



MCCA QUARTERLY

Connexional Theme

Facing the Task Unfinished : Imagine

Ephesians 3:20 –21

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

On many occasions persons have said to me: “I have never seen anything like this before”. Recently I hear it relative to the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic is instigating much fear, anxiety, grief, confusion and hopelessness. As we navigate through this crisis two things, among others, stand out for me.

Firstly, as the people of God, and specifically the MCCA, we are constrained to reassess how we do ministry. During this pandemic we need a fresh appreciation of what it means to be a “Church Without Walls” and to be engaged in “Ministry Without Walls”. With the doors of most of our churches closed, on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday and other days, we gathered in our homes to worship and celebrate. Therefore, even as we observe “physical distancing” and the “stay at home” protocols we must be the Church.

Secondly, the Risen Jesus inspires hope and comes to us in our situations. The resurrection of Jesus assures us that nothing in all this world can prevent Jesus from coming to us where we are and in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Indeed no grave clothes, no grave stone, no grave security, no locked doors can separate us from the Living Jesus. We may have been a failure, absconder, backslider; we may be afraid, skeptical, anxious or just confused, it matters not, nothing can obstruct Jesus from coming, standing with us and giving us the peace that the world cannot give.

In these days of fear, doubt and feelings of hopelessness Jesus stands among us and says “Shalom!” Peace! Friends, the Peace of God be with you and all your loved ones!!



Connexional Officers for the 2019 –2021 triennium from left: Bishop Galbraith, Rev. Spencer, Mrs. Yonnette Greaves VP; Ms. Sara Hudson, IPVP; Mr. Quincy Bourne Immediate Past Treasurer.



THINK ON THESE THINGS



WAITING FOR OUR RESURRECTION

Jesus worked many other miracles for his disciples, and not all of them are written in this book. But these are written so that you will put your faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. If you have faith in him, you will have true life. John 20: 30-31 (CEV)

Some scholars refer John 20 as the proper ending of the Gospel. The conclusion makes some powerful assertions that are central to the faith: 1. Jesus did more than we could fit in this book (v. 30); 2. What we have written is for you to centre your faith upon Jesus who we confess as Son of God (v. 31a); 3. If you believe the things about the One who we have written you will have true life (v. 31b). If we embrace the assertions, we can understand the preceding stories of the disciples in hiding and the encounter with Thomas.

The disciples are in hiding out of fear, although Mary Magdalene had brought them the message of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus, later appears to them to assuage their fears, strengthen their faith, and give them the promise of the Holy Spirit by breathing upon them. Thomas is absent and rightly challenges them with his brand of caustic scepticism, until Jesus encounters him resulting in his bitterness removed and his faith renewed. The presentation of the events is not a news report, what they do make clear is that faith in Jesus, the Son of God, is renewed and there is a complete transformation of their lives.

We are living in the season of COVID-19. You may say that this is sacrilege because *this is the season of the Festival of the Resurrection and soon we will have Methodist Heritage and Pentecost*, how dare you. The fact is some persons have been scrambling while others are readapting to digital streaming, YouTubeing, Zooming, Skyping, Face Timing, et. al. Our meetings, Bible Studies, youth activities, worship services, and even our pastoral outreach; depending on the restrictions that governments have imposed on us, are subject to pandemic rules. So, we, like the disciples are either in fear of what comes next or exercising our own brand of toxic scepticism, as we rage against the times.

Nevertheless, as the disciples and Thomas, Jesus comes to offer peace and renewal. He invites us to keep changing and living in the fresh wind of the Spirit embracing technology for evangelism, for teaching, for caring, and loving; without forgetting those who do not have access to these devices. He calls us to believe steadfastly in the Son of God and his power to heal. He invites us, to renew our lives amid this season of death, waiting on our own resurrection from the present circumstances. Onward, we must go, affirming that he overcame the sharpness of death and is calling us to be purveyors of life to those who are fearful, doubtful and anxious. Let us be hopeful because he lives and lives for evermore.

Obispo Juan M. Simpson B
Panama/Costa Rica

THE CHURCH'S OBLIGATION

AMIDST COVID-19 By Rev'd Damien

Hughes Superintendent, Curacao Circuit

From Tampa to Antigua, from Tortola to Colorado! Governments the world over have been issuing shelter-in-place orders, states of emergency and curfews; all with the hope and intent of flattening or as some have said, “*crushing the curve of infection*” caused by the novel coronavirus. The impact of these decisions has been far-reaching and will continue to affect us in all spheres of life for the foreseeable future. COVID-19 and the subsequent stay at home orders have shuttered our schools, cancelled our flights, sent employees home, crippled our economies, and emptied our chapels.

It is the latter effect that has been disturbing for some and worrisome for others. Undoubtedly, the media is rife with news items of Church leaders and Ministers of Religion defying the stay at home orders, states of Emergency and the social distancing recommendations issued by governments and health authorities. There was one video clip that made its way around the region of the police entering a place of worship because the worshippers were defying the government order. As her pastor was being led away by the police, one woman could be heard on the viral video shouting, “***Touch not the Lord's anointed!***”

The socio-economic fall-out have seen businesses exercising their corporate social responsibility and governments rendering economic and other support to their citizenry. Similarly, we as Christians must seriously consider our responsibility in this pandemic infused pandemonium. Ours is a duty to know our Christian, moral, ethical and social responsibility in the midst of the Coronavirus.

No, the Church cannot retreat into a private community and into a cocoon. But at the same time, the Church is obligated to obey the laws of the government. “***Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God***”. It would therefore reason that if and when a government issues warnings and/or orders, it is incumbent upon the Church to treat these communications seriously and to respect them. We are no less Christian if we don't assemble in our chapels. For while the devil might be rejoicing at the closure of chapels now, the heaven is ecstatic that the altar in many of our homes have been opened.

While we are all told to stay at home, we must be reminded that the world is watching. And the way we as a community of faith conduct ourselves during this pandemic will communicate either a lack of care for the community or it will communicate the care of Christ for the community. The writer of Proverbs reminds us, “***Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people***” And the older generations still assert today that order is heaven's first law. We must assure ourselves that the shuttering of our chapels does not signify that we do not know the value of the church.

Neither does it symbolise our ignorance to what the Church is. In Sermon 74 entitled “*Of the Church*” Wesley opens with this claim, “***a more ambiguous word than this, “the church,” is scarce to be found in the English language. It is sometimes taken for a building... sometimes for a congregation or body of people united together in the service of God***”.

And yes, we all know the value of the Church. From the period of enslavement to this post-modern era, the Church has been and continues to be a bastion of hope and salvation. But what happens when the church is a part of the danger? How should the Church respond? This is not simply a question for individual church members, but the Church universal. We are advised, “***Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.***”

In the face of this crisis, the Church as an institution must consider its role and responsibility and demonstrate its understanding of that role. As servants of Christ, we must serve others according to their needs and we must prioritise the health and safety of all in our community's reach, not only those in our congregations. It must be community over congregation. It is not that the Church should go away forever, in fact that is not possible. The literal emptying of our chapels, sanctuaries and houses of worship is a symbol of our trust in God's ability to meet us regardless of the location. We say that our God is imminent and transcendent; and we say that God is Omnipresent. We should then all agree that **the Church remains the church whether gathered or scattered.**

As the Church of Jesus Christ spread across waters, lands, cultures and peoples, our Christian, social, ethical and moral responsibility and duty at this time is to send out an **S.O.S. Call: Stay Home** so we can **Obstruct the Spread** and **Safeguard** one another. We must also exercise righteousness by respecting the rule of law, allowing the love of Christ to constrain us to love our neighbours as ourselves. In loving our neighbour during this crisis, we will the Coronavirus as the *Great Leveller*. Sinner or saint, sinful or sanctified, riches or rags, homeless or housed, intellectual or ignorant; anybody and everybody can be infected. The Church is called upon therefore to see **C.O.V.I.D** as a **Completely Obscure Virus Ignoring Differences**. We are all one sneeze, one cough, one touch away from being infected and the Church must lead by example in respecting the rule of law.

i. Romans 13:1, NRSV

ii. Proverbs 14:34

iii. Extractd from the Wesley Centre for Applied Theology on 31 March 2020.

iv. Proverbs 4:7

REMEMDER TO:

Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds

Sanitize hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Maintain physical distance of three to six feet.

Cover nose and mouth when in public

Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

If you are running a temperature stay home and call the doctor

SALUTE TO MOTHERS

On Mother's Day, May 10, we pause to acknowledge the great role mothers play in our lives and in the shaping of the world. Mary the mother of our Saviour was an excellent mother. She expected her child to help wherever he could (John 2: 3-5). We commend all those mothers who always want the best for their child or children and are prepared to seize opportunities for their child, or children to shine and do what they can to help others.

Mary was determined to risk her life to stand by her son (John 19:25) to the end. I gave a lady, a total stranger, a lift. After a few moments of awkward silence I asked her where she was going. After hesitating and taking a deep breath she said "I am going to..." She named the police station. She proceeded to tell me that her son is in lockup. She and her husband said they would not go to visit him because he will not hear. Then she said: "I am going. After all he is my son". Mary couldn't do anything except standing there and she did. .

We thank God for all our mothers, those who gave birth to another human being and well as all those who have lovingly and tenderly mothered the children of others. To all our mothers at home, school, church, work and in the community, we say: A. **HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO YOU!** "Thanks mom" for all your love and care.



Rev'd Andella Moore, serving in the Belize/Honduras Districts is proud of her mother Phenella Abrams. Mon is equally proud of her daughter.



Sis. Latoya Blair of Guyana cares passionately for her children and all the children committed to her care.



Sis. Beneve Griffiths from Lucea, Jamaica, and her son Joshua provides loves and motherly care for Makera Leslie and many others children in church and community.



Former Principal of Wesley College, Belize. Miss Joan Tillet loved caring for thousands of children committed to her care.



Sis. Angella Hall from Belize & Rev'd Glenna Spencer, lay and clergy, have been mothers to many.

WONDERFUL MOTHER

The heart of a home is a mother
Whose love is warm and true,
And home has always been
"sweet home"
With a wonderful mother like you!
~ Anon.

WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS



We will get through this, together you and I
We will get through this, for remember God is still nigh!

We will get through this, we continue to pray and trust
We will get through this, knowing common sense Wisdom ...is a must!

We will get through this, for you see, yes, we can still talk
We will get through this, for we do not and dare not alone walk!

We will get through this, for we can lift every voice and sing
We will get through this, for God is still Master of everything!

We will get through this, for from this only can come good
We will get through this, when we all work together, in our world, our neighborhood!

Rev'd Ruth Pratt, 3/18/2020

PENTECOST- REVIVAL OR BIRTH?

Acts 2:1-11 tells us that on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection and ten days after the ascension of Jesus, the followers of Jesus were gathered together (*literally together, together*) when a fresh and mighty wind blew and they saw "**Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability**" Acts 2: 3-4. Was this the revival and empowering of the Church or the birth of the Church?

According to Acts there was pandemonium. Some said the disciples were drunk. Some said it was too early to be drunk. The crowd that gathered included "**Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs**—v. 9-11 and they all heard the disciples speaking about God's marvelous deeds in their respective languages.

Peter seized the moment and explained what happened. At the end of his explanation some welcomed his message. The historian and medical doctor, Luke tells us that: "**So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added**" v. 41. The phrase "**were added**" sounds like something already existed and they were added to it. Were they joining something that had already existed? Were they added to the church? The Greek word for "church" is "**ekklesia**", which means "**called out**". When Jesus commenced his ministry did he "**called out**" persons to follow him.

The Holy Spirit came on those who were Jesus' followers from the beginning and those who welcomed Peter message joined them. Birth or revival??



HOW DUSTY ARE YOU?

The English language is sometimes strange even to English speaking people. And that is why I find it difficult to call Jesus a "Duster." Because I could be implying that Jesus causes dust, or produces dust.

When I was in school in the days before marker boards and erasers, we used to call the chalk eraser a "duster" because it dusted off the "blackboard", which was actually a green colored board. The cloth that

Rev'd Patrick Perrin. Former MCCA and now retired UMC Minister .

was used to wipe down furniture or clean window blinds was also called a duster.

Today is Holy Thursday, also known as Maundy Thursday because of what Jesus did at that last Passover meal with his disciples. As he "mandated" (Maundy) that they observe the Passover meal from thence "In Remembrance of Me", he instituted The Holy Communion, or Eucharist.

But another sacramental act also took place on that night which was also mandated, but which the Church has largely ignored in our practice. Jesus knelt down and, taking a basin of water and a towel, washed and dried the feet of every disciple. Slaves washed the feet of their masters. Students washed the feet of their teachers. It was never the other way around until Jesus did it! To Peter that act of Jesus was so scandalous that it freaked out Peter.

Washing feet was an act of welcome and a show of hospitality. It was necessary because travelers usually had dusty feet. So what Jesus was doing was removing the dust from the feet of his disciples. In that sense he was a "duster." Modern travel and modern shoes, along with our modern pavements don't cause our feet to be dusty anymore. But the sacramental act of feet washing was not only an object lesson in humility for every would be leader, but also an act of love.

Jesus still dusts us off today as an act of love and he mandates that we show similar acts of love to one another. We are still very dusty from sin and selfishness and from our resultant separation; from God and from each other.

Separation for us on this Maundy Thursday 2020, masks and all, is mandatory because of the dusty corona virus, the novel COVID-19. But Jesus still loves us and is still inviting us to sit at his table of grace, breaking the mystical bread and sharing the mystical cup. And after that removing the dust that still clings to our minds and hearts and souls and spirits. In a word, SIN. Will we let him?

A new mandate he gives us, that we love one another. How will we show that love from now on?

*Rev'd Patrick G. Perrin
April 9, 2020*

FROM ALDERSGATE TO ANTIGUA

At Aldersgate Street on May 24th, 1738 Rev'd John Wesley had a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit which transformed his life, his message and his ministry. His unique "heart-warming" experience caused to be let loose in the British Isle a man whose primary desire was the salvation of souls and whose ultimate aim was to build the kingdom of God and bring glory to God. Submitting to the promptings of the Holy Spirit John Wesley lived a life of total surrender to God. His legacy was a life of spiritual discipline; passionate evangelization, strong and visionary leadership, thousands of sermons, the Class System and the embryo of a new denomination.

Persecuted, ridiculed, barred from preaching in Church, and being made "Parish less" Rev'd John Wesley, an Anglican Priest, determined that the "world is my parish". His "Ministry Without Walls" saw him going wherever men and women were found—prisons, gallows, coalpit heads, street corners, grave yard- to call all and sundry to come to Christ who welcomes all unconditionally. Though he died an Anglican he had set in motion the birth of a new denomination. May 24, 2020 will see an entity with a worldwide community of over 80 million members, in 138 countries and comprising 80 member denominations. Among them is numbered the MCCA, a descendant of "Aldersgate Street" experience.

The MCCA, the oldest Methodist work outside of England, started in Antigua in 1760 through the instrumentality of Nathaniel Gilbert and his faithful co-workers Mary Leadbetter, Bessie and Sophia Campbell. Two hundred and sixty years later there is a community of over 62,000 Methodists, over 600 Chapels and over 150 ministers. Yes! We celebrate with joy and thanksgiving the great work God has commenced.

The year 2020 will forever be remembered as the year when attempting to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 pandemic the great Christian festivals of Palm Sunday, The Commemoration of the Crucifixion and the Festival of the Resurrection were all celebrated with most of our Chapel doors closed and members gathered in their homes. Amid the fear and anxiety, death and grief of COVID-19 we remain hopeful because Jesus lives.

The current context reminds us that Methodism in the Caribbean was birthed and nurtured in oppression, persecution and agony. Some of the early Methodist were enslaved Africans working long hours on sugarcane plantations. Black Harry, the ex-slave from USA who started Methodism in St. Eustatius was cruelly flogged, imprisoned and banished. John Brownell's anti-establishment approach in Nevis and his messages against the moral laxity prevailing in Tortola resulted in the Charlestown Chapel being set on fire on November 10, 1797 and Brownell being violently assaulted on the street of Road Town, Tortola, respectively. From 1807 –1814 the Coke Chapel in Kingston was closed because religious activities were forbidden before 6.00 a.m. or after 6.p.m. and on 30th November 1807 choir practice accidentally went on until 6:15 p.m.

John Wesley and the early Caribbean Methodist gave their all for the spreading of the gospel . This was inspired by their faith and assurance of salvation. What was true of John Wesley and our fore parents in the faith must be true of us in this generation. What is that? The following quote from Rev'd Dr. William Watty answers that. He said: "**One noticeable feature of the Wesleys was their refusal to take God for granted. It was precisely this refusal which was at the heart of their struggle and their spiritual odyssey to Faith and Assurance. They had to be sure of God, His pardon, His power and his peace.... They could not take that for granted. They had to have it. They had to be sure**" (Aldersgate in Perspective– page 21).

Amid COVID-19 and in this generation it is essential that we have Faith and Assurance. We must experience the risen Jesus who breathes a fresh wind on us giving us courage and confidence as we go in his name.

THANK GOD FOR OUR ELDERS

The church, like life, is on a journey. Many ran their leg of the race and have passed on the baton to younger and more energetic runners. The MCCA is blessed with many seniors. Let us salute the seniors who are amongst us and let us love and care for them. During this COVID-19 pandemic let us make a special effort to call them and pray with them. Thanks be to God for the many lay and clergy who, in their own way, helped to make us who we are today. They are blessed with great knowledge. Let us seize the moment and learn from them. May God continue to bless and grant all our seniors peace and contentment as they continue to enrich our lives.



Rev'd Cadogan celebrates his 105 birthday on May 10, 2020. We thank God for this great blessing.

This year marks 40 years since Uncle Claude Superannuated.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Uncle Claude.

Sis. Lucille Alberts Swanston on her 90th birthday



Wisdom comes with age and it is wise to listen to our seniors. Rev'd Ralph Denizar listens attentively to Bro. Andre Rocourt, treasurer of the Haiti District.

Thank God for those who make themselves available to teach and to learn. The world will be better for it.



Supernumerary ministers: Rev'd Murlene Dennis and Rev'd Edna Redmond of Guyana. This honoured group on men and women continue to make a significant contribution to the work of the MCCA.

SALUTE TO FATHERS

On June 21 we pause to recognize and celebrate the significant role fathers play in our lives.

Little is said about Joseph's fathering of Jesus. However, two things stand out and they are critical for all fathers. When Joseph learned that Mary was with child his initial intention was to divorce her. Encouraged to rescind his decision (Matt. 1:20-21) Joseph embraced the opportunity to **provide** father's love and care for Jesus. After Jesus' birth Joseph was informed that the child's life was in danger (Matt. 2:13) and he needs protection. Joseph was not his natural but legal father and thus responsible for his safety and wellbeing. Joseph rose to the occasion and be the father he should be. He protected Jesus by fleeing to Egypt.

Being a **proctor** and a **provider** are two fundamental responsibilities of every father. We salute the fathers who go the extra mile to be provide for and protect his natural children or those in his care. Today we say "**thanks Dad!**" Your love, care, support, counsel, protection and protection means a lot.

CELEBRATING DAD

You are all a father should be,
Loving, strong, taking care of me.
I celebrate you on this holiday;
I love you, Dad. Happy Father's Day!

By Joanna Fuchs



Rev'd Anthony Pothemon of Belize/Honduras District and daughter Ayannah



Bro. Kenute Harvey from Trinity - Anchovy, Jamaica is a father who loves the Lord and his church and the youth.



From left: Bishops Benguche, Galbraith and Simpson. Ministers of the gospel are called upon to be fathers of the flock of Christ and where necessary to father their own offspring.

CARING FOR OTHERS

The term “Church Without Walls” is the jargon that is being used to describe the present way in which the church is conducting its affairs. Within the May Pen Circuit, Jamaica District, some of what is being done includes the use of technology to broadcast Sunday Services, send reflections, words of encouragement and to hold online meetings. Online prayer meetings as well as Bible Studies is one of the circuit’s way of keeping members spiritually grounded. The church has also been reaching out to members who are not on social media to ensure that their physical and spiritual needs are being met.



As part of the caring ministry some congregations have handed out care packages to members of the church as well as others in their communities who are in need. They have also started to make cloth masks for persons who wish to have these.



We give God thanks for His continued presence, guidance and protection and we continue to be hopeful that God will see us through the difficulties our world is facing at this time.

Submitted by: Rev'd. Nichola Barrett-Glasgow, Superintendent of May in Pen Circuit in Jamaica

LOVE AND CONCERN



Acts 4:32 says the believers “**shared everything they had**” and v. 34 says “**There were no needy persons among them**”. When the numbers, needs and demands increased the twelve convened a council meeting and agreed to select seven persons who are “**full of the Spirit and wisdom**” to be responsible for the daily distribution of care packages.

A central component of Methodist ministry is the Care Fund from which needy members of the church and community are assisted with money for food items, medication, medical bills, school lunches, school books and uniforms and in other ways.

COVID-19 pandemic has stirred Methodist all across the Connexion to reach out and help the needy. Some members of the Bedford congregation, Guyana, organized a food drive for the Care Fund Members. They aimed to pack eleven hampers but the support was so overwhelming they managed twenty packages. The givers gave with willing and cheerful hearts and the receivers were gracious and deeply appreciative in receiving.



Rev'd Veron Hussey, Sis. Nerissa Lewis and Lucinda Harding as are shown preparing hampers for the needy.

SHOWING WE CARE

The Frankfield Methodist Church in South Manchester, Jamaica, has a membership of fifty-nine which includes two accredited Local Preachers and two preachers on trial and a Sunday School of thirty-eight students. Many members are farmers and some teachers who serve the Methodist School.

Though small in membership, the church has a heart for mission.

The **Church Bus Ministry** provides transportation for members and adherents to worship and related church activities.

The **Women’s League**, through it’s President, Sis Marcia Lewis-Brown, gained sponsorship from the Environmental Foundation for a Skills Training Center to provide training for members of the church and community.

The **Care Package Ministry** is in response to the needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic Sis Lewis -Brown and Rev’d Paulette Wright are busy preparing 100 packages for needy household. This was in partnership with a community member who resides in USA

Submitted by Rev'd Paulette Wright



Preparing Care Packages

RISING TO THE OCCASION

The Holland Methodist Circuit was unprepared for the COVID-19 crisis. The Circuit was in high in preparation for their 13th anniversary with the Women’s League at Rotterdam planning to prepare meals for the Ronald MacDonald House, a facility for visiting parents whose children are hospitalised at Sofia Children’s Hospital and for partnering with the Sunday School for the usual Food Bank, an ecumenical drive in Kralingen where the congregation meets were abruptly suspended.

Ministering to our members using various online platforms became necessary. Special thanks to the IT Team who have risen to the cause. The Live-streaming of Lord’s Day Worship commenced from Amsterdam on March 15. Presently it’s done from the manse at Zoetermeer. Bro. Joseph Williams travels from Amsterdam and along with Bro Glen Holaman of Rotterdam they coordinate the participation of members of both congregations, to ensure participation in corporate worship. Meanwhile sisters Alicia Schout and Theresita Bryson from Amsterdam formed small social media groups to work along with the children to ensure that Church school continued.

We give thanks for God’s sustaining grace and for all those who are making an offering of their gifts and graces for the sustaining of the ministry. We trust God as we make our plans for the resumption of community living and service in the wake of COVID-19.



Members of the Holland Circuit IT Team: From left are Joseph Williams, Glen Holaman and Tasika Richardson.

Submitted by Rev'd Dr. Joan Delsol Meade