

Lloyd & Elaine Cook

Serving the Lord in Jamaica



VIRUS, VICTORS AND OUR VICTORIOUS GOD.

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But, as believers in Christ, and in confidence in our God's omniscience and divine purposes, we are heeding His oft repeated consolation throughout the Bible to "Be not afraid," and "when ye see these things beginning to come to pass look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." At our church service yesterday, the less than twenty of us present changed the service into a time of prayers and encouragement of the God who is in charge, and desires us to encourage each other, and those without strong confidence in Him, to put our trust and confidence in Him who is never taken by surprise. We believe that before long "this too shall pass", with many persons coming to recognize their need to "seek the Lord while He may be found" and to "Call upon Him while He is near" and "make their calling and election sure" 2 Peter 1:10.

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Lloyd & Elaine Cooke continued.....

PRAYER REQUESTS

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- Pray for our Government to make the wise decisions and choices for us to see an end to the fear and uncertainties of our population.
- Thank God for the culture of religiosity here in Jamaica, and that it will cause our people to turn to the Lord for His help and deliverance.
- Pray for the many who have lost jobs or businesses that depend on our Tourist Industry, which has been so badly affected, with many hotels closing down due to lack of visitors.
- Help us pray for Various Jamaican missionaries serving in a number of African and other Caribbean countries, for their protection and preservation.
- For a close missionary/pastor friend who takes visits to a number of Southern African countries each year about this time; he desires wisdom from the Lord as he prays about these upcoming trips, when he takes others with him to conduct seminars, coach believers how to use sports as a ministry; and as he teaches Kenyans, Ugandans, and South Africans about their family responsibilities to “Bless their Children” with their biblical Paternal blessings.
- His mother, whom he leaves alone for four months or longer, as she faced some health issues recently.
- For Elaine’s grand-nephew, who grew up with us from the age of ten to young adulthood, who is now a Chef on a Cruise ship of older American passengers, who has been in the Southern Atlantic and Pacific oceans for a while now. Pray for his protection and that he would deepen his faith in the Lord and in His Word during this time of uncertainties.
- Thank God with us for the very good health that we are in, except for a few controlled “old age issues:” as Elaine tries to keep her Cholesterol level; and her mild High blood pressure and some heart issues under control. She does usually take her medication.
- Pray that in these our “Increasing years” we may daily have the faith to overcome the lies of Satan; when our age, aches and pains may not lead to fears, anxieties and restlessness. And that depressive thoughts and fears may not become depressions.
- Lloyd is marking a final exam and Term Papers for a small class he just finished teaching at the Graduate School on “Caribbean Church History.” His high Cholesterol situation is nearly under control, and he has reduced the level of statin drugs he used to take.
- But Lloyd has occasional Insomnia, as he sometimes paces the floor of the spare room during a part of the nights. This time is usually spent in prayer for every person and situation the Lord brings to his mind. He is sometimes sleep deprived, but manages to do quite well.
- Pray too for the Bible College and Graduate school students that he interacts with in the courses he teaches.

A NOTE FROM ELAINE

In our observations of what is happening around us, two words come to mind: “Times and Seasons.” Just two months ago, in January, our children in their beautiful uniforms headed back to school, and Elaine and her team through the “Wait and Win” program, were able to lead some of them to the Lord. Then came the month of February and it was ‘Harvest time’ in some of our churches. In one Methodist church the theme was “Harvesting Souls: the Fruit of Good Discipleship.” It brought great joy to our hearts to see the young people from six (6) Primary and High Schools participating in the service.

Now it is the month of March and COVID 19 is with us. This is the time when we are reminded that all the nations are under the control of God and God alone;

- This is the season of heightened prayer for the nations.
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“What is happening with You?” Is a common question to ask someone you haven’t seen in a while?

That is a question we have been getting a lot of lately. This is due to our recent circumstances: Lloyd having a mild operation for enlarged prostate a week ago; also because of the Covid-19 virus which Jamaica is facing, just like you are facing in the US, Europe and in other Caribbean countries; because Wednesday the 27th is Lloyd’s 78th birthday. All of these situations cause us to consider our health and our human mortality. We seek to keep “...our minds stayed on Thee, because (we) he trusteth in Thee.” (Isa. 26:3, and look up Psa.119:165) We are trying to keep trusting in the Lord, and to pay more attention to what we are ‘BEING’ rather than what we are ‘DOING’. But, what indeed do missionaries do (or BECOME) at the age of 78 and beyond?

DOING: Because of the COVID_19 pandemic, we here in Jamaica have been doing much the same things being done in other nations: we are counting how many are infected, how many have died, and how many have recovered and returned home. In Jamaica we have had “552 cases, nine deaths and 211 recoveries.” These numbers may seem small, and we thank God it is not worse, for a country with a population of just over 2.7 million where we all know everybody’s business, this daily focus on the numbers of sick, living and dead can cause much gloom and depression. No longer are we saying “Jamaica, No problem, Man!”

Our government has done a tremendous job of keeping control and reporting to the people on a daily basis all that is happening. It has even instituted a financial ‘CARE’ package to help persons and businesses that have been negatively affected, as was done in the US. All schools are closed down since March, and as graduation time comes around the College where Lloyd lectures will be having a ‘Virtual’ graduation.

Elaine’s outreach into Elementary and High Schools with her medical/moral talks to discourage early sexual activity, “Wait & Win” (similar to Southern Baptists’ “True Love Waits”) is also on hold; as is her ministry in the government remedial education program where she and her church gives financial, practical and motivational encouragement and help on a weekly basis. We look forward to the return to normal school activities when the school year begins after the summer vacation in September.

BEING: As mentioned earlier, we find that we are not DOING as much as we used to in ministry, but we seem to more focused on BEING, as we try to influence new converts, and ‘not yet mature believers’ to develop themselves spiritually in order to attract others to seek after the Lord in salvation and service. As a result we have few numbers to share, in terms of persons saved and converts discipled. We often work more with the few, rather than the many. So our ministries are now more of teaching and encouraging. There are also many who seem attracted to us for counsel, and so we find ourselves sharing of our past activities to encourage and inspire.

What we definitely are not ever going to consider is retirement. For one thing we are home in our own land. What would we do? Just sit down and do nothing? We have already seen the world, within the will of God. We thank you for having become our partners in prayer and financial support. We seek to BE all that God still wants us to BE, so that we can draw others closer to the Lord, until he shall call us home to be with Him in glory!

We trust that these do not seem like morbid thoughts, they are not meant to be. But we just wanted to share with you, our friends and family, that life is intended to be a preparation for the eternal future which God wants us to spend with Him, throughout all of eternity. So, while we await that time of ‘transfer’, let us do all we can to help others prepare and come to KNOW the Lord; and to fall in love with Him, and so become loving worshippers of Him in eternity in His presence.

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Dear Family and Friends,

March 2020

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Yours lovingly and thankfully in Christ,

Lloyd & Elaine

A Ministry of Harvest International, Inc.

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SUCH A TIME AS THIS!

As I am writing this, I am also watching the Franklyn Graham led Prayer March 2020 taking place at the Washington Mall, as they are presently praying at the fourth of seven locations. They are at the National Museum of Human History and Cultural Understanding. Daryl Strawberry and Dr. Alveda King are praying for America and for racial understanding. We join with you our friends and relatives both in Jamaica and in the United States for God's intervention in these difficult times. We seek His intervention for peace and for racial equality. Both our nations need His working in hearts and lives everywhere. We Believe God!

We still face the dangers and fears of the Covid-19 virus. Here in Jamaica we have had 77 deaths out of a total of 5600 persons who have tested positive. So far, our government has spent \$5.6 billion (US\$39,163) since March for testing, protective equipment for medical personnel, as well as for quarantined housing (in hotels, which were closed) for Jamaicans who had returned from working on cruise ships and unable to return home. One of those was Elaine's grand-nephew whom we had been brought up in our home for more than ten years while he finished school and was trained in food preparation. He has been privileged to work in some of Jamaica's great hotels before getting a job on a Norwegian cruise ship. This job took him on the Pacific Ocean to as far as Australia and New Zealand. He is back home, after quarantining at the government's expense.

Jamaica has just set up a field-hospital, which is a gift from the US government. We need to purchase two others shortly to house other Covid-19 sick patients. Children who have been out of school since March were getting ready to return to schools in early October. But, due to objections from the teacher's union, it has been decided there will be no face-to-face teaching in October. They are now preparing to do so by viral means. A problem they have is that many rural parts have no Wi-Fi service; others do not have tablets or other connectivity. We are facing similar situations as you in North America.

Health-wise we are very fortunate to have no particular old-age medical issues, thank God. Only Lloyd has his difficulties with insomnia. He has sought every way he knows to get relief, short of sleeping pills. In October he will be doing a diagnostic colonoscopy. The cost is not too expensive, so Elaine feels it will help to find out why Lloyd doesn't put on eight.

Another change that has been brought on by the Covid-19 virus is the method of teaching for the new College/School year. All classes are being taught on-line. This semester he is teaching Evangelism, Discipleship and Church Growth. Lloyd has had a particular problem using the Learning Management System. He has needed to have his tech-assistant with him to take care of any problems. This has been at some cost to him. But he has had two weeks of good lessons with the 20 students. All the lecturers face the same problems with varying degree of difficulties. Pray for Lloyd greatly: he needs it.

Our churches have likewise had to adjust. Most summer ministries were greatly affected. Some churches were closed down and some are still having virtual services, with many missing the face-to-face fellowship. Fortunately, our government has not asked us not to sing at our services, though we do observe all the other conditions in our services. Funerals have been specially affected, with only fifteen persons allowed at internments, inclusive of the ministers and mortuary helpers. Jamaicans love our funerals, and don't appreciate being restricted in any way while putting away their dead. Not to mention our party goers who give the Police problems each weekend, despite curfew beginning at 9:00 p.m.

Hurricanes have not been problematic to us this season. We have been fortunate as most storms have taken a more northerly path this season, giving the Caribbean area little reason for concern, thank God. We are glad that Haiti and Puerto Rico has not been affected so far this year.

Like our North American friends, Jamaica has faced parliamentary elections in early September. Without absentee balloting, the turnout was reduced. The party in government was returned with a surprisingly large majority. It was conducted under Covid-19 conditions which meant very little public campaigning. This made it quite peaceful. We thank God for the results and pray that the new government members and cabinet will do a good job, absent of the usual corruption accusations. Pray with and for us. Soon after the elections, a leading political activist of the last 50 years passed away. He was recently affected by the epidemic. His passing will greatly affect the future of his political party.

Pray for Lloyd as he seeks to complete his historical research and writing the one hundred year history of his denominational movement. Much financial aid will be needed toward the publication. He is hoping to find financial sponsorship from a number of local sources. Do pray that this will be taken care of soon.

Recent telephone calls from two different sources about wanting to develop technological platforms to get Lloyd's two missions books to public use in local churches, seem promising. Do pray as we try to get both of these sources to work together to get the stories out to our Christian public, to encourage greater missions' activities. This has come about as a surprise to us. We would love to see God using these books to get more interest and involvement in missions throughout the Caribbean churches. This would be a new area of service for him. May God guide Lloyd to know how much time and involvement he can wisely give to this.

We are watching the political actions and reactions taking place in the United States. The whole world is affected positively or negatively by what happens in the States. May righteousness ever rule, and God's people discern what God is doing as well as what Satan is doing to destroy the foundations of that country's founding principles. May Godly people know how to vote so that God's will is done.

We thank God for the faithfulness of those who stand with us by financial support. We depend greatly upon their prayers and provision of our every need. God is at work within us as we make ourselves submissive to God's will in our lives and ministries. May God always get the glory! Keep us in your prayers, please.

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Dear Family and Friends,

April 2020

THOUGHTS ABOUT CORONOA-19, DROUGHT AND OUR HEALTH

I am sure that, like us, you are tired of hearing the name CORONA VIRUS, or COVID-19. We wish we could turn off all the talk: it is so depressive! It has gotten under our skin, like a tick that we cannot reach to remove.

Many persons depend on 'Science' so much that they easily believe the extreme numbers and predictions of the great number of victims that should succumb to the Virus. Because they believe the extreme numbers they lose hope. While we do not ignore the possibilities, we are naturally people of hope because we are children of God and so never lose hope, despite the sense of gloom and doom all around us. We face the future with confidence, because we KNOW that our God is in charge.

Though our God sits in heaven yet He rules on the earth, over nations, and in the affairs of men and nations. We believe, and look towards the day when He will lift the gloom and let us see into His purposes for allowing this "shaking of all the foundations." We trust that people would turn their hearts towards God, consider their frail humanity, and seek His face in humility. We believe that our heavenly Father, who in nearly every contact between the human and the divine we see in the Scriptures, comforted humans with the declaration "Do not be afraid," "Trust in God!" or "Cast your care upon the Lord, for 'He cares for you!'" As we turn our eyes upon Him we are filled with confidence and hope, because we know that our Heavenly Father is in charge, and has not lost any of His power.

CORONA VIRUS

Our government here in Jamaica, led by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health and Wellness have been given plaudits, even from the Miami Herald newspaper, for their sensible and sensitive handling of the Corona Virus, Covid-19. So far there has been testing about 200 persons a day, but recently they have increased to be able to test up to 350 daily. We have tested just under 3000 persons with 370 confirmed cases, 28 recovered cases and 6 deaths. Twelve percent of persons we have been able to test have been positive. Many persons are under quarantine, some at home and others in government facilities.

Jamaica was among the first nations to cut travel to and from China – despite our large population of indigenous Chinese (since 1854), - and the Chinese government workers here doing highway financing and construction, and other construction projects.

Our much fancied Tourism, which is the greatest foreign-exchange earner, is a shamble of its former self. Most of our hotel, transportation and attraction workers are out of jobs, and this weekend the national news focus was on the effect on our farmers and egg producers of the loss of markets to the hotels. The Cruise-ship piers are shut, as is the flight industry, since our entry ports and airports are closed to all passenger traffic. We have even had to copy the U.S. financial measures to help businesses and workers with financial assistance to tide over workers and businesses with much needed economic assistance. But we do not have the deep pockets to draw from as in the United States. But we try!

While Elaine and I have not been deeply affected in our finances by this, Elaine's family has been affected health-wise, as her younger brother who lives in Queens, New York, contracted the virus, and was taken to the hospital needing treatment. He was

hospitalized, requested and was treated with the malarial drug hydroxychloroquine. He has since recovered and returned home. His daughter, younger sister, and nieces took care of all arrangements for his care. These are all believing relatives, who also spoke to his spiritual needs. We thank God for His mercies towards him, and are praying for the Lord to draw him closer and minister salvation to him. Pray!

Please also pray for our daughter, Eleanor Gail, who is on the front lines of this pandemic, as she is a P.A. (Physician's Assistant) at a hospital in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is ever on our heart for her protection, and that of her family.

DROUGHT!

The island is once again going through its annual dry season. Since the New Year there has been little or no rain, even in our wettest parishes (counties). Here in the mountainous central regions of Jamaica, we have been more fortunate than most, but the early showers are long behind us. Weather reports today give hope for showers within the next three days, and we hope the weatherman is more correct than his prediction for similar showers today. We have had to be harvesting our bath waters to sprinkle the grass and fruit trees, which had begun to show wilting leaves. This keeps us busy, but also keeps us healthy. Work is for our good!

HEALTH

Our health has been very good, considering our increasing age. We have little of the usual 'elderly' diseases, and try to eat healthy. But, Lloyd is bothered by insomnia, since he started taking Statin drugs to control his high Cholesterol since 2007. He is frustrated with not being able to find long-term help. Some nights he paces the floor for hours, before getting some early-morning rest. Years later he was found to have enlarged Prostate, which has been kept under control with prescribed tablets. However, the frequent need to awaken for the bathroom at nights, only adds to the insomnia problems. Recently, he has been having hindered flows which has necessitated the input of a catheter and bag. This is problematic, and he is considering a simple operation to 'scrape out' the inside of the prostate. The cost will be relatively low, but he requests your prayers for the financial supply and for a successful operation. We are hoping to have this done within a number of weeks.

Elaine's elevated blood pressure, and slight cardiac problems are generally under good control! She is deeply involved with her children and youth work. The outreach which she leads at her church to the needy students of the government HEART TRUST Training program is on pause, due to the closing of all schools in Jamaica because of the Corona Virus pandemic. But, continue to hold the students in your prayers.

Occasionally the deep dark shadows of the winter of life creep up upon us. But we then turn to the expressions of Job that "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!" and "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that at the last day He shall stand upon the earth. And that after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall see and not another." (Job.19:25-27)

We praise God for each one of you! And rejoice in your faithful financial and prayer support over these many years. Most of you have been doing this for the past twenty years, since our return to missionary work here in our native Jamaica. You are indispensable to our service here! We could not do it without your faithfulness. Be assured that your reward is sure.

Yours in service to our Lord,

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DO NOT FEAR, THERE IS BETTER ON BEFORE!

Christmas is upon us, as we face with you all the FEAR that seems to envelope our world. But the first Christmas occurred in a somewhat similar situation, and God's answer to the darkness that overshadowed Israel (the Northern Kingdom) at that time was the sending of His Son, Jesus 'the Light of the world'.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isa. 9:2) "...that was the true Light which gives light to every man... coming into the world." (John 1:9+)

As believers in Christ we can face unknown eventualities because we have His promise "I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." So, we will not bow to fear!

COVID-19 in JAMAICA

The Covid-19 news from Jamaica is not much better, in terms of averages, than that coming to us from the USA and from Europe. With a national population of just under three million citizens we presently our national numbers says that we have had nearly 12, 000 infections, with 3010 active cases, 279 deaths, 112 in hospitals with 9 being in critical condition.

Like you we watch the evening news with hesitation, and often wonder why the media seems to be always hyping the numbers. Fortunately, we have had no other family members here in Jamaica or 'abroad' coming down positive with the virus, praise God! Elaine remarked that, as we sit down listening to the news "with uncertainty and gloom, the Lord brought to my mind the lines from Charles Wesley's hymn "Light and Life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings." The Christian's Christmas hope is good all the year long.

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Health - Neither Lloyd nor Elaine have any persistent health issues. We praise God for this. Yes, we do face increasing and annoying pains here and there. But no chronic diseases, thank God. Elaine is concerned that Lloyd seems to lose his memory and become confused about issues more than normal. A recent occurrence was while we were playing our favorite board game Scrabble, on a Friday evening.

In addition to the Prostate and Hi-cholesterol blood tests Lloyd does regularly, he recently did an EKG and a brain scan. All his tests have been positive. His Prostate test was very good, but this was expected since he had surgery for this six months ago and is off all medication for this. Only the Brain scan he has not gotten the results on, as he has not yet been back to his doctor to whom the results were sent. But, he is under some pressure as he has to do on-line grading of a test his Regent College students did on the 15th. There are also Term Papers that accompany this Exam.

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We thank our gracious God for your many years of concern for us and your prayers for us and our ministries. May the JOY of Christmas be your constant companion and comfort into the New Year.

Lloyd & Elaine Cooke

-serving the Lord in

Jamaica



Dear Family and Friends,

June 2020

“What is happening with You?” Is a common question to ask someone you haven’t seen in a while?

That is a question we have been getting a lot of lately. This is due to our recent circumstances: Lloyd having a mild operation for enlarged prostate a week ago; also because of the Covid-19 virus which Jamaica is facing, just like you are facing in the US, Europe and in other Caribbean countries; because Wednesday the 27th is Lloyd’s 78th birthday. All of these situations cause us to consider our health and our human mortality. We seek to keep “...our minds stayed on Thee, because (we) he trusteth in Thee.” (Isa. 26:3, and look up Psa.119:165) We are trying to keep trusting in the Lord, and to pay more attention to what we are ‘BEING’ rather than what we are ‘DOING’. But, what indeed do missionaries do (or BECOME) at the age of 78 and beyond?

DOING: Because of the COVID_19 pandemic, we here in Jamaica have been doing much the same things being done in other nations: we are counting how many are infected, how many have died, and how many have recovered and returned home. In Jamaica we have had “552 cases, nine deaths and 211 recoveries.” These numbers may seem small, and we thank God it is not worse, for a country with a population of just over 2.7 million where we all know everybody’s business, this daily focus on the numbers of sick, living and dead can cause much gloom and depression. No longer are we saying “Jamaica, No problem, Man!”

Our government has done a tremendous job of keeping control and reporting to the people on a daily basis all that is happening. It has even instituted a financial ‘CARE’ package to help persons and businesses that have been negatively affected, as was done in the US. All schools are closed down since March, and as graduation time comes around the College where Lloyd lectures will be having a ‘Virtual’ graduation.

Elaine’s outreach into Elementary and High Schools with her medical/moral talks to discourage early sexual activity, “Wait & Win” (similar to Southern Baptists’ “True Love Waits”) is also on hold; as is her ministry in the government remedial education program where she and her church gives financial, practical and motivational encouragement and help on a weekly basis. We look forward to the return to normal school activities when the school year begins after the summer vacation in September.

BEING: As mentioned earlier, we find that we are not DOING as much as we used to in ministry, but we seem to more focused on BEING, as we try to influence new converts, and 'not yet mature believers' to develop themselves spiritually in order to attract others to seek after the Lord in salvation and service. As a result we have few numbers to share, in terms of persons saved and converts discipled. We often work more with the few, rather than the many. So our ministries are now more of teaching and encouraging. There are also many who seem attracted to us for counsel, and so we find ourselves sharing of our past activities to encourage and inspire.

What we definitely are not ever going to consider is retirement. For one thing we are home in our own land. What would we do? Just sit down and do nothing? We have already seen the world, within the will of God. We thank you for having become our partners in prayer and financial support. We seek to BE all that God still wants us to BE, so that we can draw others closer to the Lord, until he shall call us home to be with Him in glory!

We trust that these do not seem like morbid thoughts, they are not meant to be. But we just wanted to share with you, our friends and family, that life is intended to be a preparation for the eternal future which God wants us to spend with Him, throughout all of eternity. So, while we await that time of 'transfer', let us do all we can to help others prepare and come to KNOW the Lord; and to fall in love with Him, and so become loving worshippers of Him in eternity in His presence.

Yours, appreciating your love and fellowship in Christ,

Yours in service to our Lord,

Lloyd & Elaine

Lloyd & Elaine Cooke

-serving the Lord in

Jamaica



August 2020

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES: OF JAMAICA'S DELIVERANCE FROM SLAVERY & POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

This week in Jamaica is focussed on Public Holidays: Abolition (deliverance) from 307 years of British Slavery, and our 58th anniversary of political Independence from Britain. Many national festivities are taking place including Christian services, linked with the political observations. The Church, and various missionaries, did much to bring about the former; and its influences and national input helped to accomplish the latter.

On Sunday last I preached on the Church's influence on both, and quoted from a missionary's record of the events and reactions of "Abolition Day" 162 years ago. Here is a part of what I quoted"

"August 1st 1838...became for the slaves, the date of 'Full Free'. The records are numerous and profuse with descriptions of how the former slaves received the day. If the scenes of four years previous, at the beginning of the limited freedom of Apprenticeship system had been glorious, these were no less so. From early evening on the 31st of July, they began gathering in the Churches and chapels across the island, awaiting the freedom hour, and throughout the day, in services of prayer and thanksgiving, they poured out their gratitude first to God, then to the missionaries and to their new Queen in England, Victoria, for the boon of freedom that had been won. J. M. Phillippo, Baptist missionary from Spanish Town, gives a detailed account of the day's happenings at his church.

"On the evening of the day preceding that which witnessed the actual bestowment of the inestimable boon on the apprentices of Jamaica, the towns and missionary stations throughout the island were crowded with people ...who, filling the different places of worship, remained in some instances performing different acts of devotion until the day of liberty dawned, when they saluted it with the most joyous acclaim; others, before and after similar services, dispersed themselves ... through the towns and villages singing the national anthem and devotional hymns, occasionally rending the air with their acclamations of 'Freedom's come;' 'We're free; we're free; our wives and our children are free.'

On the following day [Sunday] the places o' worship were thrown open, and crowded almost to suffocation; in many instances even the whole premises of a missionary establishment were occupied . Sermons were preached applicable to the event , devout thanksgiving to Almighty God at the throne of grace, mingled with songs of praise, ascended to Heaven from every part of the land. ...The whole Island exhibited a state of joyous excitement as though miraculously chastened and regulated by the hallowed influences of religion.

Some of those newly emancipated former slaves went on to become missionaries to the people of the countries from which they were taken. Since then many others, like us, went as missionaries to many other countries in Africa, South and Central America; South America, and as far as to China. Today we are back in Jamaica helping to prepare young Jamaicans to become Pastors, Children Workers, and new missionaries to replace the older group that are coming back home, or being called to our heavenly home.

As those who have been delivered from our sins into the freedom of Christ we are seeking to fulfill the commission that Paul had received from the Lord "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me." Acts 26:18. We are daily seeking to be used of God to help "open the eyes of the blind, and 'lead people from darkness to light,... that they may receive

forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith' in Jesus Christ.

The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically altered our usual activities, particularly camps, and Daily Vacation Bible Schools. Many churches are just getting back to regular services, after seven weeks or more of no meetings with more than 20 persons. Like you we have had to adjust to social distancing, and the wearing of masks when we go into public places. But, Elaine has been helping in VBS which meet for only 3 days a week; she has been meeting a small group on her porch to teach them remedial reading and improve their maths skills. Virtual services by Facebook or on Zoom is still being activated by some churches and denominations. Nevertheless, there is still the desire to 'return to normal.'

As we celebrate delivery from slavery and our island's Independence, we rejoice in our deliverance from sins and seek not so much to enjoy our 'Independence' from God, but instead to draw closer to Him and declare our 'dependence' through which God can fill us with the Holy Spirit's power to offer people their emancipation from sins: and new spiritual freedom. That is our whole purpose these days.

Even as we celebrate our Island's freedom and political Independence, we are mindful of the worldwide devastation caused by Covid-19, the deaths and grief, loneliness and fear; yet, many hearts have been turning to Him, and many doors of opportunity opened for the Gospel to go forth. May we be faithful in pointing as many as we can to Him, the only true HOPE.

PRAY:

- In Jamaica we may be headed for a general election in a matter of weeks, to choose a new government for the next five years. Do pray with us for wisdom to find God's choice; as we similarly pray with you for His choice in November. God often works in mysterious (sometimes in mischievous ways) His wonders to perform.
- That both we in the Caribbean and you in North America would not have to face too many Storms, and Hurricanes this season. We are observing Tropical Storm Isaias as it goes up through the Carolinas and into other states. We pray that our daughter and her family in the Raleigh area would come through this safely.
- That we would be successful in reopening the Tourist season, which is so crucial to the economy of both Jamaica and the other Caribbean countries.
- For Elaine's grand-nephew who is back home from his job as a Chef on a Cruise-ship line. Pray too that he would be able to return in October, as they plan to do.
- For God's help for us to guide two young people to grow in Christ as we disciple them.
- For family members whom we are believing God to lead into a new and deeply loving salvation relationship with Christ, not just into church membership.
- That the Church in the US may face honestly the racial inequalities that are far too manifest in our US churches. That they may dare to reach out and meet new cross-racial friends, and so really become the multi-cultural/racial body of Christ.

PRAISE GOD:

- For His daily blessings that we experience. Despite our increased years we have very few ailments.
- Lloyd has recovered quite well from the Prostate procedure done during May, his birth month.
- That Elaine has had good results concerning her high blood pressure, heart palpitations and low pulse problems.
- For the children who come to the home for teaching by her.
- For the opportunities to help neighbors who come for us to help them with many needs.
- For two young people that Lloyd has been able to lead to salvation recently; and that he may be looking out for others whose hearts may be open for salvation.
- For the comforting and certain HOPE we have in Christ, in these days of fear and uncertainty about the future.

Thanks for your prayers for us and your supply of our financial needs. You will share with us in God's rewards on that great day.

Lovingly in Christ,

Lloyd & Elaine Cooke

A Ministry of Harvest International, Inc.

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Lloyd & Elaine Cooke

Serving the Lord in Jamaica

December 2020

CLOUDY DAYS, BUT THE SUN STILL SHINES!

The summer storms have not attacked us this year, thanks be to God. Nevertheless, we have had many cloudy days, especially when storms Delta and Zeta, which both started close to us, dumped much rain on our shores, before becoming hurricane and going on to devastate the New Orleans and Louisiana area of the U.S. Jamaica has recently endured over a week of continuous showers which have filled all our gullies, streams and rivers. Many areas have had landslips which have closed many roads, flooded some housing areas, and disadvantaged many homeowners. The Government has had to find an estimated three billion Jamaican dollars which was not anticipated in the annual budget.

The Covid-19 pandemic is still affecting us negatively: though the government has done a pretty good job of managing the virus medically, culturally and economically. Out of a population of 2.7 million, we have so far seen 8927 persons infected, with many recovered and back home. One hundred and nine are still in hospitals, with four of those in critical condition, and 202 have died from complications associated with the disease. We thank God as a nation for His mercies, and His goodness towards us, but we suffer with those of you who may have lost relatives, friends and associates. We trust that their faith and dependence was put in the Lord our God, and that any you lost has gone into His presence for eternal rest. Our prayers are with you!

Our Jamaican schools and Colleges have been affected by the virus, just as it has where you are. Even elementary schools are utilizing 'ZOOM' and other on-line systems to have teaching/learning done on-line. A big problem that this has shown up is the lack of computers, tablets, phones and others equipment for each student to use. Most families cannot afford one piece for each child; others have Wi-Fi issues because of the rural areas where they reside, as well as loss of electricity problems that is a common feature of our Jamaican scene. Just yesterday the Ministry of Education had to make a decision to open some schools again for face-to-face learning.

Family-wise, we are doing well 'all things considered.' Elaine has not been able to continue most of her children and youth ministries, nor get into the schools for her sexual/spiritual awareness classes. Lloyd has had a number of diagnostic tests recently, the most recent being a Colonoscopy a couple weeks ago. He is very well for his seventy eight years, though he is often told that he is doing too much. Sleeping at night is sometimes a problem, but he tries to avoid using prescription drugs to help him sleep. He needs to get accustomed to going to his bed earlier. Pray with/for him.

We praise the Lord that Elaine's grand-nephew, who lived with us for over ten years, is back in Jamaica because his job as a Chef with a Norwegian cruise ship line in the Pacific has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He came back to stay with us while he waits for a soon recall to his ship, and has gotten an interim job nearby. We praise the Lord for the maturity we have seen in him, and pray for his spiritual growth.

Lloyd's granddaughter celebrated her eighteenth (18) birthday a couple weeks ago, and is looking forward to her first vote in the election for President. She is also trying to decide which of the many colleges to decide to enter after the summer coming up. Her parents are helping her make that decision. Since she resides in the North Carolina ? Triangle,

it is likely she will attend one of the many Universities that are within driving distance from home. We pray she will seek/receive the Lord's divine guidance on the matter. We doubt she will want to be too far away from her dear younger brother whom she mothers a lot.

We thank God for His goodness to us over our decades of missionary service. God has given us a good life, as we have both been privileged to serve as missionaries in the Eastern Caribbean and in Africa. Lloyd still preaches a missionary message once each month, and we help to support a number of Jamaican and other Caribbean missionaries.

Lloyd will be working with two local Missions leaders to record short video presentations based on persons and information from his two Missions history books that can be used in churches. Do please pray with us that we choose the right case studies, and do a good technical job which will glorify the Lord while informing and motivating young people to consider a life of missionary service.

Yours in loving service to our Savior,

Lloyd & Elaine Cooke



Lloyd & Elaine Cooke

Serving the Lord in Jamaica

December 2020

DO NOT FEAR, THERE IS BETTER ON BEFORE!

Christmas is upon us, as we face with you all the FEAR that seems to envelope our world. But the first Christmas occurred in a somewhat similar situation, and God's answer to the darkness that overshadowed Israel (the Northern Kingdom) at that time was the sending of His Son, Jesus 'the Light of the world'.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isa. 9:2) "...that was the true Light which gives light to every man... coming into the world." (John 1:9+)

As believers in Christ we can face unknown eventualities because we have His promise "I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." So, we will not bow to fear!

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