

EASTER
EDITION

Caribbean Baptist Fellowship

CBF NOTES



CBF#BWA
SCHOOL OF
EVANGELISM

FAREWELL
PEOPLE'S
PASTOR

RESURRECTION
FACT OR
FICTION ...

TOGETHER
IN GRIEF
AND LOSS

JESUS IS RISEN

Our Mission

The Mission of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship is to encourage and facilitate the coming together of Caribbean Baptists at national and regional levels for worship and for shared witness and ministry. To this end, the CBF works to provide its member bodies with opportunities to be inspired, motivated, encouraged and equipped for service; and to be an agent through which they can pool and channel their human and financial resources towards carrying out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and expressing in word and deed the love of God for every person within the Caribbean region and beyond.



Gillian Francis, Co-editor



Santana Morris, Co-editor

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), is an island country lying within the Lesser Antilles, in the eastern Caribbean Sea. It consists of the island of St. Vincent and the northern Grenadine Islands, which stretch southward toward Grenada. The island of St. Vincent lies about 20 miles (32 km) southwest of Saint Lucia and 100 miles (160 km) west of Barbados.

It is 18 miles (30 km) long and has a maximum width of 11 miles (18 km). The larger islands of the Grenadines associated with Saint There are 32 islands and cays that make up St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Nine are inhabited, including the mainland St. Vincent and the Grenadines islands: Young Island, Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Union Island, Mayreau, Petit St Vincent and Palm Island. The stunning Tobago Cays National Marine Park is also located within SVG. This multi-island Caribbean nation offers a combination of rainforest eco-adventures, scuba diving, classic Caribbean powder-white sand beaches, luxury accommodation and yachting or sailing adventures.

Kingstown, the capital of SVG has just 17,000 inhabitants it's still more of a sleepy town, and very pleasantly walkable. Known as the 'city of arches', there's plenty of beautiful architecture to admire as you wander the streets. If you need to cool down, head to Basil's Bar in the Cobblestone Hotel for a cocktail or two.

St. Vincent is home to several volcanic beaches, with dark, sometimes black, sand that's especially striking against the pounding Atlantic surf on the island's East Coast. The Grenadines, on the other hand, have soft, white-sand beaches, surrounded by aquamarine, turquoise, and deep-blue waters.

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EDITOR'S EASTER MESSAGE

Dorrett R Campbell

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it, and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes." [Luke 19:39-42](#)

While I was watching the funeral service of our beloved Baptist Pastor, Roy James Henry, it struck me that our Lord and Saviour had no such fanfare at his burial. On the contrary he was buried like a common criminal; no doubt under the watchful eyes of Roman soldiers ...

I have often angst about the state of mind of the disciples three days after Jesus' death. They were left to pick up the pieces; they didn't know to whom to turn for comfort or how to move forward without Jesus. I imagine that each of disciple must have been locked in his own thoughts; reliving memories shared with Jesus; guilt-ridden; hiding away from the accusing eyes of others; remembering and wondering where they made the missteps as they tried to come to grips with what happened.

Meanwhile, it seemed some of the followers had separated that very afternoon. They had left the city, heading back home; feeling empty. Their conversation was sad and tinged with doubts, disappointment, and despair. Perhaps they were discussing the blazing hope that they had in Jesus; but it seemed to have fizzled out like a bamboo fire after his ignoble death.

It is while they were just lumbering along, hopeless and powerless in their grief; barely putting one foot forward that Jesus joined them. He probed their sorrow; got an insight into its cause; got them to state their hopes, their disappointments, and the rumours they had heard of his resurrection.



**WALKING IN THE POWER
OF THE Resurrection**

Jesus, the grief counsellor and comforter, gently chided them for their doubts, corrected them, then taught them from the scriptures.

The exposition was so brilliant and inspiring that re-invigorated and re-ignited, they welcomed the stranger into their home. Jesus accepted the 'invite', went in, sat down as a guest, then proceeded as host to serve the fellowship meal..

Of course, such an experience could not be kept quietly at Emmaus. The two travellers trekked the seven to eight miles back to Jerusalem immediately to confirm the good news of Jesus' resurrection. This time, their hearts and steps were light.

The conversation between Jesus and the two travellers compels us to **reflect on the powerlessness of a life not comforted by the presence of the Resurrected Lord.**

WALKING IN THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Dorrett R Campbell

Those who exist outside of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ will either ignore the signs of the times; unable to discern them or reject them or simply do not know how to interpret them; **for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God ... (1st Cor 1:18).**

The conversation also urges us to open our minds to the power and privileges we have when we live in submission to the will of Christ. Such a life has access—we commune as friend with friend

These two men were conversing with Jesus Christ, opening their minds and outpouring their hearts to him, telling him their hopes and their fears, and receiving kind, comforting and enlightening responses from Jesus.

Jesus' empathy struck a chord in their troubled hearts. This conversation was invigorating and instructive. Not only did it relieve their gloom and sadness, it cheered, revived, and filled them with burning hope; "for they said one to another, **Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?**"

The conversation also summons us to consider the purpose-driven life lived for and in the service of Christ.

We note that the two travellers' response was immediate. The moment they received the message of the good news of the resurrection and their redemption, they simply couldn't keep it to themselves. They had to return to share it with the others.

We who have surrendered our lives to the Risen Lord have experienced the power of his resurrection; must therefore run with the good news of our salvation - tell it - tell it wherever we go.

In telling the good news, we must also raise our voices against the social atrocities of this world. The prophet Isaiah (58:1) encourages us to **cry aloud, do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet and declare to my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins.**

Wherever there is social economic and physical oppression, the Church must always make its presence felt; it must stand in solidarity with the forgotten, marginalised and the displaced; and risk its reputation to ensure that the needs of the struggling and vulnerable are not ignored.

Let us not procrastinate with the good news of Christ's salvation because the time is short, and the days are dangerous.

Like the two travellers, we are to identify with Jesus' mission and walk with Him in a journey of courage, hope, and service; allowing God to use us in powerful ways.

We cannot afford to lose our connection with Jesus Christ in a time when "earth a run red". We must know Christ and make him known.

We must live in the presence and protection of Jesus Christ, walking in the power of his resurrection and living out his purpose in our resurrected lives:

- ◆ We must live and walk in constant confession with Him.
- ◆ We must live and walk in constant repentance to Him
- ◆ We must live and walk in constant praise to his name and his work through the Holy Spirit in our lives!

CBF Notes wish for you and your family a blessed and peaceful Easter, walking in the power of the Resurrected Lord.



The heart is Hope

EASTER MESSAGE OF HOPE

Dominique Dick, President

This time of the year, millions of people in the world who proclaim Christianity, turn their eyes on the historic event of Easter.

Allow me to greet you by reminding our Caribbean family what makes our strength and our reason to hope. We have faced and are still facing difficult times due to the pandemic; we hold on strong, and we keep our goal in mind.

But Easter is about victory over death and good over bad. Had it not been for the resurrection, without a doubt, no one would remember Jesus. The resurrection makes this event unique, when we believe that is God's signature, the proof of the personage absolute exceptional character.

We need an anchor in the sky. We need to stride over the suffering, cross over it. The time demands impossible things from people. We are being considered as incredible supermen; people who are

capable of surviving life's drama by our own means.

If Christianity were some sort of miracle to escape from life's hardships, everyone would have accepted it.

The heart is hope, the fundamental of the Christian life. even after hitting rock bottom, one can rise again, that is the big lesson of Good Friday.

I wish you a happy Easter, with these words of encouragement and of hope.

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Philippians 3 :16.

In our different regions, and languages, we remain united in our common destiny, which is to see the Saviour face to face.

May God bless us, while awaiting his return.



EASTER MESSAGE

Anslem Warrick, EST

STANDING TOGETHER IN GRIEF & LOSS



“These are difficult days!”

I have used and heard this phrase used numerous times over the last two years. Of course it was being used to refer to the challenges which the entire world has been going through known as the COVID-19 pandemic.

World leaders in every sphere: politicians, public and private health sectors, military and security leaders, economists, religious leaders, families who have lost loved ones and those who have survived, would have used this phrase at one time or another over the last two years. Some in weariness, others in frustration, anger and desperation.

Then in February this year as if the pandemic were not enough we witnessed a brutal military assault on Ukraine by Russia. Another super power seeking to impose its will upon a sovereign nation.

In “*Man’s Search for Meaning*”, author Viktor Frankl argues that we cannot control what happens to us in challenging circumstances. But we can – through united efforts, acceptance and search for meaning – cultivate an attitude that will enable us to find meaning in the most difficult of life’s situations.

This season of Easter should help us to cultivate hope in the midst of life’s challenges and difficulties.

New ways to provide care

What has happened as a result of our challenges is that as families and communities, we realize that we can endure the most difficult of life’s situations if we come together with one heart and one goal, to bring compassionate care to those who had suffered loss.

COVID-19, along with its lockdown and isolation rules, demanded our physical isolation. These rules and regulations truly challenged our beliefs about church, our world and our values. What we have been taught is that our connectedness to each other wherever we may be, brought us strength and hope.

We have learnt new ways to provide care and connect with loved ones. We are finding new meaning as we learn ‘wisdom in our thinking’ and ‘courage in our doing’.

And, just as Jesus entered Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday into a city in crisis, he comes offering good news, offering hope to a broken world.

Lent Brings Hope

The word Lent itself is an Old English word for the season of Spring. It’s a word that is going to mean something more real and visible for us this year as we

begin to see life and resilience come to those places, people and organizations where we thought it might never be impossible: vivid image of hope, restoration and new life.

Casting a net of compassion

Easter tells the story of Jesus entering the raw emotions of our world – becoming one with us in all of life’s experience. The interminable human spirit, the richness of what is the best in humankind, casting the net of compassion and love into the sea of a burnt, hurting, and sick world and bringing people help and hope.

Nothing is wasted. The faces, the stories, and the resilience of those we encounter are sacred. It is food for the soul to allow people’s experiences to shape who we are. Shape us in compassion and appreciation of the gift of life and those we love.

As we journey through the ‘darkness’ of Good Friday to the miraculous joy of Easter Sunday, and as we navigate this pandemic and the new war in Eastern Europe, may we find meaning in caring for and offering hope to each other, our families and communities.

A blessed and hope-filled Easter to the CBF family.



EASTER MESSAGE

Elijah Brown, BWA



IDENTITY AUTHORITY IN JESUS

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' first words after the resurrection were a call to set aside fear and to journey to Galilee where Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). In a world saturated with forces that pose as authority, Easter is a reminder that the powers of today are decisively defeated by Jesus. Easter is a call to live in the identity and authority found in Jesus in the light of eternity.

In the interim, Jesus is present with those who experience brutal and forlorn suffering as the time-constrained powers of this world rage. If there were ever a moment accurately described as God-forsaken it would be when Jesus himself "cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?')" (Matthew 27:46). In his crucifixion, Jesus identifies with the suffering of the world, and in his resurrection, Jesus demonstrates an authority of eternity that will cause the old order of things to pass away and everything to be made new (Revelation 21:4-5).

Easter is a paradoxical call to live in hope as we join Jesus in laying down our lives. At the crucifixion, two witnesses model this willingness. Joseph and Nicodemus, members of the Sanhedrin which had condemned Jesus to death in a private home with false witnesses, chose this moment of pain and injustice to identify with Jesus (John 19:38-42). As the savior of the world hung in the quiet

of the dead, it was a courageous response to publicly identify with a body left to rot on the side of a hill with the approval of the government; the approval of the religious leaders; and as the most powerful army in the world wielded the hammer. These Easter witnesses without an empty, resurrection tomb or guarantee of personal security chose to separate from the silent majority in identification with a body deemed disposable.

There are far too many bodies deemed disposable today. In the war in Ukraine, tortured bodies have been left to decompose for weeks on the side of the road or in hastily dug mass graves. In a world where 500 million have contracted COVID-19, North American and European countries hoard vaccines in the name of security while casually denying life-saving medicines. In total economic collapses in Sri Lanka, Lebanon, and Venezuela, a corrupt few somehow seem to maintain control while condemning millions to suffering and starvation.

In Nigeria, children are held for ransom, while in Myanmar, millions are refugees while the military targets its own citizens. Babies are discarded. Racist violence stretches its sinful legacy. In every city, the homeless and those who work in deep poverty for daily bread are easily ignored, or even worse, whose struggle is rationalized.

Where Jesus' crucifixion is identification with all whom have been deemed disposable, Joseph and Nicodemus are a call to serve precisely in these moments with resurrection hope.

Joseph and Nicodemus who had been secret disciples were transformed as they cared for Jesus' body and publicly gave out of their own resources. **In these acts of service, God used them in a powerful way just as God can use each one of us.**

Like Joseph and Nicodemus, we are to join Jesus in the pain and sin of this world in a journey of courage, hope, and service. Jesus is alive. We can therefore hear those first post-resurrection words and set aside our fear and journey into pain with service that proclaims with the courage that hope, peace, and resurrected new life is possible today and promised in Jesus for eternity.

This Easter, on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance - a family in 128 countries and territories proclaiming that all authority in heaven and earth is in Jesus - let us serve in the hope and courage of eternity.



BWA#CBF LAUNCHES

Dorrett Campbell, CBF



BWA#CBF



SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM

MAKING DISCIPLES TOGETHER

- The whole Church
- The whole Gospel
- The whole World

APRIL 29 - MAY 1 2022

VIRTUAL SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM

Caribbean Baptist Fellowship partnered with the Baptist World Alliance to launch its historic virtual weekend school of evangelism on Saturday 29 April under the theme, **Making Disciples Together: the whole church; the whole Gospel; the whole world.**

The week-end Virtual school was dubbed an incredible success with more than 400 persons registering and more than 200 accessing the rich material on the Whova portal.

The school provided an opportunity for member bodies to be equipped with knowledge and skills to pursue evangelism and mission within the Caribbean region.

In welcoming participants at the opening ceremony, Executive Secretary Treasurer Anslem Warrick noted that the School provided a platform on which Caribbean Baptists came together in shared objective against the backdrop of a shared history.

He expressed hope that principles taught and learnt in the school would be applied to our Caribbean context, as we demonstrate a willingness and readiness to share the gospel in our

communities and thereby increasing in effectiveness, leadership and membership.

The emphasis on the whole man, Warrick says, “reflects the conviction of Baptists that evangelism and missions must respond to the social and socio-economic needs of peoples everywhere, especially in local communities and not just a spiritual connection”.

He added that the partnership “is a recognition of God’s people who have been the beneficiaries of God’s love and graces; and our commitment to respond to the call of Christ to reach the whole man in whole world with the whole gospel”.

“We are proud to take the lead in this essential and relevant program and we hope to set the tone and pace for the other BWA regions,” Warrick concluded.

General Secretary of the BWA, Reverend Dr Elijah Brown, emphasized that every Baptist is a missionary.

up Baptists across the world who have pursued mission and evangelism relentlessly amidst extenuating circumstances.

“If God can use them, God can use you”, Brown said.

Brown urged us to pray that God would imbue us with passion for evangelism.

He referred to the great commission and expressed hope that as we lived with this mission intentionality, we would also serve with the promise that God will always be with us.

He thanked the coordinators in the CBF and urged us to continue to lean into God’s ongoing holistic mission so that God would use the Baptist family for spiritual awakening around the world.

Refer to pages 10-11 for the main address delivered by the Rev Everton Jackson at the opening ceremony.

We are grateful to the leadership of the CBF for consenting to partner with the BWA in hosting the launch of the School of Evangelism, which will be rolled out by 2024 in all the six regions of the BWA. Caribbean Baptists, you are members of a Global Family of 47 million in 126 countries and territories and 241 member bodies.

The launch of the SOE is happening at a critical time. The pandemic occasioned by the novel coronavirus and its variants, has decisively impacted the universally established notions and practices of being “church.”

Traditional means of corporate worship and fellowship, doing ministry and executing God’s mission have been radically impacted by unprecedented restrictions and lengthy lockdowns. Consequently, churches and church organizations have had to engage technology to stay connected and practise the faith as well as fulfilling the missional mandate; challenging as this has proven to be in some contexts.

The reality is, during COVID-19 and beyond, provision will have to be made for the virtual space because the church is no longer just gathered and scattered; it is also virtual. Therefore, technology must be a considered tool to aid the acceleration of God’s mission.

By God’s mission, I mean God’s redemptive purpose for the whole creation and God’s invitation to the church to cooperate with that purpose. God’s mission is therefore the task of bringing all things in heaven and earth under the Lordship of Christ as outlined in the Great Commission recorded by Matthew and Paul in Ephesians 1:10 and Colossians 1:16-17.

So then, mission is essentially integrated, and affirming the importance of evangelism and Christian Social Action, while admitting to the centrality of evangelism rather than its priority. We have been incorporated into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit to carry out God’s mission by growing the church through evangelism and discipleship, by being in the service of the world through compassion and justice and the environment through creation care.

MAKING DISCIPLES



TOGETHER

This mission requires the whole church to communicate the whole gospel to the whole world in keeping with the theme of the School of Evangelism, **“Making Disciples Together.”**

And so, given the polycentric and multidirectional nature of mission, no race, no culture, no region, no church communion can make a claim to missional monopoly because we all share a common calling, a common humanity, and a shared mission.

MISSIONAL TRENDS

As we contemplate mission today, we must consider the 21st century missional trends because mission needs a context.

On the verge of the 21st century, a summit on Baptist Mission was convened in 2000, which led to the BWA Swanwick Declaration on Mission. From that moment, the spectacular growth of the church in Asia, Africa and Latin America was noted as well as the major emerging challenge of a post-Christian culture in large parts of Europe and North America. And so, among the 21st century missional trends that we must consider are the emergence of new missional centers, urbanization, Information Technology, revolution, globalization, transport revolution, indigenization of church leadership and an increase of migrant communities among others.

Not only should we consider 21st century missional trends, but we must also contend with some staggering statistics. Of the seven billion peoples in the world, three billion or 40% of the world's population remain unreached with the Gospel of Christ. Of note, is that among those living in the 10/40 window, meaning those living in places like North Africa, the Middle East and Asia where we have the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, a staggering 90% have never heard the Gospel.

BWA#CBF SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM

And while we celebrate as Baptists numerical growth in Asia Pacific, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa, we lament the decline in membership in Europe, the Middle East, and North America in the last decade. In the case of the Caribbean, the numbers grew by 6%.

Yes, we must consider the 21st century missional trends and staggering statistics, but we cannot overlook the social ills, military tension, and global economic forces that have increased inequities that are trampling on human rights and dignity as well as environmental damage.

LEADING WITH COMPASSION

We must hear the cries for peace and justice from Ukraine and Myanmar, Afghanistan and Haiti, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Baptists everywhere must be concerned about today's instability caused by nationalism, consumerism, religious fundamentalism, and militarism.

We are called upon as Baptists to respond through the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel of Christ or word and deed. Compelled by the Great Commission, Baptists are urged to lead with a passionate commitment to Gospel witness in every place and among all. In Luke 4: 18-19, Jesus concluded that his ministry was to break the power of sin over God's people who were impoverished by sin, broken by sin, enslaved by sin, and blinded by sin.

It is the vocation of the church to share the good news of Christ for the sake of the salvation of the world and the renewal of creation. In a world groaning for restoration, it will require the whole church to communicate the whole gospel to the whole world.

EVANGELISM EMPHASIS MONTH

For this reason, the month of May has been declared by the BWA as

evangelism emphasis month, guided by the mantra, **“Every Baptist is a witness.”**

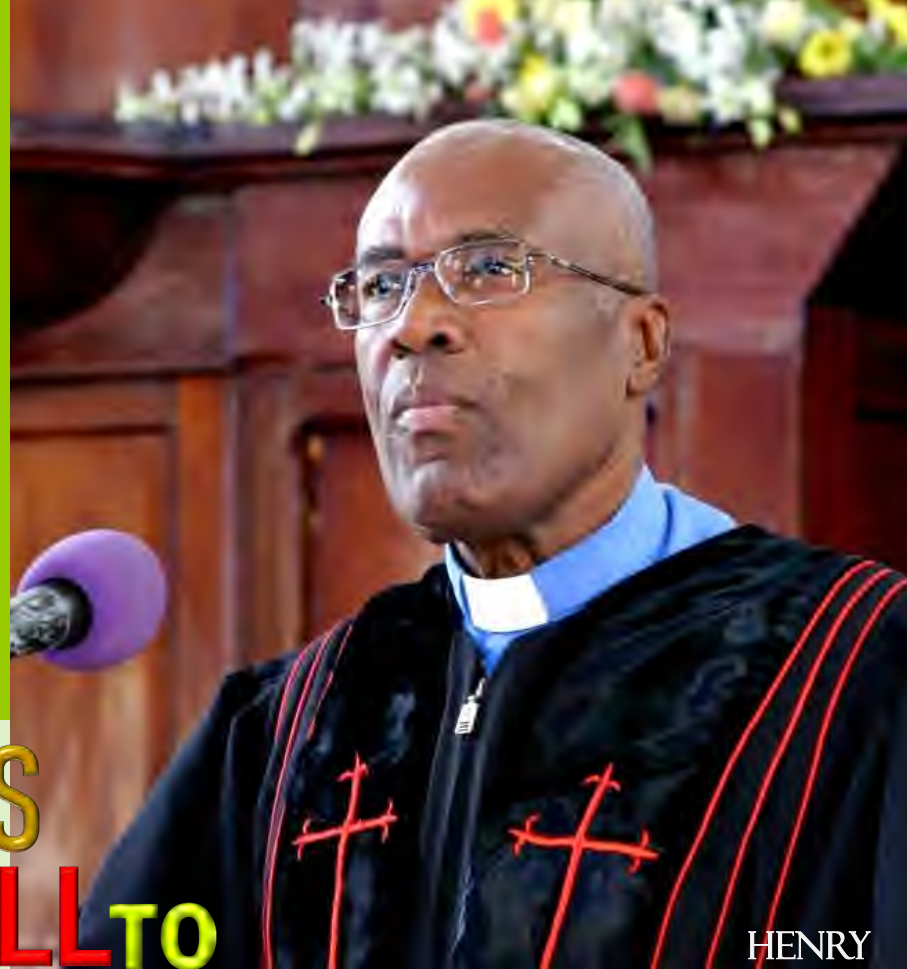
Baptists are called upon during this month to focus on united prayer and personal evangelism, lead at least one person to Christ, engage in community outreach which will all set the stage for ongoing discipleship. Through proclamation, we must speak truth to power and tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. Evil must be unmasked in high and low places and corruption unearth to create a more equitable and just society.

Yes, you are called upon to respond through proclamation but also through demonstration. By demonstration I mean acting out what is proclaimed; in other words, making real in the circumstances of God's people what it means to be transformed and liberated. The mission entrusted to the church is a mission that should not only respond to the needs of the soul but also the needs of the body. The good news that we proclaim must be translated into the transformation and liberation of God's people who are held captives.

May you find in the School of Evangelism, the impetus to get all excited to spread the Gospel of Christ in word and deed, bringing hope to the hopeless and freedom to those who feel locked in like a caged bird.



PEOPLE'S PASTOR



HENRY

The Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU) lifts her voice in gratitude to God for the life and ministry of the Rev. Dr. Roy James Henry.

JBU SAYS FAREWELL TO

REV ROY JAMES HENRY

A 1973 graduate of the United Theological College of the West Indies and the University of the West Indies, Rev Henry served the JBU for over 41 years. Ordained in 1975, he pastored two circuits - Thompson Town, for 16 years, and East Queen Street for 25 years.

As a pastor, his love and concern for the members of the churches he led, were well known. Whatever their social status, the members knew their minister cared for them and had their best interest at heart. Dr. Roy's service to these churches was characterized by humility, dedication and commitment to the honour and glory of God.

SELF-GIVING AND OTHER-REGARDING

His service to the denomination saw him giving of himself in several areas including, but not limited to the Presidency (1991-1994); Executive Committee, moderator of the Clarendon Baptist Association, Chair of the Ministerial Care Committee, Family Life Commission and Superintendent Minister - a role he played up to the time of his death.

Our brother's interest in the care and well-being of his colleagues was palpable, and it was under his chairmanship of the Ministerial Care Committee, that a policy governing how minister's who might become incapacitated in the course of our service was crafted and eventually approved.

PASSION FOR EVANGELISM

His ministry was multifaceted but if we were to highlight one area it would be his passionate commitment to the evangelistic ministry. His deepest desire was for people to come to know the salvation God offered through Jesus Christ, and he mobilized the congregations under his care to treat evangelism as a priority concern.

Dr. Roy had a concern for good order, disciplined conduct, mutuality of respect, and worked tirelessly to promote honour being given to whom honour is due. No wonder he became our go-to person for matters of protocol and unofficially became the chief protocol officer of the JBU, serving up to the time of his death.

He was very keen on promoting reconciliation and gave himself to supporting peaceful relations among people and therefore Romans 12:18 became one of his favourite scripture verses.

A TRUE ECUMENIST

A true ecumenist, he was involved in several ecumenical/church-related groups - the Jamaica Council of Churches which he served as President from (1994-1997), the Downtown Ministers Fraternal, the United Theological College of the West Indies, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, the National Religious Media Commission/LOVE FM, to name a few.

Rev. Henry brought his philosophy of service to bear on other entities as well. As one of our ministers, we were supportive of his role in Education through his service to several school boards including the Calabar High School and Calabar Primary and infant, which he chaired for many years.



JBU says FAREWELL TO THE PEOPLE'S PASTOR

Merlyn Hyde Riley, JUB, General Secretary (ag)

We celebrate the life of a wonderful human being whose joy, compassion and passion for peace, goodwill and human flourishing made him a special gift to all of us.

Other areas of service included the National Council on Education, the Joint Trade Union Council, Jamaica Medical Foundation, the Judicial Services Commission, the National Prayer Vigil and the Lay Magistrate, as Justice of the Peace.

MENTOR AND SPIRITUAL COACH

Dr. Roy's role in mentoring and spiritual direction to the wider community is worthy of note. In his youth, Roy's association with the East Queen Street Baptist Church gave him exposure to the discipline and values taught by the Uniformed Groups and Christian Endeavour Movement. In later years, as pastor of the church, he not only mentored young people who enjoyed membership in these groups, but also served as National Chaplain to the Girls' Brigade and made an outstanding contribution as a much-loved National President of the Christian Endeavour Movement.

Roy James Henry, was a man of profound spirituality, expressing himself sincerely and practically with the defining Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. He was not given to extravagant living, he served sacrificially, giving much and demanding little. His deep desire was to please his Maker and Lord and to fulfil the ministry to which God called him.

In describing our brother, a ministerial colleague declared "All this made him a servant of God worthy to be emulated, a colleague unfailingly trustworthy, a human being of utmost God given dignity".

"To all who related to him, he brought with him always, a sense that they were simply blessed to have had the opportunity to interact with him. He was a reliable bearer of God's gracious goodness, which never failed to make a wonderful difference for and to one and all".

FAMILY-CENTRIC

One could not spend time with Roy and not sense, feel and come to know and admire how much he loved and was deeply committed to his family.

Many of us knew his wife, Lorna before we met her! Vivid in our mind is Dr. Roy's departure from our meetings at certain times because 'Lorns' had to be picked up. He spoke often about the children and was an obviously smitten grandfather!

We celebrate and thank God for her- for the ways in which she supported his ministry and contributed to the joy and peace which he always exuded – and assure her of our prayers during this period of adjustment.

Memories of the Rev. Dr. Roy James Henry will forever be etched in our minds and hearts. We celebrate the life of a wonderful human being whose joy, compassion and passion for peace, goodwill and human flourishing made him a special gift to all of us.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE AT GLEN BAPTIST CHURCH

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE AND SALVATION

HATS OFF SUNDAY AT GLEN BAPTIST

2 Corinthians 5:15 *“He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”*

The death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ have played a significant role in Christendom and by extension, the Baptist Convention here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While our churches do not necessarily follow the pre-Lenten traditions of the established churches, such as mid-day prayers and worship, we definitely view this period as a time for solemn reflection of the sacrifice that was made by our Lord and Saviour.

On the morning of Good Friday, in commemoration of Christ's sacrificial death, many choose to fast from a regular breakfast and instead use cross buns and herbal tea without milk. For lunch, no meat is served in the majority of homes except for fish - particularly salted mackerel or other preserved fish.

Some churches within the Baptist Convention host Good Friday Services

while others use it as an opportunity for joint worship and fellowship with a sister church. On that day, worshippers still maintain the tradition of the past by dressing in sombre colours.

The Glen Baptist church has been hosting early morning Good Friday services for many years. There, different members are asked to read scriptures pertinent to the death of Jesus, after which hymns relating to the death of Jesus is sung. The Pastor would then deliver a message of repentance and salvation to the congregation. Members of the home church participate in the service, along with brethren from churches within the Baptist Convention and servants of God from other churches.

Our Easter Sunday services takes a different slant from the solemnity of Good Friday in that believers don their best attire and come to celebrate our Lord's resurrection. One church has dubbed this as the “Hats, Suits and Ties” Sunday as the congregation come dressed accordingly to the service. There

is a general air of celebration which culminates with the Lord's Supper. It's amazing that this activity generates such pride in our saints as we try to show appreciation of the fact that Jesus, our Lord, rose triumphantly from the grave.

On occasions our churches have culminated Easter Sunday, also called Resurrection Sunday, with water baptism: Some persons choose this as an appropriate time to show their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ in acknowledgement of 1 Peter 1:3: **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

So, we commemorate and we celebrate. It would be interesting though, to know the traditions that exist amongst other Caribbean brethren!

*Gwenette Cambridge,
President of the GBC Ladies Group Ladies in Faith Together (LIFT) Ministries.*

THE DAVID JELLEYMAN LECTURE PT2

READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

In our February Edition of the CBF Notes, we brought you Part I of the David Jelleyman Lecture delivered at the 172nd General Assembly of the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU) by the Rev Dr Stephen Jennings .

In the first part of the Lecture Jennings described and explored carefully what he considers the critical signs that we should discern, understand and to which we ought to respond : cultural development and confidence crime, corruption and COVID; climate crisis church

ineffectiveness indifference and ignorance, imperialism and interconnectedness , international colonial legacies etc

In Part II, Rev Jennings provides some practical responses to the signs he had articulated: **DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

*Stephen Jennings, PHD
24 February 2022*



So what can be done in light of all of this and specifically what can the Church do. I want to list several things that I believe the church in particular can do to impact the way this society faces.

RECOGNISING THE SITUATION AND REPENTING FROM SELF-CENTREDNESS AND SINFULNESS

The Church needs to recognize the situation and repent of sinfulness and self-centeredness. This means that we need to wake up and realize that we are living in a very critical time; not put our heads in the sand as if we are ostriches hiding out but rather to recognize the situation around us. Each day communities are breaking up, people are losing their mental balance, COVID-19 has ravaged not just people's health but education and livelihood. Crime and corruption, particularly homicide and white-collar crime, are stalking the land and are being seen in many quarters as normal.

We need to realize that Capital is driving the society and the world; not just people buying and selling and trading, it's not just regular money-making.

It's that we have a market driven, Capital economy and society that is making everything related to making money. Time, energy and right and wrong, and even relationships themselves are often subordinate or seen to be subordinate to the making of money.

We need to recognize that this is the situation and that the Church's Ministry in relation to this matter of, making money is relatively ineffective,

We're not touching these fundamental things. We're skirting around them. We need to recognize the situation and repent of self-centeredness and sinfulness that is often driving these things and turning to God for help. It's very important because a lot of these things namely crime and corruption, character and community fragmentation in a Capital-driven society is the driven by self-centredness, which in turn produces levels of sinfulness that are accumulative and in the end devastating.

People are interested in **me, myself and I**; "what I can get rather what I can give" and it seems that some people are more interested in money than in people. The love of money is replacing the love of

God.

We

need to turn away from such attitudes and actions. We will need to turn to almighty God for help, the God of Jesus Christ, we need to turn to Him and ask Him for help.

RECEIVING THE FORGIVENESS, DELIVERANCE, SALVATION, GRACE, HEALING AND HOPE FROM GOD

We need to receive the forgiveness, the deliverance, the salvation, the healing and the hope of God through Jesus Christ and seek to become renewed regularly by the Holy Spirit of Jesus. All of these words are very important; forgiveness of our sinful ways, deliverance from our self-centredness, salvation that we may be made whole with God and with ourselves and others; healing of our bodies, minds and spirits and hope for a better future.

REACTIVATING NEIGHBOURLINESS

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS AND REBUILDING COMMUNITY

Thirdly, out of that we need, as Church to restore relationships with others and to rebuild community; redoubling our efforts to rebuild community. This is crucial because let my sister my brother this is fundamental what about forgiveness. We receive deliverance, receive salvation, receive healing, hope, renewal; it's not just for ourselves. It is to help us to have renew restored relationship with others. Because the consequence of sin is that it breaks relationship or makes them superficial or manipulative or exploitative.

When we are changed and renewed, having received the salvation and the entire package from the Lord, so that by God's grace we can be restored in relationships with others. So when God's Spirit works in us, the result is what is called, in Galatians 5, the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, of joy, of peace, of patience, of kindness, of goodness, meekness and self-control. These things are not virtues in themselves but rather values and attitudes that we work out in a relationship with others. In other words, these things will help us as we relate to others. Relationships ought to be something that we pay attention to. We have to be deliberate. We have to be intentional. We start within the body of Christ, with our brothers and sisters, but we need to move out of that into families, and circles of friends and in all spheres of influence, whether at the workplace or at school or in the wider community. We all need to work to touch the wider community. The sad thing is that at the heart of so many fragmented situations in this country and elsewhere is that people don't relate well to one another. And sad to say, a number of Christians are guilty, very guilty of this kind of bad relating. We need to change. Part of that repentance and reception of salvation, and renewal by the Spirit must show itself in terms of how we relate to others and how we see, intentionally and deliberately, to be loving, kind, patient, peaceful,

deliberately aiming at rebuilding community. For again, we want to indicate that community means "community", to have oneness with others, to have healthy relationships. This leads to our observation as to what the Church can do.

REACTIVATING NEIGHBOURLINESS AND RELEASING REPARATIVE JUSTICE, MERCY AND HUMILITY

We need to reactivate neighbourliness and release reparative justice, mercy and humility into the wider society. Neighbourliness is the recognition that we should use every opportunity we have to minister to and share with the person who is in need.

The story that I have in mind is the story that Jesus told in Luke 10: 25-37 about the Good Samaritan. A Jewish man is on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho and he is nearly killed by thieves who robbed him. The priests and Levites - members of the worship team of the day - passed him by. They were Jewish and he was Jewish, but it was a Samaritan who stopped from his business to help him. The purpose of Jesus telling that story is that one of the persons from the worship team and religious leadership had asked the question about which is the greatest commandment. Jesus says you know what it is; And the man answers yes; love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And then the second one is love your neighbour as yourself. And when Jesus tells him do this and you will live, the man asks Jesus, but who is my neighbour? In the end Jesus tells him the story and then asks the man, who was neighbour to the man? Not who is my neighbour, but who was neighbour to the man. And my brothers and sisters, that is still the question we need to answer: **Who are we neighbour to? And what does it mean to be a neighbour?** The word comes from a Middle English word that means "the one that is nearby". It is not just nearby physically, but the one to whom we are nearby in affection.

In other words, who touches our heart, which person or which group of persons, or which kind of person touch our heart. Those are the persons we are called to we need to be near to, to reach out and in the name of Jesus, and because of his Spirit, as part of his church, to make a difference in the lives of such people. In so doing we now fulfil God's commands.

Therefore, we need to revisit and emphasize neighbourliness. There was a time when we were much more neighbourly as a people, before we were afflicted with corruption, crime, community and character fragmentation. If we are going to do this, we need to release reparative justice mercy and humility in the place. "Reparative" itself comes from a Latin word which means "to repair". And there are a lot of things that need to be repaired: relationships, people's economic standing, people's minds, people's social well-being, people's physical frames, people's infrastructure; so many things need to be repaired. I know that we live in a country that itself is owed reparations from those who formerly colonized us and that fight is going on. And we need more people to join the fight, but in the meantime, what can we do?

We have to release the reparations of justice, mercy and humility in our society. Many people need reparations in terms of justice, being treated fairly, for instance in terms of getting a living wage. We should be supporting an increase in the minimum wage, and while doing so, seeking to make sure that prices are not put out of the range of people, whether to purchase everyday items or to pay utilities. We also need to release the reparation of mercy, i.e. compassion to say to people the Living God cares for you, and I feel what you are feeling and I want to help repair some of the damage. So we need more people to help with counselling and deliverance so that people who are oppressed by the devil and his works can find release and relief in their time of suffering.

REVISITING THE FREE VILLAGE

Our brothers and sisters really need that urgently because especially in these COVID times, so many people have just folded under and many more are on the edge. How can we help to send someone to school; to make sure somebody eats; to make sure that people can find basic medicine? We need that even while we accept that the powers-that-be have to change economic policy so that justice can prevail, mercy should still continue.

As we do that, we should do that humbly before and with God. That's what the prophet Micah, in Micah 6 v 8, says God requires of us; to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. We should not be people who are haughty, prideful, bombastic in how we behave as if we are gods of the little tin pan variety. Rather, we should be of the God of Jesus Christ, who though He has great power and might, emptied Himself of all of that and became a servant. That's what is needed now.

We need to release reparative service so many of our people, including leaders, have become so alien from the people that they cannot be talked with, they talk down to people and whatever they say, they expect people obey without question. Their word has become law. People have given themselves all kinds of titles and expect that because God speaks through them at times, that they are gods themselves. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Jesus we follow is a Jesus who humbled Himself; washed the feet of his disciples; who fed them; who cried with them; accompany them; who listened to them; who learned from them; and who learned from others. It's time that we really follow Jesus in humility.

When we live like this, then people will know that we are his disciples, in a word because we love for that is the essence of justice, mercy and humility, which in the end will make a difference in the lives of others.

REVISITING AND REHABILITATING THE FREE VILLAGE STRATEGY

For those who might not know, or might not remember, it was the Church in Jamaica that provided a way for formerly enslaved African peoples. What the Church did, led by the Baptists and the Moravians, was to purchase all plantations or land surrounding plantations to make what they call Freedom villages. These villages consisted of small acre plots, which surrounded a central area in which a Church was built.

These free villages, as they were properly called, operated on several levels. They were economic units, where the newly freed peasant could work the land for their families and could buy, sell and trade the crops grown and be able to look after their households. In so doing, they could be economically independent of the plantation life of which they were once a part. These free villages were social units, as they helped people interact with each other without having a master or overseers present. They therefore could truly enjoy the freedom that they had been given, and fought for, without undue interference.

These free villages were political units, for they were carved out in such a way that each person or each family could have a vote in the country's parliament or assembly. So successful was this strategy that the planter class felt threatened by it and took the unprecedented decision to suspend parliament and elections until in 1839, by which time they had changed the rules so that people needed to have ten acres of land in order to vote. The planter class in effect disenfranchised the peasantry; an action which contributed to the Morant Bay Uprising and other forms of social and political protests that took place in Nineteenth Century Jamaica. The Church of that day recognized that it needed to change the political process and it had to get involved to do so.

The free village was also an educational, ideological and religious unit. Educational, because it taught people to read and write and to do arithmetic; all in the Church schools that started on Sundays and that were held in the Church buildings after worship services. It was out of that, that many of the Church schools were started with buildings being built after a while, in order to meet the growing numbers of people needing the Church's educational program. The Church played a lead role as it continues to do in the educational building of people in, and from this country, and it all started out of the free village movement. But the free village was also religious, because it emphasized not just learning to read the Bible, but meeting the God of the Bible and helping people to become followers of Jesus Christ. The Christian foundation of Jamaica continued for the next 150 years and only began to change in radical ways in the 1990s because of the impact of globalization.

The free villages were also ideological projects, because they enabled the formerly enslaved to think of themselves as free; free in Jesus and free because of Jesus and their efforts, free because the Church helped to make a difference in their lives first by helping to fight for freedom, through people like Sam Sharpe and then the fight to maintain freedom through people like George William Gordon and Paul Bogle. No wonder these villages were called Freedom Villages. Today, I think that history is largely forgotten and its significance is largely undervalued. I believe therefore it is time for us to remind ourselves of that history and not just to remember it, but to reactivate it. It is important to do so if we are going to help the fragmented communities and characters that we see around us daily. We have to have a plan. We have to have a strategy. Thankfully we have a blueprint already with the free village system.

REHABILITATING THE FREE VILLAGE

Now, it is important to recognize that we cannot exactly replicate the Free Village system; not only because time has passed, but because the context is different, radically different. The truth is that when the free villages started Jamaica was largely rural. In fact, up to the eve of Independence in 1962, Jamaica was 75% rural and 25% urban. In 1992, 30 years later it was the opposite 25% rural and 75% urban.

Update the Free Village Strategy

Now 30 years later from 1992 and 60 years later from 1962, those distinctions are largely lost, thanks to the greater connectivity that we have with one another via the concrete developments and technologies we spoke about earlier. So roads, cell phones, talk shows and television programs, internet, YouTube and social media all connect to each other so that people in the rural area can in an instant be connected with someone in town for better or for worse. And of course, not just in towns in Jamaica, but in town, cities and places all across the world. Put another way, all of Jamaica is increasingly urbanized and its mindset citified, even in the country. Meanwhile, people in cities such as Kingston, Portmore Ocho Rios and Montego Bay still want to live the country life aka natural life, as is shown in the foods they eat, or the music they listen.

So therefore, the free village strategy has to be updated. In what ways can we update this? To give a detailed outline of the strategy is beyond the scope of this lecture. But we can attempt to give the broadest of outlines. We need something that will be economically helpful, enabling persons to earn their own incomes and to be able to be independent of dominance global and local Capital. Of course, they would need to still be able to buy, sell and trade in ways that would preserve their own dignity and independence and ability to determine their own destinies.

We also need a strategy that will help

people socially, to be able to relate to one another in community in ways that will be mutually beneficial to all. Even in depressed communities, there is much mutual interaction which is helpful. But when there is persistent poverty, such interactions are often skewed and socially unhelpful. We need to find ways then to have such communities, rural and urban varieties, to enable people to be able to help their neighbour and to receive help from that neighbour. This updated free village strategy needs to have within it a political component, which really empowers people and not keep them dependent on the party, politician or on the dons.

Once upon a time, it was the Church that was a major important organization in a community, helping people to find jobs, educational opportunities and scope for upward social mobility. This role is now played by politicians of all parties and by dons and gangs. The Church needs to find ways to work with parties, with politicians and gangs for more horizontal nonpartisan approaches for human flourishing. But the Church must also be willing to work with other members of civil society in partnership for the well-being of our citizens. The Church's influence will continue to diminish. It must seek therefore to continue its role in charity, education, health and skills training at all levels. But it must go beyond these to provide liberative ways Liberty and transformative ways to affect the entire, including those who are wealthier to share more of their goods and services with others, and not mainly work with the poor.

The Church needs to tie all of these as well to the psychological, ideological and religious or the spiritual because all of these are important to a holistic ministry which we are called to exercise. So we still need to have a vision of freedom, of body, mind, spirit and economic, political and societal as our ancestors did. As we seek to bring them into God's holiness, for them wholeness, for then and therefore the religious has to be the practical, and not merely theoretical. Salvation, healing and

deliverance needs to move from people's words into people's lives, people's faith, need to affect their everyday living and vis versa. After all that is the Jesus way.

RECLAIMING THE PROPHETIC, PRIESTLY AND PASTORAL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

That leads us to talk about the need to reclaim the Prophetic, Priestly and Pastoral ministries of the Church. This is crucial, for if we are going to do something about the signs that we are reading, there is need for a certain kind of leadership, a servant leadership that nevertheless is Prophetic, Priestly and Pastoral.

By the prophetic, we mean people speaking for the Lord in the present based on the past and God's ways in the past, with a view to helping people navigate a new future. Prophecy is not merely speaking about the future, foretelling; it is speaking the truth to power in the present, forthtelling, it is saying thus saith the Lord; this is what the Lord says now. It means that every prophet and prophets together need to be aware of current events but learn to read them in light of the ways of God, especially a seen in Scripture and in the history of the church throughout the ages. We need to be familiar or so with the ways in which God has worked through the history of Caribbean people and the Caribbean Church, so that we can learn from that history in order to guide the present people into the future that God has for them.

God would have servant leaders in this time or to be priest as well, people who pray to God on behalf of the people and hear from God on behalf of the people. People who bring the people and their concerns to God and persons who brings God's concerns to other people. At their heart, priests are intercessors and those who would be prophets need to be intercessors first...

This leads us to talk about the fact that servant leadership in the Church at this time needs to be pastoral. We need to be people who care for God's people and have them in our heart. We care both for those gathered in congregations and for those scattered outside of the pale of the Church. We need to be people who rescue the perishing and care for the dying.

RECLAIMING THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

It is a great honour and privilege to be a pastor, even as it is a great burden and responsibility. And we need to take it seriously as the future of people and in a real sense, our region and its impact in the world, depends on it. My prayer is that servant leaders will recommit once again to affirm their calling in Christ. We need to be Priests, Prophets and Pastors.

REMEMBERING AND RE-MEMBERING THE GOD-GIVEN CALLING OF THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE

Our final suggestion is to remember and re-member the God-given calling of the Jamaica people. Our 60-year-old national pledge says, among other things, that we as God's Jamaican people, would pledge the love and loyalty of our hearts, the wisdom and courage of our minds and the strength and vigour of our bodies in the service of our fellow citizens. We promised to stand up for justice, brotherhood (solidarity) and peace, to work diligently and creatively, to think generously and honestly. We would do this, we said, so that Jamaica would under God increase in fellowship, beauty and prosperity and play our part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race.

That was our pledge then and it is a pledge that we repeat every year since. But do we mean it when we hear it or say it, and do we understand it as a God-given calling as a people?

It is one of the reasons that God raised us up in the Earth as a distinct people. It is critical that we understand that we are making a pledge before God and humanity. We need to understand that God hears, and others hear what we have said, and that God takes us seriously, for He says in Ecclesiastes 5:1-7, it is better not to pledge than to pledge and not keep the promise. We often say in Jamaica that a promise is a comfort to a fool, but God is no fool. He takes our promise seriously. I want to challenge us to remember the promise

that we have made and are making to God and to other people and especially in this 60th year of political independence.

We not only ought to remember this promise, but we remember, my brothers and sisters, that having promised, that we should seek to love of our people, to be loyal to them wherever we are, in Jamaica and around the world. We should seek to be wise and courageous with our minds, and to use whatever strength we have in our bodies to serve our fellow citizens; that we make and keep the promise to stand up for justice, for solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and for peace, not just within our lives, but within our society and communities.

We promise to seek to work diligently, and creatively, in ways that would be a blessing, with the God-given gifts that we have, and to work diligently and honestly and give generously. We do this so that as Jamaicans, we will enable our country and countrymen and women, to increase in beauty and fellowship, so that Jamaica will (again) be a place that people will want to come to, not run from, because of how we treat one another. Jamaica (again) would then be prosperous materially, socially and economically, psychologically, religiously, and spiritually. We will, as a result, play even more our part in making sure that the world fulfils its own promise.

My friends, all of this is a noble ideal, and because it is an ideal, we might fall short of it, but we should nevertheless aim for it. For if we aim at nothing, then we will hit it every time, but if we aim at the sky, we'll at least land on the mountains. I urge you, my brothers and sisters, in this 60th year of Jamaica's Independence, that we seek to fulfil and remember our God-given calling as Jamaican people.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Today, we have been asked by the Lord, to read the signs of the time, we have

been asked to recognize them; to understand what the present time is all about and to do what is right in it, and because of it. Reading those signs in the context of present-day Jamaica, we have seen that there are many things happening, some good, some bad.

We have seen that there is concrete construction, constructive development, uncontrolled confidence, things are being built and technology is spreading. People are more connected and there is a deeper confidence in who we are as a people in many ways; in our art, speech, looks, and different cultural forms. But with that comes a contradiction, for we, who have so much to celebrate, are people who live in a country where there is crime and corruption, particularly homicides and white-collar crimes. It is present all over, to the point that some believe it is endemic.

We have seen that Jamaica has become a Capital-Driven Society, where the making of money for a few, at the expense of everything and everyone is paramount. With that, there is a community and character fragmentation as the penetration of Capital coming into many communities; it is causing communities to break down and people themselves to lose their social connection. This is contributing to a climate crisis, where natural hazards become disasters, where the place that we live is no longer as safe and as healthy as it used to be. Even the COVID-19 pandemic itself is a part of this, both in terms of its inception, but also in its handing, in terms of how people have related to it and reacted to it.

We have seen that in all of this, the Church is relatively ineffective. Because while the Church tries to meet the social needs and the spiritual needs of people, some of the deeper political, economic, psychological and spiritual needs of people are not being met. **We asked; why was this?**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We discern that Jamaica, like many places, is reaping the legacy of international colonialism when it was subjugated for 300 years by others. And that ownership and all that was extracted has left us poorer in so many ways.

Even though we have been fairly independent for the last 60 years, we are still a part of a world where there's interconnected imperialism. Now, more than ever, we are connected one to the other, both within and outside of the societies. But we are not connected fairly, because a few still control the wealth of the world and the many are left with little or nothing. And that is mirrored in local situations. As a consequence, there is inequality and inequity; inequality because there are gaps between peoples' incomes and wealth; inequity because there is a measure where people are consistently and persistently disadvantaged by others who consistently and persistently have advantage. There's a lot of injustice and iniquity: injustice because people are treated unfairly, and iniquity because people react to their unfair treatment people unfairly themselves, as seen in criminal and corrupt activities

In reaction to this, there has led to an indifference, and indifference of great proportions, as people really don't care about others and their own needs come first, which is idolatry. They have made of their demands, their goods, their services, their achievements and new acquisitions, gods who they worship. And the Living God becomes an adjunct to that; a means to having and to keeping all of this.

People, in effect, are worshipping themselves and not believing in the Living God. We need to ask God to help us to look at that idolatry seriously because it means that there is an identity crisis. We, as people in general and the Church in particular, do not know who we are and whose we are, that we belong to the Living God through Christ by the Spirit, and that we ought to be following Him, as we will give an account to Him for the life that

we are living, individually and as the nations of the Earth.

Because of all this and reading and relating Jesus' context in the 1st century C.E. to ours in the 21st century C.E., I believe, with all my heart, that we are facing imminent judgment. But by judgment, we don't mean punishment or condemnation, catastrophe or disaster. We mean justice to mean examination; that God is taking a look at who we are, what we are about, and what we really say. Just as a teacher will be testing to see whether students are really wasting their time in their classes, so the Lord looks to see whether we're really Jesus' followers, whether we are really seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness or whether it's just about our own little fiefdom on agendas. The Lord is looking and examining. The question is whether we have come up wanting or whether we are passing the test.

Either way, there is work for us to do, for reading the signs of the time is not merely about describing or discerning. It's about doing something about what we are seeing.

In the first place, we should recognize this, recognize the situation, and repent of our self-centeredness, which results in accumulative sinfulness. Secondly, we need to receive the forgiveness and the deliverance from bondage, salvation that makes us whole, the healing that gives us strength, and wisdom and the hope of a better future. All of these are promised from God through Christ, and we can all be renewed day by day by the Holy Spirit of Jesus so that we can become more and receive more that which God would have us to be and to do and to possess.

Out of that, we need to ask God to help us to restore relationships with others, as we seek to relate to them through the Spirit in more loving, kind, patient, self-control, meek, good and helpful ways, that will in turn rebuild community, that would make us more unified, more whole and more together, to counter the character and community fragmentation which is prevalent today.

God is calling us to exhibit the spirit of neighbourliness, to get connected to those who are in need, to draw near to them, and to help to minister to them. We do this by helping to release reparative justice, mercy and humility, to repair the damage that so many people have experienced because of the years of living in an oppressive system.

We, therefore, need to treat people fairly and to make sure that they are treated fairly, singularly and collectively, and through personal interactions as well as public policies. We ought to seek to exercise mercy and compassion for people just as we ourselves need mercy from God. People are not perfect, sometimes they are simple and downright wicked, but if they turn and if they are in need, then mercy should be extended. We therefore should act justly and compassionately, in humility with our God, remembering that we are not gods; we are creatures of God, servants of God and we too will have to give an account to God for our lives.

We being called to notice that we need to, at the bigger level, the wider level, the deeper level, revisit the free village strategy. We seek at one and the same time to find economic, social, political, educational, psychological, ideological and religious ways to have people to be free; free from oppression, for people to determine their own lives under God, and free to live to the full potential as human beings and as communities. To do so, would require us reclaiming the prophetic, priestly and pastoral ministries of the Church. That is, there is the need for revisiting of the role of those who are servant leaders in the Church and in community, for it was on this that the backbone of the Church and the country was built. It is that which is called for now. But we have to remember that we are not to lord it over people, but rather assist and help them to be all that God called them to be.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF DADA AND MAMA JENNINGS

In the end, we see that God is calling us to remember and re-member the God-given calling of the Caribbean peoples of which we are part, to live the life that we should so that Jamaica may under God increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity and play her part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race.

TO THOSE ON WHOSE SHOULDERS I RISE

Earlier I thanked the JBU for giving me the privilege to present this lecture in the name of the Reverend David Jelleyman, who was one of my teachers in seminary in 1983-84 during his final year there as Baptist Tutor. What I didn't mention was that he was not only my teacher, but he also taught my dad as well. He was my dad's lecturer at Calabar College (an antecedent seminary of UTCWI) from 1957 to 1961. When Dad graduated from college, he became my father's colleague and, along with Mrs. Jelleyman, good

friends of both my parents. Dad and Mom went on to become outstanding ministers of the gospel, Dad as a Pastor, Mom as a Nurse.

Dad was not just an outstanding pastor, but an outstanding parent. He was the one who taught me and my siblings to read, and the first book we learned to read from was the Bible. He was- as one descended from fisherfolk- the one who taught me how to read the weather, to discern the signs of the time in the weather patterns. He was the one who taught me to play dominoes and to learn how to read the game. Often, when I had the domino pieces in my hand for a while, he would say to me "Don't just read the game, son: do something!"

From him, I owe the perspective that *analysis* ought to be matched by *action*. I thank him for being the first to teach me how to understand this text of Jesus and how to read

the Bible with one hand, and to read the news- through newspapers, radio, television, social media and the conversations of ordinary people - with the other hand.

Dad died in 2021, a few days after celebrating his 60th Anniversary as an ordained minister of the Jamaica Baptist Church, while Mom passed a few years ago. This year, 2022, they would have celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary, a few days before Jamaica would be celebrating its 60th Anniversary of Independence. I dedicate this lecture, not just to memory of the Jelleymans, but also to memory of my parents. I hope that they would be proud of it, and I pray that you would have been helped by it.

God bless you all and thank you.

THE RESURRECTION: FACT OR FICTION?

Clinton Chisholm, Theologian, Journalist and author

CBF VIEWS

AND MUSE

The event of the resurrection is very well documented in Scripture, but many have advanced theories to explain it away, to prove that it is fictitious.

Our young people and adults who are studying at the upper secondary and tertiary levels have to deal with teachers and friends who will raise these issues with them. In fact, if you witness to thinking people today you will face these issues.

STOLEN BODY THEORY (John 19:39-40)

This was reported in Mt. 28. 13 as coming from the Chief Priests and Elders and the theory was in circulation as late as AD 150. There are problems of motive and means with all versions of this theory.

What motive and means would the disciples have had for stealing the body of Jesus?

When Jesus died, they were a defeated, cowardly, frustrated set of men. Would they risk a Roman guard to take away the dead body of Jesus? To do what with it?

Can you imagine Peter, who didn't believe Jesus could die, who denied him while he was still alive, risking his life for a dead man?

The disciples had neither motive nor the means to steal the body. The disciples were no A-Team or mission impossible squad, they could not have pulled off that one.

Modify the theory and say that the Jews stole the body, and you have

more problems of motive because the Jews were the ones who in Mt. 27. 62-66, insisted that the guard be placed so nobody could remove the body.

Could Pilate or the Romans have stolen the body? To what end?

If the stolen body theory is true, why didn't someone simply produce or reveal the body and silence the resurrection preachers? The stolen body theory could not hold up in a court of law. It is manifestly weak.

THE WRONG TOMB THEORY

The argument here is as simple as it is silly - it says, the women who claimed that the tomb was empty went to the wrong tomb.

Well, did every follower of Jesus forget the location of the tomb in just three days - specially the women mentioned in Lk. 23.55 who checked out where he was buried so they could anoint his body later?

Did the disciples who ran to the tomb upon hearing from the women also go to the wrong tomb?

The wrong tomb theory sounds plausible until you remember one troublesome little fact about where Jesus was buried. Jesus was not buried in a public cemetery but in a private tomb. (Mt. 27: 57-60). The wrong tomb theory could not hold up in a court of law. It is fraught with problems.

THE SWOON THEORY (John 19. 39-40)



The claim here is that Jesus did not really die but simply fainted or swooned on the cross and revived in the coolness of the tomb.

We must notice as well, they argue, that Pilate in Mk. 15. 44 was surprised that Jesus was already dead when Jesus' body was requested for burial!

There are serious problems here. First, Pilate ensured from the centurion that Jesus was in fact dead. The spear thrust into Jesus' side certified that.

A team of medical practitioners in 1986 published a paper in the Journal of the American Medical Association "On the Physical Death of Jesus" in which they concluded that it was impossible for Jesus to have survived the brutalities of his crucifixion (see <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/403315>)

Joseph and Nicodemus, who handled Jesus body would have known if he was not dead and would not have bound him with spices for burial.

THE RESURRECTION: FACT OR FICTION?

Clinton Chisholm, Theologian, Journalist and author

CBF VIEWS

AND MUSE

But assume Jesus really swooned and was not dead on the cross. Imagine a badly battered, bloody, weak man, in a cold tomb, without food or water and medical care for three days, getting up out of a mummy-like wrap of spices ...

He would have to be pushing away the stone from the inside, beating off or escaping a Roman guard, walking miles on wounded bare feet and telling his disciples that he was raised from the dead? **Can you even imagine that?**

To believe the swoon theory requires more faith than the biblical account of the resurrection. The swoon theory could not hold up in a court of law. It is manifestly weak.

THE HALLUCINATION THEORY (1 Cor. 15:6)

This theory seeks to gainsay the post-death appearances of Jesus. In short, the theory claims that the disciples did not really see Jesus but thought they saw Jesus, they were 'seeing things', they were hallucinating.

We have major problems with this theory because, apart from drug-induced ones, hallucinations are restricted in terms of when, where and to whom they occur.

Usually, they happen in a place with a nostalgic atmosphere and at a time when a person is in a mood of reflection, is reminiscing and thus predisposed to seeing what is seen. Usually as well hallucinations happen only in certain kinds of individuals - those who are highly

strung emotionally, nervous, highly imaginative and most importantly, expectant of what they say they have seen.

Jesus appeared to women and men alike. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15.6 that he appeared to some 500 at once and some of them were still around. Group hallucinations are not known in medical history.

Consider the tough rationalist Thomas who would not even trust the words of his colleagues - 'unless I see him for myself and put my hands in his wounds I will not at all believe he is alive'.

What do you do with the learned anti-Christian Saul of Tarsus who killed to silence the foolishness of Jesus as Messiah?

Neither Mary nor any of Jesus' disciples expected Jesus to rise from the dead. Mary took aromatic oils to anoint the dead body of Jesus. Jesus had to tell the disciples when he appeared to them that he was not a ghost. There was nothing in their Jewish belief-system to make them expect resurrection in this life. In the next life, yes, but not in this life.

The hallucination theory could not hold up in a court of law. It is shot through with weaknesses.

THE TWIN-BROTHER THEORY

The argument is that Jesus had a previously unknown twin brother who mysteriously resurfaced after Jesus' death and passed off himself as the resurrected Jesus. Like Swiss cheese this theory has too many



holes and is too convenient to be taken seriously. Would you believe a modern university conferred a doctorate on the clown who came up with this theory?

Mothers especially would have little difficulties refuting this theory.

Any theory that seeks to counter the resurrection must have explanatory power (adequately explaining) and explanatory scope (breadth of coverage) in making sense beyond reasonable doubt of all of the following; the empty tomb, the post-death appearances of Jesus, the radical transformation of the apostles, the origin and early rapid growth of the church **in Jerusalem**, and the movement of a predominantly Jewish group of Christians away from fundamental markers of Judaism like worshipping exclusively on the Sabbath and obedience to the Mosaic Law.

Only the resurrection of Jesus adequately explains all these issues.



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