



# CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

## Season of Easter

May 2, 2024

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 18

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

### **My Life Journey**

*Mr. Michael Bowerman*

On May 1st, I reached a significant milestone in my life. Inevitably, such a moment has caused me to reflect on my journey of life, one that is unique, as everyone's is, but also has things in common with others. My reflections on the years I have lived have caused me think of some of the lessons for my life that God has taught me. I trust you might indulge me as I share some of these as a challenge and encouragement for those who are believers.

First, to say, I am a Christian, and have been since the age of twelve when I clearly remember asking God to forgive my sins and make me His child. I start here because, from even before this, I knew about Jesus, that God sent Him to die on a cross, that He rose from the dead and went back to heaven and that He was going to return one day to take Christians back there with Him. My parents were Christians - I certainly knew this - and I remember an occasion before I gave my life to Christ when I arrived home to find no one there. I panicked, for I thought that Jesus had returned and raptured them, leaving me behind!

Some five years ago, I sat down and listed several key things that I have learned in my Christian life that, I believe, still stand today. I trust some of these might be of help to you.

#### **1. The importance of teaching children the faith from the very beginning.**

This cannot be over-emphasized. You cannot start too early. Looking back, I realized how enormously blessed I was by being raised by Christian parents. They were, in fact, missionaries during my formative years. At the age of six, and for the next nearly eight years, I went to a missionary school which provided me a firm knowledge of the Bible and understanding of the faith. The school had as its motto, But Continue Thou, words given by Paul to his young friend, Timothy, as he reminded him of those from whom he, Timothy, had learned from infancy the Holy Scriptures - his mother and grandmother.

We need to provide as many opportunities as possible for our children to make their own decision to follow Jesus. I was born into a Christian family but that didn't make me a Christian, I knew. Christianity is not something we inherit. Christening, church-going and any religious practice are in themselves of no value apart from a personal relationship with God which we have when by faith we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. It is not enough to grow up to be 'cultural' Christians - those who accept the Christian ethic and values, who want the benefits of the faith but not the faith itself, a Christianity without the person of Christ. Our children must simply and clearly come to understand this.

Further, it is important to teach our children and young people spiritual disciplines. The missionary school not only taught me the Bible but had me memorize it and study it. From before I could read, I was encouraged to have a daily "quiet time." To help our children develop the habit of regular prayer and Bible reading early is foundational to their growth in the Christian faith. Without these disciplines, and those of going regularly to Sunday school and church, attending Bible studies and the like, they will end up flabby, shallow Christians, or they will simply walk away from the faith.

#### **2. Equally essential is to understand that the Christian life is a life of faith - from beginning to end.**

I knew that salvation came by grace, through faith, and it wasn't the result of 'works' or human effort. However, I early came to realize that this was not only true of becoming a Christian but of being the Christian I had become. In other words, the Christian life from the day we are saved to the day we die is one that must be lived by faith - complete trust in God.

There were two verses which I got to learn early in life. Over the fireplace of Banana Cottage, our home in Africa, was a wooden carving which had the first five words taken from Proverbs 3:5-6: "In all thy ways, acknowledge." I learned these verses first in the King James Version: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." These words have undergirded my faith from those early days.

I grew to understand that 'all' meant all; that there was no part of my life from which my faith and my trust in God should or could be excluded. My home life, my job, my social life, my recreation, what I watched or read, where I went, as well as what I considered my 'spiritual' life - my church and work for God - must all be exercised in complete dependence on God. The decisions of life, both small and great, required me to seek the will of God, and to accept that having done so, the outcome was part of God's sovereign plan for me and was for my good, even when it did not appear so.

Further, I grew to realize that being the Christian I had become - in other words, living the Christian life successfully - was impossible! However, God in God's infinite wisdom provided me the wherewithal in the person of the Holy Spirit to enable me to do so. The Holy Spirit indwells my life. So, I potentially have everything I need to live the Christian life and to be Christlike as God wants me to be. Further, we are told in Ephesians 1:3 that God has "blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ". We lack nothing from God that we need. Every resource is available. So, John 15:5 became a key verse in my understanding of how to live the Christian life: Jesus' words, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

From this, I also came to understand and accept that holiness is something that God works in me, and that it is not an optional extra for a Christian. God requires it - Christlikeness - of God's people. We need to do all we can to allow the Holy Spirit to make us holy. But I learned that this is not some external lifestyle or behaviour, not some super-spirituality, having some supernatural gift or "being so heavenly minded as to be no earthly use." It is living as God wants us to; to do what Jesus would do. It is "rubber meets the road" living. It has to do not only with our words and action but our very attitudes - our hearts. It comes from loving God with our whole being first and then, as a result, learning to love others.

I early recognized that this does not mean that a Christian ever achieves perfection in this life. A holy person is not a perfect person. We are 'saints', according to the Bible, but saints who sometimes sin, and what we sometimes call sanctification is ongoing and won't be completed before we reach heaven.

However, I realized that it is important to be consistent in witness in both word and life. To be a witness for Christ was going to be a challenge for me. At the age of 14, I was about to face a brand-new world - one very different from the cloistered world of a mission station and missionary school in the bush, hundreds of miles from civilization. I was heading to boarding school in England. Shortly before I left, I was asked a question I have never forgotten. Major Ian Thomas, an evangelist and Bible teacher who was visiting for a Bible

conference, took me aside and asked me directly, "Are you a Christian boy?" It was a question - and a challenge - I have never forgotten. I was to learn that as a Christian, I needed to answer that question unashamedly.

I learned, and am still learning, how important it is for Christians to share their faith. I have come increasingly to recognize that every Christian is a witness - either a good one or a poor one! Not everyone has the gift of evangelism, but every Christian is mandated to share their faith with others. Just as the Apostle Paul declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel, nor should we, even when faced with cynicism and hostility.

I learned, too, in this context that God provided me with spiritual gifts to serve the church. I am a steward of my gifts. I am first answerable to God, but I am also responsible for faithfully exercising them for the benefit of God's people, to the building up of the church. This often requires hard work and time. I believe that God provides every Christian with at least one spiritual gift in order to serve him in some particular area, and those who do not exercise theirs are disobedient and failing as stewards of Christ.

### **3. Finally, I have learned that God wants me to finish well.**

I have like everyone known times of discouragement, frustration, of spiritual lethargy, times when I wanted to throw in the towel - times I have grown "weary in well-doing" (Galatians 6:9 KJV). And, as time moves on, these do not grow less; in fact, the advancing years inevitably place limitations on me! However, I realize that while there will come a time when I can no longer do some of the things, I still find myself doing in the work of the church, there will never come a time when I cease to serve Christ. There is no retirement from serving Him! Paul knew this well as, shortly before his execution, he could witness: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

I have learned, and am still learning, with the writer of Hebrews 12:1-2 that I must "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." I must "run with perseverance the race marked out for (me), fixing (my) eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" - right to the end. I want to hear those welcoming words one day: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21).

These are a few things God has been teaching me. What has he been teaching you? Are you being a good student and continuing to learn from him, however long you have been a Christian?

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## Spring Cleaning at Elmslie Memorial

Close to forty Congregants of all ages of the Elmslie Memorial United Church, George Town, gathered on Saturday, April 27, 2024, to assist with the spring cleaning of their Sanctuary. The Property Committee of the Congregation organized the event. Armed with enthusiasm and cleaning supplies, the volunteers tackled every nook and cranny in the building, cleaning the interior from top to bottom, leaving no corner untouched. Whether cleaning the windows, vacuuming the carpet, dusting the ceiling fans, or polishing the pews, each task was undertaken with a sense of purpose and pride. Others worked outside, power washing the exterior and attending to the plant beds.



*Some of the volunteers posed for a quick group photo.*

As we reflect on the collective effort poured into the spring-cleaning day at the Elmslie Church, let us remember the importance of willingness and availability to serve. Whether it's offering our time, talents, or resources, wherever and whenever the need arises, the commitment to serving together strengthens the bond of fellowship and belonging among the congregants of any church. Our acts of service, whether great or small, whether in the limelight or behind the scenes, are tangible proofs of our faith and bring glory to God.



*(All photos by Mrs. Terry Merren)*



## Celebrating 170 Years of Service

In May 2024



### WEBSTER MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH, BODDEN TOWN, GRAND CAYMAN

Cordially invites you and your family to join us for the following special events:

**May 4, Saturday, 8:00 – 10:00 AM**

Prayer Breakfast behind the Church Hall on the beach

**May 5, Sunday – 11:00 AM**

170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations Opening Service

**May 12, Sunday – 11:00 AM**

170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Communion Service

**May 18, Saturday – 10:00 – 3:00 PM**

170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Beach Day (Coe Wood Beach)

**May 19, Sunday – 11:00 AM**

170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Youth Sunday

**May 20-24, Monday-Friday – 10:00 – 3:00 PM**

Historical Display in the Church Hall

**May 26, Sunday – 11:00 AM**

170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations Closing Service

**Come and celebrate with us!**

**BETHESDA**  
COUNSELLING CENTRE

<https://www.bethesdacounselingcenter.com/>  
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The United Church in Jamaica  
and the Cayman Islands

# SUMMER DAY CAMP 2024

**Cayman Islands (CIRMC)**

**"Spread the Fyah"**

FUN, WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP



**Children's Camp**  
July 9-14



**Teens' Camp**  
July 16-21

Venue:  
Prospect Youth Centre  
8am - 6pm Daily  
Cost: CI\$150

**USE QR CODE  
TO REGISTER**

Deadline: June 17, 2024



**Sunset Sail**

Inter-School Inter-Varsity  
Christian Fellowship  
Annual Sunset Boat Cruise

**Worship on  
the Waves**

ADULTS: \$50  
STUDENTS: \$25

SATURDAY MAY 11, 2024 @ 4:00 PM  
Departure Location: The West Bay Yacht Club

Ticket prices Include: 2 Stops and 1 Meal

WHATSAPP/CALL: 345-929-5111

**WORSHIP  
THE LORD**  
Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council  
Sundays at 7:45am on Radio Cayman

on Radio Cayman 89.9  
every Sunday at 7:45 am

**May 5, 2024**  
**Mr. Michael Bowerman**

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