

**Extracts from a sermon by Rt. Rev. Dr. Roderick Hewitt
as the CWM Assembly 2006 opens in Ocho Rios, Jamaica on 18th June**

CWM's Assembly in Ocho Rios opened on 18 June with a challenge to take the good news home.

Drummers, choirs, and a steel band led the delegates and guests in enthusiastic and colourful celebration: "From many tribes and nations, with thankful songs we come."

Moderator of CWM and of the host church, the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Rt Rev Dr Roderick Hewitt laid down a challenge to the Assembly.

"God's redemptive work is opposed to structures of injustice at every level in our world that maintains the privileges of the powerful," he said.

"The good news that was embraced by the shepherds declared that God in Jesus Christ has inaugurated a new reign that no empire can subvert. Jesus' birth, the birth of the Christ child, set a stark warning to the emperor and his empire that God's purpose for his world is greater than Caesar's.

"To the pretenders of local and global power the church declares the sovereignty of God's power.

"The good news takes us into a very uncomfortable experience. It begins with an understanding of the human condition - a condition that no amount of adjustments can change. Change can only come if we admit our weakness, powerlessness and hostility and embrace God's good news of acceptance, forgiveness and love in Christ.

"Rooted at the heart of this transformation is the power of the cross.

"The mission of the crucified and resurrected Christ has made impotent the awesome powers of the imperial systems of this world that seek to make and keep people captives to their desires. In the face of worldly powers God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

"This is the good news that we will take home: that the called out people of God in every local community around the world, however weak or poor we are, we are part of God's mission of righting the wrongs of this world that are enslaving people and denying them fullness of life."

Reported by Kenwyn Pierce of CWM (Council for World Mission)