

Urbana 2015 Seminar Session

The Challenges and Opportunities of the Church in the English (Anglo) Caribbean

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The English Caribbean



The English Caribbean

- There are 10 independent English Speaking Islands
 1. Antigua and Barbuda
 2. The Bahamas
 3. Barbados
 4. Dominica
 5. Grenada
 6. Jamaica
 7. Saint Kitts and Nevis
 8. Saint Lucia
 9. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
 10. Trinidad and Tobago

The English Caribbean

- There are two countries known as Mainland Caribbean countries:
- Belize
- Guyana

There are 5 British Overseas Territories

- Anguilla
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Montserrat
- Turks and Caicos Islands

The History of Caribbean

- Christianity came to the Caribbean with Christopher Columbus in 1492
- This began the Spanish Conquest of Caribbean
- The first set of missionaries were Catholic
- The British Colonisation of several islands began in 1612
- Piracy in the Caribbean widespread 1500 to 1830

The History of Caribbean

- The original people –Amerindian Indigenous peoples lived on the island
- Colonial Conquest
- European Battles/Wars
- Slavery/Slave rebellions
- Economic exploitation
- Independence (1962- 1983)

Christianity in the Caribbean Today

- European missionaries from Catholic and Protestant forms have made their mark across the region
- Christianity is the dominant religion of the region
- 59% Catholic
- 25% Protestant
- 14% Afro-Caribbean Religions
- 1% Hindu
- 1% Islam
- 1% Judaism

Challenges of the Church

1. Deepening Social Crisis
 - Many countries have high debt burden
 - Highly export-dependent economies
 - Very vulnerable to external conditions of trade
 - Vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, and volcanic activities
 - Massive Earthquake hit Haiti in 2010 and killed over 100,000 people.
 - High levels of crime and violence

Challenges of the Church

- High levels of unemployment and underemployment
- Growing human trafficking
- Growing production and trafficking of illegal drugs
- Second largest area in the world for the spread of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- HIV/AIDS one of the leading causes of death among people aged 25 to 44, caused 27,000 deaths in 2006 and 11,000 in 2007.

Challenges of the Church

2. Persistent Poverty

- Despite poverty reduction strategies by state and para-state agencies
- There has been improvement in living standards for some but most live below poverty level
- Belief system, values, attitudes, and social practises contribute to poverty

Challenges of the Church

3. People's Participation

- Post-independence politics has failed to deliver expected benefits
- People have lost faith in political leaders and their own society
- The rate of external migration is extremely high
- Migration has caused negative effect on Caribbean Family

Challenges of the Church

4. Decline of Biblical and Theological Reflection

- Church attendance in the Caribbean can be described as above average, but the impact of the gospel is less visible
- Confidence in the gospel is reducing
- There are shifts in contemporary Caribbean values, marked by importation of external values, principally from North America.
- Increased secularization and de-Christianization are extremely noticeable
- There is a reduction in Biblical and theological reflection

Opportunities of the Church

1. Mission to Children and Youth

- Children and Youth (age 0-18) make up 50% of Caribbean population
- Many are at risk to exploitation, neglect, and trafficking, they need help and protection

Other opportunities exist in areas such as:

- ✓ Child Health
- ✓ Child Poverty
- ✓ Child Justice
- ✓ Child Evangelism
- ✓ Early Childhood Education
- ✓ Special Education for Children with Disability

Opportunities of the Church

2. Mission to Care for God's Creation/Environmental Missions

- Work can be done with local churches and NGOs
- Advocate for proper human settlements/better shelter policy for the poor
- Support poverty alleviation projects
- Advocate for responsible eco-tourism industry

Opportunities of the Church

3. Church Planting Mission

Even though many churches exist, there is much room for church planting in the Caribbean today.

- Church planting should be mindful of the historical context
- Church planting and growth emerge from a deeply embedded prayer movement
- Effective church planting occur where there is a strong emphasis on biblical preaching, a strong witnessing and evangelistic ministry

Opportunities of the Church

- Church planting require entrepreneurial leadership with an air for flexibility and innovation
- Should have ability to respond to socio-economic needs of the working class poor and the marginalized in society.
- Strong focus on ministry to children and families
- Investment is needed in technology and communication media

Opportunities of the Church

4. Participation and develop of Short-term and Long-term Missions
 - Opportunities North American Church and local churches in community Projects
 - Partnership of overseas and local Student Ministries to conduct short cross-cultural initiatives
 - Opportunities for partnership in enhancing camping and missions activities



THANK YOU

Questions ???