

CGI Jamaica Hosts Historic Leadership Conference

by Glenford Smith

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The leadership corps of the Jamaican CGI, spearheaded by Pastor Ian Boyne, met for a special symposium on Sunday, June 13, 2010 in the Blue Mahoe Room, at the lovely Courtleigh Hotel, prominently situated in the heart of corporate Jamaica's headquarters, New Kingston. In an atmosphere permeated by a spirit of relaxed camaraderie mixed with focused intensity, Pastor Boyne directed a memorable day of fellowship, food, discussions and prayer.

While the discussions were led primarily by the chairman, the format of the meeting facilitated group participation which included comments, questions, and brief debates. The major themes of the congress included the importance of trust, implications of being a church leader, and how to work together more effectively.

The meeting commenced at 11.15 a.m. I offered the opening prayer, after which the chairman outlined the scope and objectives of the meeting. From the outset, the chairman clarified that the meeting was primarily about relationship building rather than day-to-day operational church matters. This deliberately chosen focus was based on Pastor Boyne's own leadership philosophy which elevates the importance of mission-oriented, trust based relationships over brilliant strategic planning. The best operational and strategic initiatives are guaranteed to fail in any organization if leaders don't trust and respect one another, or have the ability to put the organization's mission above individual interests and inevitable interpersonal differences.

Relationships are the most important thing, Mr. Boyne stressed, as great ideas will not work if people don't have the desire to stay and work together. Good relationships among leaders actually prevent many problems, and make it easier to resolve those that do occur. Everyone is unique, with his or her own strengths and weaknesses, interests and proclivities, but knowledge of one another enables leaders to work with one another's strengths rather than dismissing one another based upon weaknesses. So far, this approach has been largely responsible for his success in leading and growing the Jamaican work, he noted.

It was unwise to take past results for granted and become complacent however, as Satan was relentless about finding new ways of distracting leaders, destroying relationships and derailing the church's mission. Proverbs cautioned

that the prudent person sees evil from afar and hides him- or herself while the simple pass on and are punished, hence the need to look ahead and build strong relationships based upon trust, respect and a Christ-centered commitment to the church's mission.

Mr. Boyne expressed his sincere thanks for the respect, love and support he has received from everyone generally. He also acknowledged the sacrifice made by all 19 persons present, which comprised deacons and deaconesses from the Kingston and Spanish Town congregations as well as representatives from the youth ministry leadership who received special invitations. Special recognition was also given to Mr. Orion Brown, recently appointed as Administrative Assistant to Pastor Boyne.

In dealing with the main objectives of the conference, Mr. Boyne showed how important trust is among leaders, and gave instances in the recent history of the Church of God to demonstrate his points. He also explicated the connection between trust and character.

One of the main implications of being a church leader is the call to prioritize the church's mission above personal interests and selfish ambitions. Mr. Boyne explored this theme by referencing the examples of Paul (Acts 20.18—31; 21.8—14), Timothy (Philippians 2.19—21), and Peter (John 21.15—19).

Putting the welfare of the church as primary included being responsible as family leaders, providers and nurturers; becoming aware of personal weaknesses and vulnerabilities that could distract and eventually destroy; making decisions with the awareness of how these will affect one's capacity to lead and serve God's Church effectively, including decisions about careers, associations, place of residence, and marriage.

In order to work together more effectively Mr. Boyne identified the following factors as being of great importance: understanding one another, discipline, courage in expressing disagreements forthrightly and honestly, and impeccable confidentiality.

The session closed with prayers being offered by several persons followed by the singing of the song "Bind us together." The meeting was dismissed at 5.15 p.m.