



UCJCI UPDATE

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THE UNITED CHURCH IN
JAMAICA AND THE
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Congregational
Disciples of Christ and
Presbyterian

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OUR VISION: *“Touching
lives, Nurturing Disciples,
Seeking Transformation
through Christ.”*

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PRAY FOR:

Rev. Dr. Adlyn White, whose husband Vesta White has passed.



CWM'S Gen Sec CONNECTS WITH THE YOUTH



Rev. Dr. Cowan and the youth

Keeping in tune with the pulse of our member churches”. This is how Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan, the General Secretary of Council for World Mission (CWM), described the purpose of his recent visit to the Caribbean. Dr. Cowan routinely connects with various groups seeking opportunities to hear what is on the heart of CWM members. He noted that although the Caribbean is the smallest region of CWM, some outstanding leaders have come from this region. He said “UCJCI has contributed to the shaping of CWM through the sharing of people and ideas.”

At a gathering of UCJCI members at a town hall meeting at Shirley Retreat Hotel a question was posed to the General Secretary – **“How does the Caribbean as a region which sees itself as Christian engage in evangelism with a multi-religion world?”**. Dr. Cowan responded that Jesus called into being a community which would offer an alternative to the systems of domination and corruption. He noted that ‘we were not called to nurture institution but to be salt and light’ and if that understanding is embraced then the Church would find opportunity for conversations and actions which declare the good news of God, the news of justice and peace in partnership with other faiths. Another concern

raised was the reality of **economic distress in rural parts of Jamaica**. One participant noted that after preaching the Word people get excited but then have to go back to situations of economic deprivation. **There is need for economic empowerment.**

In his time of connecting with youth **the need for relationship was highlighted by them**. In response to Dr. Cowan’s question, **‘How can we improve relationship?’** there came a powerful declaration. One youngster noted that he wanted greater **cross-generational communication** and interaction but “we don’t want a hostile takeover, we want genuine fellowship”. He stated that very often when adults venture into the space of youth it is **to tell them what to do rather than to listen**. The gathering of over 60 young people from the Cluster 4 grouping of churches in **North Eastern Regional Mission Council** at Duke Street United Church were very forthcoming in expressing their views.

CELEBRATING...

Last Sunday, our Church, The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), celebrated 'Union Sunday'. It was a day in which member congregations were encouraged to reflect on our history as a Church and how we came to be united.

In an interview with UCJCI General Secretary, **Rev. Norbert Stephens** during our Church's programme United in Faith (UNIF), Rev Stephens traced the history of the Church and how its three antecedents, the **Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Disciples of Christ** came together to form the United Church of which we are now a part.

Our journey towards a United Church, he pointed out, began as far back as 1880. At that time, a first attempt was made to join the then Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Churches in Jamaica.

The Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, had by that time, had a history of some **80 years**, having been established in Jamaica through the work of the Scottish Missionary Society. It was not until **1824**, however that work had been undertaken on a large scale on the sugar estates, thereby benefitting in terms of its growth, with emancipation in 1838, when some 300,000 slaves were freed. **Ten years later, the first synod was held.**

The Congregational Churches in Jamaica, were formed through the activities of the **London Missionary Society from 1834.** Financial challenges, led to an appeal to the Congregational Union of England and Wales and to the International

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Congregational Council for assistance, which led to growth and the formation of the Congregational Union in Jamaica in **1877.**

The first complete step in the union between these two churches was made on **1st December 1965** when the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica and the Congregational Union of Jamaica became one Church, the **United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman .**

Twenty seven years later, in a historic ceremony, held on the grounds of Sabina Park in Kingston Jamaica, on **December 13, 1992**, the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman joined with the **Disciples of Christ in Jamaica**, which came out of the United States of America and which began in Jamaica in 1839.

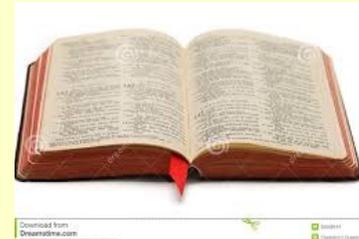
This union resulted in the formation of the **United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)**

The union of these three Churches is depicted in the logo which is today used to represent the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI).



The Cross unites all three Churches that came together (Presbyterian, Congregationalists and Disciples of Christ,) to form the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI). **It acknowledges Jesus as the Head of the Church.**

The Open Bible represents the centrality of the Word of God. This was a significant feature of the logo of the **Congregational Church.**



The Chalice/Cup; represents Christ's death and resurrection; the symbol used by the **Disciples of Christ (DOC)** **Its slogan was: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; In all things, charity."**



The Burning Bush, "burnt, but not consumed", represents the perpetual flame of the Gospel, and is the symbol of the **Presbyterian Church.**



The Sea is symbolic of the Church in two nations; Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, witnessing across **the Caribbean Sea**, but not confined to the boundaries of the shores of the Caribbean. So today all Congregations in the Union are referred to individually as a **member of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. (UCJCI).— Celebrate the Union!**