 as a picture of God's judgment and condemnation of sin. It is a story of the rebellion of the children of Israel against Moses and God. They lacked belief by doubting that God's deliverance was right for them. Although they saw how God had kept them in their journey through the wilderness, the people, frustrated and boisterous, resorted to their favorite complaint crying, *"Why have you taken us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."* (Numbers 21: 5). In judgment for their unrighteousness, God sent fiery serpents which bit them, and many died. Ps. 107 vs. 17 -18 seems to refer to such a scene, stating because of their transgressions or sins against God, they *"drew near to the gates of death."* Our unbelief in God, because of our sin nature, make us deserve God's judgment.

Yet the passage in Numbers is also a picture of God's mercy, that brings healing. As the people suffered, they cried out to Moses. In repentance, they acknowledged *"we have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you, pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us."* Moses prayed and was instructed to make a bronze serpent, put it on a pole and lift it up; for when those who are bitten look up at it, they would be healed. The people who believed looked up at the bronze serpent and were physically healed. Ps. 107 vs 19 states *"Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses."* Many can testify about crying out to God and receiving His mercy and healing.

### **Thirdly, Jesus teaches that the Son of Man must be lifted up.**

In the Numbers passage the bronze serpent was put on a pole for the people to look up. According to Jesus it was a foretelling picture of the Son of Man being lifted. When Jesus said, *"as Moses lifted up the serpent,"* it is believed that Jesus was alluding to His earthly betrayal and death on a cross, which was a stake used for cruel

punishment by the Greeks and Romans. It resulted in much mourning by His followers but as the bronze serpent on the pole had brought physical healing to the people, so Jesus became our Saviour, taking our unrighteousness by being in anguish, pain and death as experienced by those bitten by the serpent. That was His payment for the penalty of our sins, so that He secured spiritual healing which Nicodemus and all humanity needed. Now, we look up not to a serpent on a pole for healing and mercy but to Jesus.

#### **Fourthly - Jesus is God's expression of love and grace.**

By the Son of Man, the Father Almighty extended to us the hand of grace. Verse 16 is highly regarded as God's expression of this divine love. It says that *"God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* This liberating word of love that changes the heart declares with certainty that whoever believes receives eternal life, that is, they are saved.

Jesus then stated in verse 17, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved."* Anyone throughout the world who believes in the Name of Jesus - the Son of Man and repents of sin as did the people in Numbers, is not condemned, but receives the free gift of salvation, that is, God's grace. Ephesians 2: 8 & 9 says *"For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

God's grace is available for spiritual rebirth, consider making the decision to accept this free gift of salvation by surrendering and acknowledging your wrongs and unbelief.

Jesus wants us to know that He was lifted up on the cross but was also lifted high in glory. Philippians 2: 9 says in returning to the Father in glory, Jesus was *"highly exalted and given a name above every name."* This same Jesus promised that He will prepare a place for us so that someday where He is we will also be there. The glorious news is that Jesus was lifted up so that He would redeem and lift us up to glory with Him.

If you do not know Jesus, will you believe that He can give you spiritual and physical healing today? As you read, embrace this prayer as your own, 'Jesus I believe that you died for my sins, I repent of sins and accept you as my Lord and Saviour. Come into my heart today I pray. Amen'.

May the blessings of God our Father, Jesus the Son and His Holy Spirit be yours always.



Girls' Brigade Companies from across Grand Cayman gathered on Sunday, March 3, 2024, at the **William Pouchie Memorial Church in North Side** to mark the opening of the **2024 Girls' Brigade Week**. Ms. Debra McLaughlin, President of the Cayman Islands Girls' Brigade Council, brought the Greetings, and Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, National Chaplain, offered the Opening Prayer.



Ms. Debra McLaughlin and Rev. Rohan Forrester

The 2024 Girls' Brigade Week theme is **'Mission Possible - Making Disciples.'** In his message based on Mark 1:16-20, Minister of the host Congregation, Rev. Rohan Forrester, focused on two things that sum up the importance of embracing the call and the responsibility to respond: 'Follow me' and 'immediately.'

The week's activities include a joint Companies Fellowship Gathering on Wednesday, an Overnight Camp for the Seniors and Brigaders on Friday, and a Day Camp on Saturday for all the girls at the Prospect Youth Centre.



The **Girls' Brigade International** is one of the world's oldest and largest movements bringing Christian mission to girls. For 130 years it has been empowering young women to live life to the full. From a small Sunday school in Dublin, the movement spread to over 50 countries in five continents.



## Dedication at Elmslie Memorial

On Sunday, March 3, 2024, the Morning Worship Service at the **Elmslie Memorial United Church in George Town** began with the dedication of the Sanctuary's new entrance door. Minister of the Congregation, Rev. L. Christopher Mason, offered words of dedication and prayer, expressing the gratitude of the Congregation to Ms. Selma Eden and her family for the generous donation.



Family representatives of Ms. Selma Eden, in the company of Rev. L. Christopher Mason, at the sanctuary's main entrance, ready to ceremonially open the new entrance door.

## Evangelism MAT Sunday at Savannah United Church

The **Savannah United Church** had its Evangelism MAT (Mission Action Team) Sunday on March 3, 2024. Mrs. Sonia Wallace, in her presentation, outlined the three primary responsibilities of the MAT:

1. Plan and share in organizing aspects of evangelism in conjunction with other MATs
2. Organize different forms of evangelism, thereby providing opportunities for sharing Christ in practical ways
3. Explore contextual ways of mobilizing the Congregation to evangelize.

The theme of the MAT in 2023 was '**Sharing Christ ONE 2 TEN,**' and the activities focused on Family and One-to-One Evangelism training and facilitated Sports Evangelism, Prison Ministry, and Child Evangelism.

The MAT has chosen the theme '**Encounter Jesus**' for 2024, primarily focusing on Family, Community, and Sports Evangelism. During the Service, the Evangelism MAT also launched a Family Evangelism brochure, encouraging the Congregation to share it with family members and neighbors throughout the year.

Mrs. Wallace stressed that spreading the word of God is the duty of every Christian. She said, "We all must strive to do more." We should take advantage of every opportunity, whether at work or while shopping, to share the Good News.

Some photos from the Evangelism MAT activities in 2023.





International Women's Day

## #InspireInclusion

**Inspire Inclusion** is the campaign theme for **International Women's Day 2024**. The theme reminds us that the journey toward gender equality is intrinsically linked to fostering an inclusive society where every woman, regardless of background, race, or circumstance, is recognized, valued, and given equal opportunities. It calls upon individuals, communities, and nations to unite in a collective effort to dismantle barriers and prejudices, championing an environment where diversity thrives, and all women are afforded the respect and recognition they rightfully deserve.

In light of the theme, we can't help but also reflect on how Jesus treated women according to the Gospels, which reveal a revolutionary approach for His time. His interactions suggested respect, compassion, and a recognition of women's intrinsic worth and dignity, challenging societal norms. His attitude towards and treatment of women lays the foundation for a vision of inclusion that transcends the ages and cultures. Jesus elevated women from societal constraints, thereby exemplifying a timeless model of empowerment that resonates with the essence of the International Women's Day theme.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, let us follow in the footsteps of our Lord and strive to create a future where inclusivity is not just a theme but an enduring reality for women in our environment and worldwide.

The CIRMC acknowledges and salutes the tremendous contributions that women make in our lives, in our families, in society, and also in our Congregations. We also commit ourselves to journey together with transformed and renewed minds and hearts, to be partners in changing harmful and outdated perceptions and practices where they still exist, help forge positive change for women and create a truly equal and inclusive world.

## 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



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every Sunday at 7:45 am

**March 10, 2024  
Mrs. Sonia Wallace**

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