



The South Caribbean District of The Methodist Church in The Caribbean & The Americas



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Brothers and Sisters,

To all God's children called Methodists in the Southern Caribbean and New York, USA; Grace, peace and love from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was, who is and who ever shall be. Amen!

Delegates of the 196th District Conference converged at The Methodist Church Complex, Kingstown in the beautiful, lush, tropical paradise of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. There, we received and were encouraged by news of the wonderful ways in which God is moving in His Church throughout the Sub-region. Circuits have been very positive in their reports regarding progress in developing a prayer culture and their being able to accomplish the objectives of the strategic goal of spiritual growth and development. Circuits have been actively engaged in chaplaincy to educational institutions, mission and outreach to the wider communities and creative ways of sharing the gospel as we encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and growth to Christian perfection. It was also celebratory that all but two of the Circuits were up-to-date in their assessments to the District and the District being up-to-date with its assessment to the Connexion as at the 31 Aug 2017 having also cleared its 1992-2008 indebtedness of EC \$888,000.

The District continues its conversation on reorganization, confident that our prayerful pursuit will reap a new, dynamic and vibrant Methodist Church in the South Caribbean District. One which is more equipped to navigate the challenges of our wider society, while being an agent of transformation.

We were very mindful of the myriad trials that face our people, and the challenging times in which we live. We have been very concerned about the growing prevalence of crime and violence in many of our islands prompting further questions about the nature and scope our youth ministry. In light of the economic, social and cultural difficulties we face, including high unemployment, political divisiveness, and a society often focused on consumerism and individualism, the call of God to be salt and light is even more urgent and demands that we consider whether or not the Church ought to take greater responsibility for the healing of the moral and spiritual fabric of our society.

During this Conference we witnessed the ordination of Reverends M. Filanese Sanon and Al Walcott to



the sacred ministry as Presbyters of the Methodist Church at a dynamic service at the historic Kingstown Methodist Church. On that occasion the resounding echo of the congregation “He/She is Worthy” embodied the expectation of the wider church that they will function with a deep sense of call, ‘feeding the sheep and not eating them’. We are confident that they will endeavour always to live holy lives and remain faithful to their ordination vows.

We accepted Sis. Tene Joseph from the North Trinidad Circuit for training as a Deacon (Evangelist), and Sis. Hassan Matthews Wickham from the Georgetown/Mt Coke Circuit for training as a Local Presbyter. We ask your prayers for both sisters that as they begin this new and exciting journey, He who began this work in them will be faithful to finish it.

This Conference was the last for Rev. Dr. Cuthbert Edwards in his capacity as District President/Bishop. After ten (10) years in this office we must acknowledge that his was a leadership that was bold and visionary, seeking to navigate uncharted territories and negotiate many challenges. His new station to the Thomas Memorial Wesleyan Methodist Church in Harlem, USA is especially significant as we formalize that relationship and manage a new and critical real estate development. His tenure will also involve furthering the conversation with two other burgeoning congregations to ascertain what the future holds for our New York Circuit.

The Rev. Derick A. Richards was elected to the office of President/Bishop for the South Caribbean District for the next triennium. This appointment was especially significant since he is one of the youngest persons to hold that office in this District and was so elected in the very circuit from which he candidated eighteen (18) years ago. We are confident that he has the gifts, graces, temperament and spiritual maturity to lead the District at such a time as this, along with the support of the ministerial colleagues and lay leadership of the District. We are even more confident that God’s grace is sufficient for him.

As we have been reflecting over the events of the past year, and look forward to the progress of the coming year, we are reminded of how precious you are to God and to the Methodist Church. Without your continued service and sacrifice we will not be able to fulfil our theme of being renewed in Christ with a commitment to shaping a new Caribbean.

We take this opportunity to celebrate with those who have experienced joys and successes and we pledge our prayers and support for those who have been bereaved or have experienced some kind of hurt. In all things, we know in whom we believe and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day.

More than properties and programmes, our greatest concern ought to be our surrender, faithfulness and humility before the Lord. We must resist all temptations of worldliness and falsehood, along with the temptation towards a spirituality that is superficial and spurious, while pursuing an authentic, informed, grounded and



passionate relationship with the Lord. Purity, devotion, and sacrificial service must be priority with our preachers, teachers, officers, and members being men and women of highest devotion and spiritual integrity!

Many have laboured faithfully for the Lord and sacrificed much in His service. We thank God for our youth and young adults who even in the midst of great academic demands are unswerving in the commitment to the Lord, for many of our men and women whose willingness to serve has seen them discovering gifts and abilities which they never knew existed. We thank God for our children whose life and innocence, cry and laughter bring a freshness to our worship and a deep sense of responsibility for their nurture and care.

For those who are asleep or have lost their way, awake out of your spiritual slumber! Stop your wanderings and return to your Lord! Follow Him as His loyal disciple. We, as a church, have much work to do for His glory. We have a high calling from God to fulfil and only if we are spiritually renewed, revived and reinforced, can we fulfil all the works that God has called us to accomplish. Therefore, let us humbly seek Him, “expecting great things from God and attempting great things for God”. We end with the promise of God in Jeremiah 33:3 – ***“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.”***

