



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

July 15, 2020

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God's Own Purposes Fulfilled in Creation

By Mrs. Sonia Wallace

Since the start of this month we have been reflecting on God's creation as outlined in the Bible. We firmly stand on the truth that God created the world and today we want to highlight three (3) purposes God fulfilled:

- Relationship with humankind
- Revelation of Himself and
- Restoration of all His creation to His presence.

As we emerge from a worldwide pandemic, we are still feeling the effects of having our social relationships and activities suddenly and drastically reduced or even stopped. For many this resulted in varying degrees of feelings of isolation during the lockdown. I was deeply moved when I saw a news clip from New York showing a little girl outside the window waving to her grandmother, seeking to be in her presence, but having to settle for placing her hand on the window pane over the image of her grandmother's hand. In that moment, the yearning for a grandmother's intimate presence was evident but in reality they were separated. They craved for the freedom to practice the loving relationship they knew.

My first tenet is that God created the world to fulfill His purposes for relationship. In previous programmes we saw the triune God in creation – Father, Son and Holy Spirit in Divine relationship. To create man, the triune God spoke to Himself saying “let us”. A collective decision was made to create male and female, such that like Him (three persons in One), humankind would also have the ability to relate to each other, to the rest of the created world and to God. We are all conceived from relationships and reared in family groups. Likewise the animals share in lower relationship rearing their young. In our relationship with each other humankind, as managers and stewards of God's creation have recognized that everyone is born in the image of God with equal value and God-given potentials. In addition, as social beings we need healthy social relationships for holistic growth and wellbeing at all stages of life.

To foster relationship with humankind, God took the initiative and made a place on earth, to meet with Adam daily. The Greek version of the Old Testament relates the word Eden to a Hebrew word which means “delight.” It was the place of God's

presence, where He met face to face with man and woman. John 4:24 tells us that God is Spirit and humankind was given everything necessary to sustain life on earth and spiritual life in the presence of God. A spiritual relationship with humankind was a fulfillment of God's own purpose. It was God's intent that we would always be in His presence. This purpose was achieved as the Creator met in utter delight with the created in the place of His presence and man and woman were perfectly fitted to accomplish the purposes of God in dominion over the earth.

Secondly, in creating the world God purposed to reveal Himself. Indeed, God revealed Himself when He set out the guiding principles to life in Eden. He revealed the freedom of a God of love to give man and woman a choice. When humankind sinned He revealed Himself as the God -Elohim, (creating and knowing all); He had the plan and His purpose would not be thwarted as His relationship with the created would be sustained. In eternal love for humankind, He shed the blood of the animal whose skin He used to clothe man and woman. God forever established the need for the shedding of blood to atone for sins as the way He would approach humankind who had lost holiness, spiritual life and the place of delight.



God later chose a people - the descendants of Abraham to reveal Himself. He revealed Himself as Yahweh (the I Am -the Self Existent One) to Moses –His chosen deliverer, who declared Him the God of Israel and through them to all nations. He set out precepts which were required in fostering his personal relationship with them. Such as, they should have no other god and worship only Him. He declared His ways and precepts to them through his prophets and priests individually and as a nation. However, in their state of spiritual separation, He patiently, repeatedly reminded them as in Is. 43: 10 and 11, “You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed nor shall there be after Me. I, even I am the Lord and besides me there is no savior.” (NKJ)

We are reminded that in Psalm 57, David, who became one of the kings of Israel, witnessed of his personal relationship with God. As he fled from Saul he wrote in Vs. 4 of that psalm “my soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire,” but “my soul trusts in you and in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge. He had a relationship with God and a revelation of God. He expressed confidence in “El Elyon –the God Most High. The passage states “I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me.”

Thirdly, God created the world to fulfill his purpose of restoration that was a life giving principle. God always took the initiative to impress His life giving presence on earth, He is ever present and ever watchful over His creation, to save, and make new. So in Is. 43:18 -21 we get the pronouncement of God's new plan to Israel. He declared "I will do a new thing". Vs. 20 to 21 state "The beast of the field will honor Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise". (NKJ)

The New Bible Commentary states "For real fulfillment (of this passage) we must look beyond the modest homecoming from Babylon" which presented the context for this message in Isaiah, and keep in view the ultimate deliverance which Jesus accomplished by sacrificially shedding His blood for the world. In Ephesians 3 Paul wrote to the Gentiles, (those who were not from Israel) stating "the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ...now...made known by the church...according to the eternal purpose which He (God the Father) accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." (NKJ)

The new thing, God's previously hidden plan or mystery, for Israelites and Gentiles (all people) to be restored to spiritual life was now fulfilled. The triune God gave His son – Jesus Christ to redeem and rescue all humankind from the dominion of sin by shedding His own sinless blood in atonement for our sins. In Christ we are children of God, fully restored to the family and to God's holy presence. Romans 8:21 tells us that creation also was delivered into the freedom from sin.

When you accept Jesus Christ as Saviour it is as if you died with Christ. Roman 6:11 tells us "reckon yourself to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our lord." Those who have accepted Jesus Christ have been renewed to spiritual life fulfilling God's purpose for a people (of different nations and tongues) who would declare His praise.

You may ask why is praise so important when we have a relationship with God and the revelation of who He is. Dr. Myles Monroe in his book 'Praise and Worship' explains that "we practice the presence of God through praise and worship." The Psalmist says we bring a sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. Ps. 150:6 says "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

There is however another stage in the fulfillment of God's plan of restoration to His presence, it is our ultimate, fully realized presence with Him in heaven. There we will have glorified bodies and life eternal with unending praise to God. In Rev. 4:9-11 John is taken up to the throne room in heaven. He sees worship being offered by created beings accompanied by representatives of the people of God – the twenty-four elders. The church of believers in Jesus Christ can look forward to being in the presence of God at His heavenly throne declaring "You are worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and by your will they exist and were created." (NKJ)

If in this pandemic you have recognized your need to have a relationship with God and grow in your knowledge of Him, I invite you to tell Him praying like this,

Lord Jesus, I want to know you. Forgive me of my sins. I believe that you died for me and your blood cleanses me from all sin. Come and live in my heart. I accept you as my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Others may be experiencing distress, grief and fear. I encourage you to trust God. Take time to read and pray verses of Psalm 57. Set your heart to praise God in your struggles and trust Him to work all things for your good.

**...IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST,
THE NEW CREATION HAS COME:
THE OLD HAS GONE,
THE NEW IS HERE!**

2 Corinthians 5:17

**Crises Preparedness and Response Capability
Guidelines for Congregations and Council**

PRAYING TOGETHER AND FOR EACH OTHER IS ESSENTIAL DURING A CRISIS.

Part 2. Resources, Databank

Congregations should structure themselves so as to be able to respond rapidly and lovingly in the case of personal crises, without the Minister being the only one responding. Certain personal crises will dictate a particular sensitivity in relating to those affected. Allied to this is the fact that the Minister, or any other counsellor, cannot initiate counselling with someone, no matter how badly they may appear to need it, and here a friendly voice of another member or relative could be vital in getting the person to start talking with the Minister or another counsellor.

The ability to respond will include the establishment of a data bank to ensure that Members and Adherents can be referred quickly to the right agency or person able to help in the particular need. This will include:

- Who is available for counselling, in addition to the Minister? Is there anyone on the staff or amongst the membership appropriately trained and approved by the Minister for this purpose?
- Bethesda Counselling Centre – 946-6575; 923-6488
- A list of other professional counsellors, Government and private, and any specialities.
- The contact details of the local Children and Family Services unit.
- Cayman Islands Crisis Centre – 949-0366 – Crisis Line 943-2422
- Police Family Support Unit – 946-9185, as well as your local station
- Women’s Resource Centre – 949-0006
- Lawyers for Legal Advice (besides through the FRC)
- Persons for basic financial advice and referrals to the right company/agency
- Members who can lend a caring ear, some who may have been trained in grief ministry or brief counselling, who can help with insurance claims/explanations, etc.

Either type of crisis can affect all our Members and Adherents. However, there are some individuals for whom the Congregation can and should establish special structures to ensure a level of care on an ongoing basis – e.g. the elderly and others living alone – and in the event of national emergency, such as a hurricane watch/warning.

GENERAL CARE AND OVERSIGHT

Therefore, on an ongoing basis, Congregations should implement a structure and arrangements to ensure attention to the following:

1. That the full list of all our Members and Adherents is reviewed and a ‘needs assessment’ (not an income assessment!) completed for each person. Where special needs, such as listed below, are identified, then arrangements as follows should be made and implemented. (This procedure will require regular, planned updating.)

2. Persons living alone are checked on daily by someone – where there are family members or neighbours who do this faithfully, there may be no need for the Church membership to impose themselves, but simply to let the individual and the relative/neighbour know that we are available to help and who to contact. Depending on the circumstances, the question may also need to be asked whether the person should continue living alone.

3. Special arrangements for similar oversight may also be needed where more than one elderly person live together, and to ensure proper use of medication, taking regular meals, etc.

4. Especially when there are no close, younger relatives involved, the Congregation will want to ensure that the living quarters of such persons are properly outfitted with sanitary and safety equipment, etc.

5. Such ‘alone’ persons should also be visited more regularly, on a planned basis, by the Congregation, invited out where still

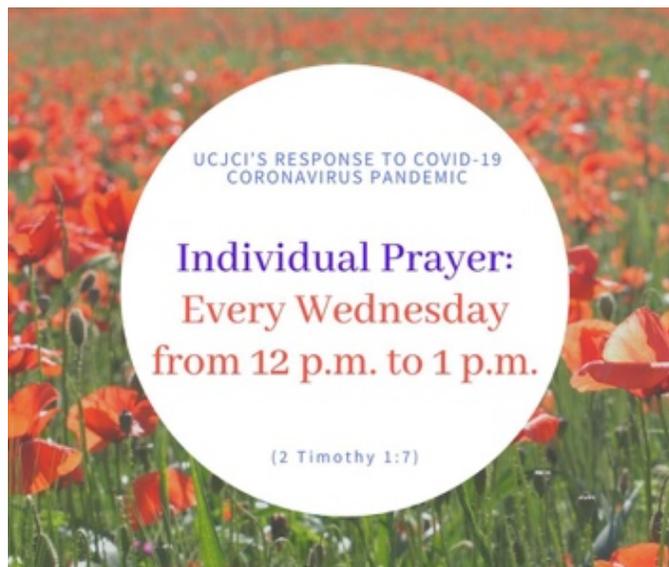
mobile, etc., as well as the ad hoc visits by the Minister and members in the spirit of friendship and love.

6. Persons with young children also need to be given special consideration in our planned ministries of care and support. The number of children may be a factor, or the income level of the parent(s), the health considerations, and whether there are two parents or only one, and the level of ‘grandparent’ and other family support.

7. Depending on the circumstances of the household (e.g. age), the Church should be alert to ensuring that the home is equipped with basic safety equipment – e.g. fire/smoke detector alarms in house, fire extinguishers, and that the individuals know how to use them.

8. Consideration must also be given to the situation of non-Caymanians living here – do they have any family, or a friends-network already established?

(to be continued next week)



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

July 19. Mrs. Sonia Wallace

July 19. (Sunday) 7th Sunday after Pentecost
All local United Church congregations are open- Please contact the offices for details.

Worship Services will still be available via video links.

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