



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

December 30, 2019

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 20

SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

IN THIS ISSUE:
New Year Reflection

New Year Reflection

*By the Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield
Deputy Regional Secretary
Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council*

As we reflect on 2019, the stark recognition that this year also ends the second decade of the 21st century must come to mind. The world has undergone tremendous changes in these twenty (20) years inclusive of the impact of 9/11, the advent and spread of social media, post-post modernity and the declining influence of religion, increase in the level of cultural and religious intolerance, the subtleness yet increasing levels of discrimination and hate speech inter-alia.

In the Cayman Islands, the changes in these two decades have been significant. These include the new Constitution, the introduction of the Bill of Rights, change in the nomenclature of government leaders, the birth of a unity government, the topographical changes, the creation of Camana Bay, engineering feats in buildings and road networks, population growth, work permits increasing in numbers, the Status Grants and the need for the preservation of what it means to be Caymanian and the historic people's initiated referendum (albeit, this has been delayed and will occur in the third decade of the 21st century). The Cayman Islands have also been carried reluctantly into the conversations related to the Same-sex marriage and the now public debate surrounded the LGBTQ2+ community.

The religious landscape has also changed in the past two decades. There now exist the Chabad Cayman Jewish Community Centre, the Temple Beth Shalom and the Islamic Society of the Cayman Islands. A Hindu temple does not exist in the Cayman Islands, but the 2010 Census showed the number of Hindus as 454 (0.8% of the total Cayman Islands population). There are now more shop-front churches and Christian groups making use of Community Centres, the Harquail Theatre and the Cinema.

Internally, in the two decades, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands decentralized (2009) and gave more autonomy to congregations and three Regional Mission



Councils were added in Jamaica. The Cayman Area Council became the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council and in the two decades the Bethesda Counseling Centre (2007) and the Beth Shalom Mission (2018-19) have been developed and the Cayman Prep and High School student population has grown to over 900.

However, we have work to do! The table below represents the 2010 statistics of those who identified as Presbyterian/ United Church affiliates/members. Based on the 2018 Data Gathering Statistics for the CIRMC we have a total of **764** members and a ministry reach of just over three thousand.

Religious Denomination by District, Sex and Status, 2010 - Presbyterian/ United Church

District	Total	Males	Females	Caymanian	Non-Caymanian
George Town	1,829	858	927	1,370	460
West Bay	1,190	541	649	1,057	133
Bodden Town	1,040	486	552	909	129
North Side	277	140	137	253	24
East End	288	123	165	257	31
Sister Islands	18	8	10	11	7
TOTAL	4,561	2,156	2,440	3,857	790

The 2020 census will provide the latest statistical information once it is conducted and although as a denomination for us it is not a 'numbers game', we have to search diligently for the many who need to hear and receive the gospel of Christ.

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) has declared **2020 as the Year of Evangelism**. Evangelism will therefore be at the core of the Regional Mission Councils' and

Congregations' activities for 2020. For this level of evangelism to be achieved there must be a commitment by the leadership, members and adherents of the UCJCI to grasp a deeper level of understanding of what it means to be evangelical and how to make this central to our identity.

“How are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” - Romans 10:15

Throughout 2020 **Evangelism** will intricately linked to the preaching themes that have been selected.

These are the **Spirituality of the Disciple, the Cost of Discipleship, Stewardship and the Disciple as Evangelist.**

As the United Church enters this period of intense Evangelism, there is the need however to identify some of the critical sign posts that surround us as a church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

- Rapidly changing culture which includes people empowerment
- Continued declining interest in ‘traditional church’
- Isolation of the church by certain sections of the society
- Conflation of right and wrong --competing set of values - moral dilemma
- Acts of crime and violence becoming more vicious
- Lack of respect for others
- Lack of integrity, honesty and common decency
- Influence of social media

There are also some internal Church sign posts that must also grab our attention:

- The traditional understanding and expectations of Evangelism is not necessarily a key profile for the UCJCI
- Worship is energized in spurts and based at times on the ‘feel-good’ experience
- Although we gather faithfully for worship, our fellowship at times is strained
- Giving in the Congregation is either just stable or in decline
- Continued decline in the numbers of certain demographics (young adults and men)
- Need for intentional and intense ministry to all persons who are seeking Christ
- Need for evangelism strategies that will truly draw persons to Christ and the kingdom of God

The list could be more extensive, but these items will suffice for the intent of this call to Evangelism. **Evangelism will be undergirding the preaching themes in each quarter of the year but in addition let us ensure that the following occur:**

- i. **Reaching everywhere** and everyone with the love of Christ and the gospel of peace
- ii. **Encourage Missional and Healthy Congregations** - renewing our approach to Fellowship, Discipleship, Worship and Stewardship
- iii. **Equipping the Lay Leaders** -ensure that the lay leaders are trained to become more effective in

undertaking the mission in the local Congregations and particularly in **specialized ministry** to women, men and young adults.

- iv. **Ministering to Children and Youth** -Equipping the Youth Ministers and Volunteers to be better able to undertake the vital ministry to youth and children.
- v. **Training Youth Peer Leaders** – Strengthening youth capacity to participate in worship, fellowship and evangelism
- vi. **Advocacy**- Raising awareness and ensuring activism is undertaken in addressing the critical social, political and environmental issues which are current in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

Prayerfully, let us embark on this era of Evangelism and seek the lost and weary for Christ. Let us not become daunted but remain focused and intentional as each congregation in the Regional Mission Council read the surrounding context and prepare members to reach others for the sake of Christ.

Blessings and Peace to you and your household in 2020.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 31 (Tuesday) New Year's Eve

Watch Night Services

10:00 pm - Eat End/Gun Bay

10:30 pm - Elmslie/South Sound, Robert Young/Savannah
Bodden Town/North Side

11:00 pm - John Gray Memorial

January 1. (Wednesday) New Year's Day

Garden Party – 11 am Bodden Town (Nurse Josie Senior Center)

January 3 (Friday)

Council office re-opens

January 4 (Saturday)

Women's Fellowship Council meeting

January 5. (Sunday) 2nd Sunday after Christmas

Commissioning of Lay Pastor Ormond Williams –
4:00pm East End United Church

January 8. (Wednesday)

Council Finance & Property Committee meeting –
5:30pm Council office

Worship the Lord

-on Radio Cayman 89.9 every Sunday at 7:45 am-

January 5 Moderator-Rt. Rev. Dr. Cowans

January 12 Rev. Rohan Forrester

January 19 Mr. Mike Bowerman (Keswick Team)

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

292 Prospect Point Road

P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman

KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS

Tel: 1 345 947 1963

Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com

Website: unitedchurch.org.ky