

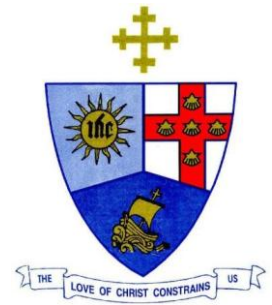


The MCCA Women's Seminar 2020: A ground-breaking event

Towards the end of July, I was delighted to be able to join others for the first ever online seminar for women of the MCCA.

'Women of God Called to Proclaim: Serving God during COVID-19'

with sub-theme, **'CARE: Christ for All Reach Everyone.'**



Hosted by their MCCA Unit President, Dr Lois Grant-Hector, and Mrs Sherraine Galbraith, wife of the Connexional Bishop of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, it brought together women from many parts of the Caribbean in a two-day event packed with worship, bible study, and workshops. A linked business meeting was successful in electing new officers. Greetings were brought by Bishop Galbraith, Area President Dr Sandra Gadson and myself. There were about a dozen panellists and around 200 attendees, who were encouraged to post comments and questions on the 'chat' or 'Q and A' Zoom facility.

Opening devotions were led by women of the South Caribbean District including a reflection by Sis. Marcelia Nelson on Matthew 28: 19-20 'The Great Commission'. The President led us in a memorial of those who had died since their last assembly in 2015 and gave an excellent report with PPT on developments in the MCCA over recent times. Carolyn Reynolds gave an interesting presentation on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality stimulating discussion afterwards about how to support women whose livelihoods have been lost due to the pandemic. Professor Barbara Bailey, the first Vice-President of MCCA Women (1980-1985), urged us to make use of the CEDAW declaration* and to use it as a study guide.

Sherraine Galbraith taught us about 'Netiquette' a word that was new to me but useful in identifying appropriate behaviour for internet usage. She drew on the assembly sub-theme of 'CARE' urging us to be **Considerate, Alert, Respectful and Encouraging**.

The following day, opening devotions came from the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos women with a reflection on Philippians 3:4-14.

Ms Chenee Riley, a lawyer from Jamaica, outlined our rights and responsibilities in a presentation entitled 'You and the Law in a time of COVID-19'. She helped us understand the sacrifices we might make in being a good neighbour in the light of the story of the Good Samaritan and the sacrifice of Jesus who sacrificed his rights and freedoms for the greater good of the world.

Rev'd Jeanette James from the Leeward Islands led a bible study 'Caring for each other' showing that to be a source of hope to others we need to have a good relationship with Jesus Christ and be empowered by the Holy Spirit. By using the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 we may bear the fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5.

Rev'd Emily Demerritt from the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos District urged us to strengthen our Methodist system of class groups established by John Wesley to ensure growth in discipleship. Her PowerPoint presentation will be useful to me as I encourage my own church to look again at this worthwhile method of 'watching over one another in love,' to support and encourage one another in our lives with God, particularly in this period of forced isolation for many.

Sis. Carla Boyce-Smith, former World Secretary (2011-2016) from Panama, urged us to have fun and stay healthy through recreation, online exercises and games. Other MCCA women provided further worthwhile sessions on our response to COVID-19, not described here, but all appreciated by those who could stay online.

I was mightily proud of the MCCA women who had found the courage to produce such a ground breaking event and to do so with such grace and commitment. I hope their excellent presentations will be made widely available.

* (**CEDAW**), The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.