

CBE NOTES



MAGAZINE

March-April 2023

10 year
Global strategy
for BWA

HISTORYMAKER
MERLYN

EST MISSION
to Guadeloupe

EASTER MESSAGES
From Member Bodies

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Our Mission

The Mission of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship is to encourage and facilitate the coming together of Caribbean Baptists at national and regional levels for worship and for shared witness and ministry. To this end, the CBF works to provide its member bodies with opportunities to be inspired, motivated, encouraged and equipped for service; and to be an agent through which they can pool and channel their human and financial resources towards carrying out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and expressing in word and deed the love of God for every person within the Caribbean region and beyond.



Gillian Francis, Co-editor



Jolene Henley, Admin Services

The **St. Vincent Baptist Convention** was established in 1987 and currently comprises seven churches at various stages of development. Our Baptist membership has traversed many crossroads, hills and valleys and now stands at 1,777 with 830 active in-house members.

Three churches are in the rural community (Deliverance, Sandy Bay, Overland); one in the capital (Kingstown); two in the outskirts (Glen and New Creation) and one on a Grenadine Island (Union Island).

We are a small island of 150 square miles with a population of 110,295 (2021) and the SVBC churches are but a tiny spec on the denominational landscape; but together, we continue to make an impact via our strong media presence, reaching thousands on a weekly basis.

Significantly, we have had a very difficult period from December 2019. Charles Dickens, commenting on the French Revolution in ***The Tale of Two Cities*** in 1859 mused, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ...".

The SVBC has had challenges to the Baptist Faith and Witness, resource limitations, COVID-19 realities; and in the midst of it all an extensive volcanic eruption - and hurricanes - exacerbating an already difficult situation. Yet rising above a virtual apocalypse and deepest gloom, we saw the faithfulness of God and the perseverance of the saints resulting in more than 145 new believers being added to our active fellowship.

After two years of social gathering restrictions, the SVBC met for a special Annual General Meeting on 11 June 2022, and elected a new slate of officers. **[Continued on page 31]**



Bernadette Richards Duncan , Vice Chair



Anslem Warrick, Executive Editor

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, DESIGN & LAYOUT:

Dorrett R Campbell

FRENCH TRANSLATION

Caryl Andrew

COVER PHOTO

Merlyn Hyde Riley
General Secretary, JBU

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EDITOR'S LETTERS

Dorrett R Campbell

Through our faith in Christ, we can find the courage to persevere, the wisdom to make the right decisions, and the compassion to support one another.

Since our grand and glorious gathering on the Nature Isle as a Fellowship, we have not sounded a **Note**; a consequence of a series of physical mishaps which incapacitated your editor, But God has been faithful. **We press on.**

I was grateful to have been a part of a team from six regions of Baptist ministry which participated in the Baptist World Alliance Global Team Retreat at the BWA headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia.

On March 1-5, the BWA General Secretary Elijah Brown brought together leaders and representatives from different regions and departments within the BWA to formulate a global strategy for the next decade; build relationships, forge partnerships, worship, and share knowledge and best practices.

It was a rewarding and epiphanic experience that increased my awareness of the structure of the BWA, its worth and work as well as the work and challenges of Baptists around the world.

The experience transformed my perception of the BWA: not just a headquarters at 405 Norwood Drive, Falls Church, but a team of selfless, willing praying hard working Baptists who have a lucid God-given vision and passion for God's mission and the Baptist movement. I came away - with a fractured arm

yes—but with a more thorough understanding and greater appreciation of the movement of which I have been a part for so many years; a resolve to continue to support and avail my resources and skills to the sustainability of this very important movement, that seeks primarily to transform and balance people's lives to the glory of God.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated and eternally grateful for the love and acts of kindness shown to me by the team of sisters after my ruinous fall; and even to this day, they check on my recuperating progress on a regular basis.

Indeed, irrespective of whether we are in the Caribbean, the African region, Europe or North America, God has knitted us together as a community of saints doing life together and advancing God's kingdom together. **More anon.**

EASTER MESSAGE

It is that time of the year again when we reflect on the greatest act of love and sacrifice in human history – the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. These events serve as the foundation of our faith and the source of our hope, reminding us that God's love for us is boundless and unwavering.



EASTER, A REMINDER OF GOD'S REDEEMING

LOVE

As we contemplate the suffering that Jesus endured, let us be reminded that our own trials and tribulations are not in vain.

Easter is a time to reflect on the power of the resurrection. It is a reminder that death does not have the final say and that there is always hope for new life. This is especially relevant for us as Caribbean Baptists, who have faced numerous challenges and hardship over the years. Whether it is the impact of natural disasters, economic instability, or social inequality, we have often had to contend with difficult circumstances. Yet, just as Jesus emerged from the tomb, so too can we emerge from our own challenges with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

Through our faith in Christ, we can find the courage to persevere, the wisdom to make the right decisions, and the compassion to support one another.

Let us be mindful also of the ways in which we can share the hope of the resurrection with

others. Whether it is through acts of service, acts of kindness, or acts of love, we have the opportunity to be a light in the world and to share the message of hope with the hopeless, the hapless and the helpless.

Let us remember that Easter is not just a week-end event, but a reminder of the ongoing work that God is doing in our lives.

In this edition of **CBF NOTES**, Easter greetings from some member bodies are translated into French. We give God thanks for Caryl Andrew who has supported us in this initiative. This is a labour of love. Going forward, we hope to be able to bring you an entire edition in two languages.

Pray for us!

Easter is a reminder of the depth of God's love for us and the extent to which he was willing to go in order to reconcile us to himself.

EST NOTES

Anslem Warrick, Executive Secretary Treasurer

We highlighted inter alia, the continued solidarity of the CBF with member bodies that had experienced or were still experiencing disasters of one kind or another

Representatives from several Caribbean territories met in the lovely nature island of Dominica from 17th - 21st October 2022 for the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF) Executive meeting and Men's Concert.

This was a first in three ways. It was the first in-person meeting of the CBF Executive since the COVID-19 pandemic and the many lock downs and it was also the first time in its 52-year history that the CBF was being held in Dominica and the first evangelistic Men's concert executed by the CBF.

The CBF is very grateful to the President Rev David Serrant and other leaders of the Dominica Baptist Union along with Sis Annette George-Boney and the members of the Deliverance Baptist Church in Roseau, for their assistance and hospitality in hosting this meeting.

Our meeting days began and ended with lively and inspiring worship led by various members of the Executive and short thought-provoking messages centred around the theme 'We Have Come This Far, We Press on By Faith' based on Philippians 3:14,15.

Plenary sessions of the Executive began on Tuesday 18, as we joyfully welcomed all our Executive members and our visiting CBF friends from the United States of America, Ghana/United Kingdom and Latin America.

We then proceeded to deal with reports from departments and committees followed by the Executive Secretary's report and

the Finance report. We celebrated the growth of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union (CBWU) and the recently concluded youth festival at which a new Youth Executive was appointed.

We highlighted inter alia, the continued solidarity of the CBF with member bodies that had experienced or were still experiencing disasters of one kind or another.

We celebrated the two new CBF member bodies who had recently been accepted as members of the Baptist World Alliance. We also discussed and prayed about challenges which we are experiencing in the Caribbean Christian Publication and with our Ministerial Training program.

One of the important decisions taken at this meeting was to have the CBF constitution translated in French and Spanish by our next Executive meeting.

Strategic Planning

A main feature of this Executive meeting was the strategic planning sessions facilitated by Rev Dr Michael Friday, Trinidadian/American Pastor, and Transformational Leadership Consultant. During these sessions, the members of the Executive worked through very searching questions of identity, resources, strengths and weaknesses, goals and big issue needs identified from a previously collected questionnaire. The final document outlines the Strategic Plan of the CBF for 2023-2028.



**WE HAVE COME THIS FAR
WE PRESS ON BY FAITH**

Special thanks must be expressed to the new Administrative Assistant Mrs Jolene Henley-Valentine and also to the wife of the EST Mrs Karlene Edwards-Warrick for their invaluable assistance in the execution of this meeting. The CBF is also very grateful to Ms Dorrett Campbell for agreeing to record the Minutes of this meeting.

Evangelism Training

An evangelism training session for leaders and Pastors was facilitated by Rev David Serrant. Questions at the end of this session led to a very lively discussion on the need to revisit and redefine evangelism strategies and evangelism terms. The Evangelism Committee was encouraged to conduct a symposium on Evangelism in the Caribbean context.

Men's Concert

Our Executive meeting ended on Thursday evening with a lively, well attended inaugural CBF Men's Concert. It was held at the Deliverance Baptist Church in Roseau and men's groups and

soloists from the member bodies, including the Barbados Baptist Alliance Band and Dominican Hill Top Singers—all participated with great enthusiasm. It was a fitting finale to a successful Executive meeting.

The end of the Executive meeting did not mark the end of the work for the EST and the President of the CBWU.

The Guadeloupe Experience

At the invitation of the President Rev Dominique Dick and the Guadeloupe Baptist Federation, we paid a visit to the French Caribbean Island of Guadeloupe with the intention of exploring the possibility of expanding the CBF by contacting our francophone Baptist family in Martinique. The President of the CBF promised to use his contacts in Martinique to advance this mission.

Baptist work in Guadeloupe, though challenged by the vagaries of the COVID-19 pandemic, is strong and is being renewed daily by the grace of God and the hard work of the pastors and leaders on the island.



ghli



BAPTIST GATHERING IN THE NATURE ISLE

As a Caribbean Baptist family, we have been looking forward for the past two years to this time when we would meet in person to worship, celebrate, reflect and strategize for the future of our regional body.

We are mindful that we are coming together as a believing community, God's people endeavouring to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and therefore our first and foremost duty is to worship God. That is the reason why our daily activities begin and end with seasons of prayer and worship.

We will celebrate together with our member bodies and their achievements over the last year, we will celebrate our survival through some most difficult years. We will celebrate our involvement and participation in our worldwide Baptist family. We will celebrate our graduates, our departments

and committees that have made strides under challenging circumstances.

We will also reflect on and pray about how the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship can continue covenanting to bear witness to the Kingdom of God in the region, by pooling their resources and partnering in mission and evangelism, relief and development, Christian education and stewardship as well as theological education among other areas.

The challenges and threats are many, but I encourage us to listen to the Spirit and let us strategize on how we will together move our organisation forward into a brighter future.

We are thankful to God that throughout our region as more persons become vaccinated and observe the health professionals' advice, there is a steady decrease in the number of fatalities and

hospitalisations due to COVID-19.

In most of the islands and territories as in many other parts of the world, restrictions are being lifted, economies and businesses are reopening, travel restrictions are easing and limits on in-person gatherings are being removed. All are being advised however, to maintain the basic protocols of hand washing and wearing of face masks, avoiding large crowds and restricting close face to face contacts. What this means is that persons are travelling again, and all our churches are meeting in person once again.

We are truly grateful that the CBF family can meet again in-person for the first time in nearly three years. Praise God!

OUR DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

The CBF Women and Youth Departments continue to forge ahead with very relevant and productive ministry programs.

The women continue to meet virtually for their General, Executive, Officers, training and prayer meetings.

Their first in person Executive meeting is scheduled for 23-26, November 2022, in Miami, Florida.

The Youth Department has been having their sessions virtually as well with bible study, Webinars and inspirational moments featuring youths from different islands. They recently held their Youth Festival in a hybrid format, with in person sessions hosted by Guyana. This was an election year and a new slate of Youth officers were elected.

I want to place on record the gratitude of the Executive to Ms Joy-Ann Woods and her outgoing team for their years of dedicated service to the CBF Youth department. We recognise and congratulate the new team led by Ms Sherry Ann Proffitt from Guyana.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Anslem Warrick



STANDING WITH MEMBER BODIES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

CBF stood with Haiti after it had been hit by multiple disasters within the months of July and August, 2021.

The CBF through its Communications Ministry issued a press release in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago condemning the assassination of the President and the attempted murder of his wife, extending condolences to and expressing solidarity with the people of Haiti. We continue to work with BFAD to provide financial and spiritual support to our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

The CBF also stepped in to provide humanitarian and financial assistance donated by member bodies, after the Soufriere Volcano in St Vincent and the Grenadines erupted on 9th April 2021. Many individual churches also sent needed supplies and funds directly to St Vincent.

Caribbean Baptists were called to a season of prayer with a two-and-a-half-hour virtual prayer session held on Saturday 4th September, 2021. Eighteen

conventions participated in this powerful day of prayer and we were particularly blessed by the presence of Rev Frederick Weston, BUTT President, Rev Tomas Mackay, President of the BWA and Rev Marsha Scipio, Director of Baptist World Aid.

HAITIAN PASTORS RETREAT

In the month of February 2022, the EST was graciously invited by Baptist World Aid Director, Rev Marsha Scipio to join a team going to Dominican Republic for a Retreat with the leaders of the various Haitian Baptist groups. This was to be a time of healing, rest, reflection and reconciliation. This was a truly humbling and inspiring experience.

For the first time we saw over six Baptist groups represented by their leaders, come together to talk candidly about the trauma related to the many disasters and tragedies they had experienced as a nation and as individuals. Excellent trauma management counselling and group activities were provided by a wonderful team led by Rev Marsha Scipio and other professionals. It was all

undergirded by prayer and the study of scripture.

Rev Scipio also did sessions on identifying and using limited indigenous resources for sustainable development.

We all left the retreat with a better understanding of the complexity and extent of the Haitian problem, but also with a sense of hope of the possibility of the churches working more closely together in the future.

TWO NEW MEMBERS TO BWA

We are truly happy to report that at the BWA General Council meeting held March 6-9, 2022, the BWA confirmed the recommendation of the Membership Committee to receive the Evangelical Baptist Association of Guadeloupe and the Baptist Alliance of Barbados as the newest BWA member bodies.

Our aim is to ensure that every CBF member body is also a member of the BWA.

CONCLUSION

It is no secret that we face very serious challenges as a region and consequently as a regional body.

I am truly hopeful that we will receive God's direction and we will truly work together to facilitate growth, unity, development and the fulfilment of our mission bear witness to the Kingdom of God in the region, by pooling our resources and partnering in mission and evangelism, relief and development, Christian education and stewardship as well as theological education.

Let us continue to support the work and ministry of the CBF and to do all we can to make our fellowship stronger and more relevant.

Revival service: Miracle Temple Baptist, Abymes. President Dominique Dick interpreting



Rev and Mrs Warrick Port-Louis Baptist Church

Pastors and leaders of the of the Guadeloupe Baptist Federation meet with EST



Special thanks to my Interpreter, Rev Magidou at the Baptist church in Moule

PREACHING IN GUADELOUPE

While on the island of Guadeloupe, the President of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union, Mrs Karlene Edwards-Warrick, met with the President of the Guadeloupe Baptist Federation, Mrs Maryvonne Bique and the women. The EST preached four nights of revival services: two nights at the Baptist Church in Moule in Grande Terre; two nights at Miracle Temple Baptist Church in Abymes and Sunday morning Service at the Baptist Church of Port-Louis where the President is pastor.

The EST also held meetings with the Pastors and leaders of the Federation thanking them for their support and solidarity with the CBF since its inception, and assured them of the continued support and prayers of the CBF.

They were also updated on some of the programs and plans of the organisation.

They expressed delight with the decision of the Executive to translate the CBF Constitution into French and Spanish and they offered their assistance with the translation not only of the constitution, but also with the CCP materials and the CBF Magazine. They saw this initiative as one that will encourage greater participation by the French speaking islands.

Baptist work in Guadeloupe, though challenged by the vagaries of the COVID-19 pandemic, is strong and is being renewed daily by the grace of God, and the hard work of the pastors and leaders on the island.





EASTER MESSAGES

**Christ has not only spoken to us by
his life but has also spoken for us
by his death.**



From BWA

“Just as Jesus was coming out of the water ... a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’” Mark 1:10-11

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS LOOKING FOR YOU ...

Jesus’ public road to Easter began in the wilderness. Journeying from Nazareth, Jesus crossed the Jordan River where he was reluctantly baptized by his cousin John. Hot and arid with clay soil and small intersecting dry riverbeds, this area was steeped in Hebrew history. This is near to where the people received Deuteronomy, Moses gazed into the Promised Land, Joshua crossed the river, and Elijah was carried to heaven. The geography is imbued with symbolic significance. Jesus’ choice of geography amplifies his commitment to hurting humanity.

Beginning his public ministry in the wilderness, Jesus embodied engagement that was not characterized by cultural conformity but character transformation, not financial surplus but sacrificial generosity, not powerful access but justice advocacy. For those who find themselves in the wilderness, Jesus came that you “may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Lost in the shame of sin or the weariness of today, this Easter Jesus walks into the wilderness to look for you and to accompany you – should you choose – on the road to resurrection hope. Jesus chose the wilderness to offer healing for hurting humanity.

Jesus’ choice of baptismal location was not accidental but intentional. Over the intervening 2,000 years, the banks of the Jordan River have shifted. Though the broader area is now marked by dry wilderness, at the exact location of Jesus’ baptism is a spring of water that flows continuously. A short distance from the Dead Sea, it is a lasting portrait that Jesus resurrects death into life.

It is Jesus’ welcoming invitation: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and ... rivers of living water will flow from within them” (John 7:37-38). Jesus chose the wilderness to offer life for dying humanity.

Significantly, Jesus’ intentional baptismal location is situated at the lowest geographical point in all the world. It was not enough for Jesus to forsake heaven and be born into a manger. Jesus chose the lowest point in Earth to inaugurate his public ministry. He was not baptized on the heights of the mountains or the wonders of the plains or the sandy beaches of the sea but at the lowest point in all the world. Jesus chose in his baptism to join the lowest depths of creation and join humanity in the lowest depths of our loneliness.

What a glory for hurting humanity that Jesus’ ministry stretched from the lowest point in the world to the top of the cross. In this intentional location, it is Jesus saying whatever depths of despair you are in today, he is already joining you in the lowest of lows to offer a “spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14). In this intentional location, it is Jesus calling to his followers to join him in a ministry of presence that testifies in hope there is no wound too injurious, no pain too perilous, no war too damaging, no flight too forsaken, no sin too intertwined that cannot be made whole in the resurrection. What a glory for hurting humanity and all creation that Jesus’ ministry is measured from the lowest point in the world to the height of the cross.

Come hurting humanity. Come weary creation. Come every man and woman. Find Jesus where he is already – offering living water in the wilderness of our deepest lows.

On behalf of the Baptist World Alliance – a family in 128 countries and territories – in our wilderness may we taste and see that the Lord is good, and may we allow this spring of living water to bring all of us resurrection hope this Easter.

Rev. Elijah M. Brown, PhD
BWA General Secretary



Elijah Brown

De BWA

JÉSUS DANS LE DESERT TE CHERCHE ...

Au moment où Jésus sortait de l'eau, il vit le ciel se déchirer et l'Esprit descendre sur lui comme une colombe.

Et une voix se fit entendre des cieux : Tu es mon Fils bien-aimé, en toi j'ai mis toute mon affection. (Marc 1:10-11)

Le chemin public de Jésus vers Pâques a commencé dans le désert. Voyageant depuis Nazareth, Jésus a traversé le Jourdain où il a été baptisé par son cousin Jean. Chaude et aride avec un sol argileux et de petits lits de rivières secs et intersectants, cette région était imprégnée d'histoire hébraïque. Proche du lieu où le peuple a reçu Deutéronome, que Moïse a contemplé la Terre Promise, que Josué a traversé la rivière et qu'Élie a été emmené au ciel. La géographie est imprégnée de significations symboliques. Le choix de la géographie par Jésus amplifie son engagement envers l'humanité souffrante.

En commençant son ministère public dans le désert, Jésus incarnait un engagement qui n'était pas caractérisé par la conformité culturelle mais par la transformation de caractère, non par un surplus financier mais par la générosité sacrificielle, non par l'accès au pouvoir mais par la défense de la justice. Pour ceux qui se trouvent dans le désert, Jésus est venu pour que vous ayez la vie, et que vous l'ayez en abondance (Jean 10:10).

Perdu dans la honte du péché ou l'épuisement de nos jours, cette Pâques est celle où Jésus marche dans le désert pour vous chercher et vous accompagner, si vous le choisissez, sur la route de l'espoir de la résurrection. Jésus a choisi le désert pour offrir une guérison à l'humanité plongée dans la souffrance.

Le choix de l'emplacement du baptême de Jésus n'était pas accidentel mais intentionnel. Au fil des 2 000 années écoulées, les rives du Jourdain se sont déplacées. Bien que la région la plus vaste soit remplacée par un désert sec, à l'emplacement exact où Jésus prit son baptême, se trouve

une source d'eau qui coule en continu. Non loin de la mer Morte, c'est un portrait qui montre que Jésus ressuscite de la mort à la vie.

Jésus lance chaleureusement cette invitation: Si quelqu'un a soif, qu'il vienne à moi et... de son sein couleront des fleuves d'eau vive (Jean 7:37-38). Jésus a choisi le désert pour offrir la vie à une humanité mourante.

De manière significative, le lieu choisi pour le baptême de Jésus était intentionnel. Il est situé au point géographique le plus bas du monde. Il ne suffisait pas que Jésus abandonne le ciel et naisse dans une crèche. Jésus a choisi le point le plus bas de la Terre pour inaugurer son ministère public. Il n'a pas été baptisé sur les hauteurs des montagnes ou sur les merveilles des plaines ou sur les plages de sable de la mer, mais au point le plus bas du monde. Jésus a choisi dans son baptême de rejoindre les profondeurs de la création et de rejoindre l'humanité dans les profondeurs de sa solitude.

Quelle gloire pour l'humanité blessée que le ministère de Jésus s'étende du point le plus bas du monde jusqu'au sommet de la croix. Dans cet emplacement intentionnel, Jésus dit que, quelles que soient les profondeurs du désespoir dans lequel vous vous trouvez aujourd'hui, il vous rejoint déjà dans le plus bas des bas pour offrir une "source d'eau jaillissant jusqu'à la vie éternelle" (Jean 4:14).

Dans ce lieu intentionnel, Jésus appelle ses disciples à le rejoindre dans un ministère de présence qui témoigne dans l'espérance qu'il n'y a pas de blessure trop blessante, pas de douleur trop périlleuse, pas de guerre trop dommageable, pas de péché trop grand qui ne peut pas être guéri à la résurrection.

Quelle gloire pour l'humanité meurtrie et toute la création que le ministère de Jésus soit mesuré du point le plus bas du monde à la hauteur de la croix. Viens à moi humanité meurtrie. Venez vous qui êtes fatigués. Venez tous, hommes et femmes. Trouvez Jésus là où il est déjà - offrant de l'eau vive dans le désert de nos dépressions les plus profondes.

Au nom de l'Alliance baptiste mondiale - une famille dans 128 pays et territoires - dans notre désert, puissions-nous goûter et voir combien le Seigneur est bon, et puissions-nous permettre à cette source d'eau vive d'apporter à tous l'espoir de la résurrection à Pâques.

**Rev. Elijah M. Brown, PhD
General Secretary, BWA**

Elijah Brown

From GUADELOPE

UNITING IN FAITH THIS EASTER

Dear
brothers and sisters in Christ:

I greet as the CBF president as well as the President of the Baptist Federation of Guadeloupe. As we come together to celebrate Easter, we are reminded of the incredible sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross. Through His death and resurrection, He has given us new life and hope, and we are truly grateful for the gift of salvation that He has given us.

Easter is a time for us to reflect on the love and mercy that Jesus has shown us. His sacrifice was not just for a select few, but for all people, regardless of their background or status. He came to bring salvation to the world, and His love knows no bounds. As we celebrate His resurrection, we are reminded of the incredible power of His love and the hope that it brings to all who believe.

As members of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, we are united in our faith and our mission to share the Gospel with others. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our communities, and to spread His message of love and hope to all who need it. This Easter, let us renew our commitment to this mission, and to living out Christ's teachings in our daily lives.

We must remember that the work of spreading the Gospel is not just the responsibility of pastors and church leaders, but of all believers. We are all called to be ambassadors of Christ, and to share His love with those around us. This means not just talking about our faith, but living it out in practical ways. It means reaching out to those in need, showing kindness and compassion to those who are hurting, and being a light in a world that can often be dark and

challenging.

This Easter, let us also remember those who are less fortunate and in need of our love and support. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant challenges for many people, including loss of income, food insecurity, and limited access to healthcare. As followers of Christ, we are called to be a source of hope and support for those who are struggling. Let us reach out to those in need, and offer whatever help we can, whether it is through financial support, volunteering our time, or simply offering a listening ear.

Finally, let us remember that the hope and joy that we experience this Easter is not just for this season, but for every day of our lives. We have been given new life through Christ's resurrection, and this is something that we can celebrate and hold onto every day. No matter what challenges we may face, we can take comfort in the fact that we have a risen Savior who is with us every step of the way.

May God bless you all this Easter and always.

Rev Dominique Dick
President, CBF

Dominique Dick



De GUADELOPE

UNIS DANS LA FOI POUR PÂQUES

Chers frères et sœurs en Christ:

Je vous salue au nom de notre Seigneur et Sauveur ressuscité, Jésus-Christ. Alors que nous nous réunissons pour célébrer Pâques, nous sommes rappelés de l'incroyable sacrifice que Jésus a fait pour nous sur la croix. Par Sa mort et Sa résurrection,

Il nous a donné une vie nouvelle et de l'espoir, et nous sommes véritablement reconnaissants pour le don du salut qu'Il nous a donné.

Pâques est un temps pour nous de réfléchir à l'amour et à la miséricorde que Jésus nous a montrés. Son sacrifice n'était pas seulement pour quelques-uns, mais pour tous les peuples, indépendamment de leur origine ou de leur statut. Il est venu apporter le salut au monde, et Son amour ne connaît pas de limites. En célébrant Sa

résurrection, nous sommes rappelés de la puissance incroyable de Son amour et de l'espoir qu'Il apporte à tous ceux qui croient.

En tant que membres de la Communauté Baptiste des Caraïbes, nous sommes unis dans notre foi et notre mission de partager l'Évangile avec les autres. Nous sommes appelés à être les mains et les pieds de Jésus dans nos communautés, et à diffuser Son message d'amour et d'espoir à tous ceux qui en ont besoin. Cette Pâques, renouvelons notre engagement envers cette mission et envers la mise en pratique des enseignements de Christ dans notre vie quotidienne.

Nous devons nous rappeler que le travail de diffusion de l'Évangile n'est pas seulement la responsabilité des pasteurs et des leaders d'églises, mais de tous les croyants. Nous sommes tous appelés à être des ambassadeurs de Christ et à partager Son amour avec ceux qui nous entourent. Cela signifie non seulement parler de notre foi, mais la mettre en pratique de manière concrète. Cela signifie tendre la main à ceux dans le besoin, montrer de la gentillesse et de la compassion à ceux qui souffrent et être une lumière dans un monde qui peut souvent être sombre et difficile.

Cette Pâques, n'oublions pas non plus ceux qui sont moins fortunés et ont besoin de notre amour et de notre soutien. La pandémie de COVID-19 a entraîné des défis importants pour de nombreuses personnes, notamment la perte de revenus, l'insécurité alimentaire et l'accès limité aux soins de santé. En tant que disciples de Christ, nous sommes appelés à être une source d'espoir et de soutien pour ceux qui luttent. Tendons la main à ceux dans le besoin et offrons tout l'aide que nous pouvons, que ce soit par un soutien financier, du bénévolat ou simplement en écoutant.

Enfin, rappelons-nous que l'espoir et la joie que nous vivons cette Pâques ne sont pas seulement pour cette saison, mais pour tous les jours de notre vie. Nous avons reçu une nouvelle vie par la résurrection de Christ, et c'est quelque chose que nous pouvons célébrer et retenir chaque jour.

Quels que soient les défis auxquels

Rev Dominique Dick
President, CBF
Président de la FEEBG

Dominique Dick

From EST

Blessed Easter greetings to all my brothers and sisters of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship.

CALLED TO BE CHANGE AGENTS

Once again we commemorate the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ by journeying with Him from Palm Sunday through to Resurrection morning. Many churches would have had or are having special music and choir performances, and some are having sunrise services, where worshippers gathering at dawn to celebrate the rising of the sun and the resurrection of Christ. In addition to your church services, families and friends would be gathering together for meals and fellowship, enjoying the hot cross buns, cakes and various types of baked goods.

Even as we celebrate and enjoy time with our families in our Caribbean context, let us not forget the many challenges we face as a region. High levels of crime and violence caused by unemployment among the youth are just some of the issues with which we continue to grapple .

In Isaiah 53:5, we read about the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross. His wounds brought us healing and peace, and through Him, we can be saved from the darkness of sin and death.

But what does this mean for us in our current context? As followers of Christ, **we are called to be agents of change in our communities.** We are called to bring hope to the hopeless, to be a voice for the voiceless, and to work towards a more just and equitable society. To be an agent of change means to actively work towards creating positive, meaningful, and lasting change in the world around us. It involves taking deliberate actions that can help transform situations or systems that are unjust, oppressive, or unsustainable.

Being an agent of change requires a deep commitment to the values of the kingdom of Christ. The values of justice, equity, humility, sacrifice and compassion. It involves having a clear understanding of the problems that exist in our communities and identifying the root causes that are contributing to those problems. It requires a willingness to collaborate with others and to build bridges between different groups and communities.

Ultimately, being an agent of change means taking responsibility for our own actions and their impact on others. It requires us to examine our own biases and privilege and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all.

In the context of Easter, being an agent of change means embodying the values of love, sacrifice, and service that Jesus Christ demonstrated through His life and death.

It means living out our faith in ways that bring hope and healing to those who are most in need.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, let us be reminded that He has overcome the sin and powers of death. He has triumphed over the darkness of this world, and through Him, we too can be agents of light and hope in our communities.

So let us pray for our region, for our leaders, and for those who are most affected by the challenges we face. And let us commit ourselves to working towards a brighter future; one where the peace and love of Christ reigns supreme.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all this Easter season. In Christ.

De EST

Alutations bénies de Pâques à tous mes frères et sœurs de la Communauté Baptiste des Caraïbes.

APPELÉS À ÊTRE DES AGENTS DE CHANGEMENT

Encore une fois, nous commémorons la passion de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ en voyageant avec Lui de dimanche des Rameaux jusqu'au matin de la Résurrection. De nombreuses églises ont eu ou ont des performances de musique et de chorales spéciales, et certaines ont des services de lever du soleil, où les fidèles se rassemblent à l'aube pour célébrer le lever du soleil et la résurrection de Christ. En plus de vos services religieux, les familles et les amis se rassembleront pour des repas et de la camaraderie, appréciant les petits pains aux raisins, les gâteaux et divers types de produits de boulangerie.

Même si nous célébrons et profitons du temps avec nos familles dans notre contexte caribéen, n'oublions pas les nombreux défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés en tant que région. Les niveaux élevés de criminalité et de violence causés par le chômage parmi les jeunes ne sont que quelques-uns des problèmes auxquels nous continuons de lutter.

Dans Esaïe 53:5, nous lisons sur le sacrifice que Jésus a fait pour nous sur la croix. Ses blessures nous ont apporté la guérison et la paix, et grâce à Lui, nous pouvons être sauvés de l'obscurité du péché et de la mort.

Mais que cela signifie-t-il pour nous dans notre contexte actuel ? En tant que disciples du Christ, nous sommes appelés à être des agents de changement dans nos communautés. Nous sommes appelés à apporter de l'espoir aux désespérés, à être une voix pour les sans voix et à travailler en vue d'une société plus juste et équitable. Être un agent de changement signifie travailler activement à créer un changement positif, significatif et durable dans le monde qui nous entoure.

Cela implique de prendre des mesures délibérées qui peuvent aider à transformer des situations ou des systèmes qui sont injustes, oppressifs ou insoutenables.

Être un agent de changement exige un engagement profond envers les valeurs du royaume du Christ. Les valeurs de justice, d'équité, d'humilité, de sacrifice et de compassion. Cela implique de comprendre clairement les problèmes qui existent dans nos communautés et d'identifier les causes profondes qui contribuent à ces problèmes. Cela nécessite une volonté de collaborer avec les autres et de construire des ponts entre différents groupes et communautés.

En fin de compte, être un agent de changement signifie prendre la responsabilité de nos propres actions et de leur impact sur les autres.

Cela exige de nous d'examiner nos propres préjugés et privilèges et de travailler en vue de créer une société plus juste et équitable pour tous.

Dans le contexte de Pâques, être un agent de changement signifie incarner les valeurs d'amour, de sacrifice et de service que Jésus-Christ a démontrées tout au long de Sa vie et de Sa mort.

Cela signifie vivre notre foi de manière à apporter de l'espoir et de

**Rev Anslem Warrick
Executive Secretary Treasurer, CBF**



DID I HEAR, A GLASS CEILING SHATTER?

DORRETT R. CAMPBELL

Yes, you did!

The Rev Merlyn Hyde Riley, member of the St Catherine based Gregory Park Baptist Church is the first woman to have been appointed General Secretary of the 174-year-old Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU).

At its closing ceremony of the 173rd General Assembly on February 26, the JBU installed Hyde-Riley amidst a chorus of alleluias from the sea of women present at the service.

As the chief coordinating officer of the Union, Hyde-Riley is expected to provide administrative, strategic and spiritual leadership to the nearly 40, 000 strong denomination with just under 340 churches; and to give oversight to the daily operations of the Union's secretariat.

She is also expected to work closely with the president, officers and executive committee to shape the Union's mission

strategy and to formulate and implement policies to guide the work of the Union.

Rev Hyde-Riley comes to the position with a wealth of leadership experience locally and internationally; and in both secular and faith-based organizations: she has served as the JBU's Associate General Secretary for 15 years and has been acting as the General Secretary since October 2021.

Rev Hyde Riley was also the first woman to be elected as president of the largest and oldest umbrella group of churches in Jamaica, the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) and is the currently one of two vice moderators for the World Council of Churches (WCC), a critical position in the four-member strategic apex of the WCC.

Endorsing her appointment, JBU President Glenroy Lalor noted that Hyde-Riley has been well prepared in heart and mind to serve the Union as general secretary at this time.

"Her service in local and international ecumenical movements, her commitment to the JBU, her strong work ethic and her abiding and growing spirituality have prepared her for this office. She has been prepared by the Spirit for such a time as

this," President Lalor affirmed.

She has also led and served on several committees and Civic Boards, in the JBU, the World Council of Churches and the Baptist World Alliance. She currently serves as a member of the Board of Governors of the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI); the Teachers Services Commission and the National Council on Education.

A gender specialist with a master's degree with distinction in Gender Studies, a first class honours degree in Theology and another in Arts and General Studies from the University of the West Indies, Hyde-Riley has been a strong advocate of gender mainstreaming among Baptists and in secular organizations.

In responding to the appointment, the newly minted General Secretary re-affirmed the work and worth of the women of the JBU "whose model of Christian Service opened the eyes of many to the reality that God has gifted both women and men to do the work of the Lord," she declared.



LALOR: she has been prepared by the Spirit for such a time as this



WARRICK: Rev Hyde-Riley has certainly broken the glass ceiling in this regard



JOHNSON: She's surefooted in a her Christian walk; has a servant heart, a keen intellect and is dependable

Her strong academic background, experience as an accredited pastor and moderator of several churches, as well as her grounding in the teaching profession will serve her very well in this position that requires critical thinking skills, mobilization strategies, effective communication skills, mediation and conflict management skills and strong interpersonal relationships.

Rev Hyde-Riley shares the vision for the JBU to grow numerically, missionally and spiritually and to provide space for its members to flourish.

"I also have a vision for the Union to take the lead in recapturing the imagination and passion of our forebears that will find expression in our work for justice, peace and the empowerment of our Jamaican people so that they can fully realise a life befitting people created in the image of God," Hyde-Riley said.

Her immediate objectives are to lead the development of a strategic plan to guide the work of the union for the next five years and to re-energise the ministers and membership towards a path of renewal; "many of whom have for various reasons become disconnected or lost their passion for church," Hyde Riley explained.

However, Rev Hyde-Riley is not naïve to the challenges confronting her in achieving these objectives. Financing the development and implementation of the strategic plan and mobilising human resources, she said are no easy feats.

"Getting people to reengage is never easy, especially at a time when people are disengaging from church and institutions in a more individualistic and post Christian society. People sometimes have a wait-and-see approach and so it may take some time to galvanize people in our quest for renewal".

Hyde Riley succeeds the Rev Karl B Johnson who served in that capacity for 20 years before returning to the pastorate. Johnson who had served with Hyde-Riley for more than a decade, regarded the appointment as "a blessing to have witnessed this historic moment".

"She's sure-footed in a her Christian walk; has a servant heart, a keen intellect and is dependable and organised in discharging her duties. There could hardly have been a more prepared person for that office; and I offer her my full

support and prayers," Johnson said.

Meanwhile, CBF Executive Secretary Treasurer Rev Anslem Warrick sends congratulations to Rev Merlyn Hyde-Riley on behalf of the Fellowship, noting that she has served in the position of Assistant to the former General Secretary Rev Karl Baldwin Johnson and also as Acting General Secretary since 2021.

"Rev Hyde-Riley has certainly broken the glass ceiling in this regard since she is the first female General Secretary in the JBU in its nearly 200 year history," Warrick says.

"Congratulations again to her again and we pray God's grace and blessing upon her for an effective and successful tenure," the EST concluded.

MERLYN MAKING HISTORY Glass Ceiling Shatters

BWA GLOBAL TEAM RETREAT



TOWARD A 10-YEAR STRATEGY

General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Rev Dr Elijah Brown has taken steps to craft a 10 year strategy for the global Baptist movement as we move toward the 200th anniversary of Jesus' death and resurrection as well the start of the church at Pentecost.

Brown wants to unite all Baptists across the globe in a spirit of cooperation, collaboration and community. But not only that, he feels the time has come for Baptist to be open to new ideas and territories even while strengthening partnerships with other organizations and churches around the world, and promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

SHARING THE VISION

The first step was to bring together global leaders of the six regions to conduct a situation analysis as an imperative toward charting the future and sustainability of the Baptist World Alliance—no not the team of wonderful persons whose office is headquartered at 405 Norwood Drive, Falls Church, but Baptists across the world. The strategy focuses on spiritual formation, social justice, evangelism, leadership development and inter-faith relations.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Brown facilitated the building of relationships even as he shared a lucid vision for the BWA but it wasn't just about Brown and his vision, the sessions were interactive and participatory as he intentionally engaged us in the shaping and framing of a global strategy even while creating the enabling environment for all participants to deepen their friendships and our understanding

of the work of the Lord through one another.

GLOBAL MAPPING

The BWA General Secretary not only ensured that all of us got a thorough understanding of the governance structure of our movement and ministries, but that we were able to see how our local, national and regional ministries relate to the five major ministry areas of the BWA:

1. Worship and Fellowship
2. Mission and Evangelism
3. Aid, Relief, and Community Development
4. Religious Freedom, Human Rights, and Justice
5. Theological Reflection and Transformational Leadership

SCANNING THE ENVIRONMENT

In our situational analysis, Brown and his team led us through an environmental scanning session in which we explore six winds of change and their potential impact on the sustainability of the Baptist movement:

1. Changing demographics
2. Increased urbanization
3. Plural and turbulent cultures
4. Vulnerable peoples and democracies
5. Changed power and organizational dynamics
6. Technology and artificial intelligence

RE-FRAMING THE MISSION

Within the context of these environmental factors we were led to reflect on a renewed Pentecost and recommissioned church released on the mission of God, and distilled as follow:

- ◆ **Renewal:** spiritual calling and theological

value that looks upward to God

- ◆ **Recommissioning:** Discipleship practice that looks inward to individuals or within the church
- ◆ **Release :** missional practice that looks outward to share the Gospel and serve the community

FRAMING THE ACTIONS

Brown and his team engaged us in completing four strategic frames that sum up the vision, and pave the way for simple and practical strategic actions for both the BWA and its six regions:

1. Personal commitment to spiritual formation nurtured in community
2. Live and proclaim the good news
3. Care for the vulnerable in community
4. Freedom and healing in society

A CULTURE OF PRAYING

The BWA has a culture of praying. They take Paul's instruction to pray without ceasing to a new and higher level. Their plethora of prayers were not staged for our benefit, but clearly an integral part of their way of life .

For the three days that we spent at that retreat, we made no move, did nothing, said nothing without praying—for one another, for the six regions, for the work of Baptists around the world, for the world and for everything. Not only did the prayers make us feel closer to God, but they made us feel closer to one another.

I will tell you more about those six winds of change and the four frames in our next issue.



BLESSED AND
HOLY
Easter

CBFN

From ST VINCENT

A special Easter Message to our Caribbean Baptists and Christian believers, not only in the Caribbean but wherever you are as you read this word.

RISEN FROM HOPELESS ASHES

Greetings from the Baptist body of believers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Our Baptist Convention is relatively small, comprising seven local churches, but we are fervent in our ministry for the Lord and making an impact that is felt across our small country.

We are currently still in the process of rebounding from our volcanic eruption that occurred recently. In fact, this Easter Sunday (9th April) will mark exactly two years to the day since that fateful morning when our volcano erupted. Don't be surprised therefore that my Easter message will focus on the resurrection and what it means for the re-emergence of a people from ashes.

As one who experienced that dark Friday (9th April, 2021) I can attest to the dismay, disruption, and overwhelming dread as our people watched the dark clouds of ash cover the sky. The uncertainty of what lay ahead of us was almost palpable. Over the subsequent days and weeks, possessions and dispositions seemed buried under a layer of ash.

This is so reminiscent of an even darker Friday, many years ago, when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ breathed his last on a Roman cross. The following (of disciples) back then must have experienced an even more extreme sense of dismay, disruption, and dread than we experienced on the Friday of our volcanic eruption.

This experience of disrupted lives, shattered hopes, dreadful fear, and depressing uncertainty is not limited to what the followers of Jesus experienced on that Friday that he died; nor is it felt only by people who go through traumatic experiences like we did in Saint Vincent when our volcano erupted. The experience of a God-forsaken hopelessness is one that is usually felt across the spectrum of our humanity, whether occasioned by a broken relationship, health distress, financial hardship, or any of the myriad of troubling issues that assails mankind.

But my Easter message is on the possibility of our re-emergence from God-forsaken hopelessness (aka our resurrection). Two years after the fact, this truth of the possibility of re-emergence is lived out in Saint Vincent as our people have resiliently risen from the ashes. Our testimony is that the dark times won't last; hope ignites the way through the worst of times.

But our testimony pales in comparison to what it must have been like on that first Resurrection Sunday when Jesus burst forth from the tomb!

The clutches of death could not keep Him; the grave could not hold Him. He tore the bars away! And here's the best part...He did it for us.

According to I Corinthians 15:20 His resurrection was a first fruit: the real power of his resurrection is that it makes possible our own resurrection from every dark situation of death in our lives: relational; financial; health; but most of all spiritual.

Saints, let us celebrate not only the resurrection of Jesus, let us celebrate our own unassailable resurrection made available to us when Jesus rose on that first Easter Sunday.



Carol and Cecil Richards

From ST VINCENT

Un Message spécial de Pâques à nos baptistes de la Caraïbe et aux chrétiens, non seulement dans la Caraïbe mais à tous les lecteurs quelque soit votre zone géographique.

REVENU DE CENDRES SANS ESPOIR

Salutations des baptistes de Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines. Notre Convention baptiste est relativement petite, comprenant sept églises locales, mais nous sommes fervents dans notre ministère pour le Seigneur et avons un impact ressenti dans notre petit pays.

Nous sommes actuellement encore en train de rebondir suite à l'éruption volcanique qui nous a touchée récemment. En fait, ce dimanche de Pâques (9 avril) marque est le deuxième anniversaire depuis ce matin fatidique où notre volcan a explosé. Ne soyez donc pas surpris que mon message de Pâques se concentre sur la résurrection et ce qu'elle signifie pour la réémergence d'un peuple, des cendres.

En tant que personne ayant vécu ce vendredi noir (9 avril 2021), je peux témoigner de la consternation, de la perturbation et de la crainte accablante alors que notre peuple regardait les nuages sombres de cendres recouvrir le ciel. L'incertitude de ce qui nous attendait était presque palpable. Au fil des jours et des semaines suivants, les biens et les dispositions semblaient enfouies sous une couche de cendres.

Cela rappelle tellement un vendredi encore plus sombre, il y a de nombreuses années, lorsque notre Seigneur et Sauveur Jésus-Christ a lâché son dernier soufflé sur une croix romaine. Les disciples de l'époque ont dû éprouver un sentiment encore plus extrême de consternation, de perturbation et de crainte que nous avons connu le vendredi de notre éruption volcanique.

Cette expérience de vies perturbées, d'espoirs brisés, de craintes terribles et d'incertitudes déprimantes n'est pas limitée à ce que les disciples de Jésus ont vécu le vendredi où il est mort ; ni n'est-elle ressentie seulement par les personnes qui vivent des expériences traumatisantes comme nous l'avons vécu à Saint-Vincent lorsque notre volcan a explosé. L'expérience d'un désespoir abandonné de Dieu est quelque chose qui est généralement ressenti dans toute la gamme de notre humanité, qu'elle soit occasionnée par une relation brisée, une détresse de santé, une difficulté financière ou l'une des myriades de problèmes troublants qui assaillent l'humanité.

Mais mon message de Pâques porte sur la possibilité de notre réémergence de l'espoir abandonné de Dieu (alias notre résurrection).

Deux ans après l'éruption, cette vérité de la possibilité de réémergence est vécue à Saint-Vincent alors que notre peuple

est résolument sorti des cendres. Notre témoignage est que les temps sombres ne dureront pas ; l'espoir éclaire le chemin à travers les pires moments.

Mais notre témoignage pâlit en comparaison de ce que cela a dû être le premier dimanche de la résurrection lorsque Jésus est sorti du tombeau !

Les griffes de la mort ne pouvaient pas le retenir ; le tombeau ne pouvait pas le retenir. Il a cassé les barreaux ! Et voici le meilleur ... Il l'a fait pour nous. Selon I Corinthiens 15:20 Sa résurrection était un premier fruit : le vrai pouvoir de sa résurrection est qu'elle rend possible notre propre résurrection de chaque sombre situation de mort dans nos vies : relationnelle ; financière; santé; mais surtout spirituelle.

Bien-Aimés, célébrons non seulement la résurrection de Jésus, célébrons notre propre résurrection inattaquable mise à notre disposition lorsque Jésus est ressuscité le dimanche de Pâques.

Rev Cecil Richards, PhD
President, SVBC



Carol and Cecil Richards



From St Kitts ... **MOST JOYOUS OCCASION**

Easter is the highpoint on the Christian calendar. It is what I consider the singularly most joyous occasion for the Christian church. The season provides the opportunity to reflect and celebrate the prophecies that foretold the Messiah in the Old Testament and calling us back to the miraculous resurrection of Jesus that fills the New Testament with its holy light.

On a personal note, the season brings us together through the one who has broken down the partitions and made us one in salvation through the grace and mercy of our Lord, as the Apostle Peter notes in this passage:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3).

Let us use the season to give thanks for the many blessings God has bestowed upon us. Truly, the greatest gift is the opportunity to make our petitions as a priesthood of believers. We are reminded that we can come boldly, yet humbly to our God in prayer and make our requests known, because Jesus Christ has bridged the gap.

My prayer this Easter is that all of us in the CBF family will give thanks for our salvation through the practice of loving one another as Christ loves us.

Christ is risen indeed and because He lives, we can face tomorrow. His resurrection renews and replenishes our heart with hope and in hope!

We serve a risen Saviour!

Rev Lincoln Connor
Pastor, Antioch Baptist Church



de St Kitts ...

L'OCCASION LA PLUS JOYEUSE

Pâques est le point culminant du calendrier chrétien. C'est ce que je considère comme l'occasion la plus joyeuse pour l'église chrétienne. Cette période nous donne l'opportunité de réfléchir et de célébrer les prophéties de l'Ancien Testament qui ont prédit la venue du Messie et de nous rappeler la résurrection miraculeuse de Jésus qui remplit le Nouveau Testament de sa lumière divine.

Sur une note personnelle, cette période nous rassemble par celui qui a abattu les murs et nous a réunis dans le salut par la grâce et la miséricorde de notre Seigneur, comme le note l'apôtre Pierre dans ce passage :

"Loué soit le Dieu et Père de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ! Dans sa grande miséricorde, il nous a fait naître de nouveau à travers la résurrection de Jésus-Christ d'entre les morts pour une espérance vivante." (1 Pierre 1:3).

Consacrons cette période à remercier Dieu pour les nombreuses bénédictions qu'il nous a accordées. Certainement, le plus grand présent est l'opportunité de faire nos demandes en tant qu'un sacerdoce de croyants. Il nous est rappelé que nous pouvons venir avec assurance, dans humilité devant notre Dieu en prière et faire connaître nos requêtes car Jésus-Christ a réparé les brèches..

Ma prière en ce temps de Pâques est que nous, membres de la famille de la CBF exprimant notre reconnaissance pour notre salut en nous aimant les uns les autres, comme Christ nous aime.

Le Christ est réellement ressuscité et parce qu'il vit, nous pouvons faire face au lendemain. Sa résurrection renouvelle et remplit notre cœur avec l'espérance et dans l'espérance !

*Rev Lincoln Connor
Pastor, Antioch Baptist Church*

From Jamaica

LINGERING NEAR THE CROSS

I have been thinking about the cross of Calvary and its continued meaning for us as Jamaicans and Caribbean Baptists.

My lingering thoughts on the cross may have been influenced by my rereading of James Cone's **The Cross and the Lynching Tree** alongside Devon Dick's **The Cross and the Machete**; both presenting the insight that the Cross continues to be an empowering symbol of God's loving solidarity with the least and the lowest – those whose lives are full of "crosses."

When a Jamaican says something is "crosses," it can mean anything from trials, tribulations, inconvenience to bad luck.

This world continues to be plagued by "crosses," including the lingering effects of the COVID pandemic; the rising prices of basic products necessary for life and living as a result of a hard to control inflation; salaries and wages that cannot cover the cost of living; crime and violence and in particular murder making our communities unsafe and people insecure; the impacts of the climate crisis and the self-inflicted wounds on the body of the earth by senseless wars all amount to crosses or the Jamaican pronunciation, "craassies."

The American Author and Poet James Baldwin is credited to have said "Whites discovered the cross by way of the bible; black people discovered the bible by way of the cross." So we look to the cross and beyond that to the empty tomb, but I am lingering near the cross in this Easter season.

The cross of Jesus Christ continues to remind us of God's suffering solidarity with the cross bearers in 2023: the crucified people - whether they be in Haiti or on the streets and villages in Jamaica.

That same cross bestows on us, as it did our fore parents during enslavement, the power to resist all the injustices and evil of this life. God was with Jesus on the cross. Therefore, God is with us and will continue to walk with us and help us to carry our crosses daily.

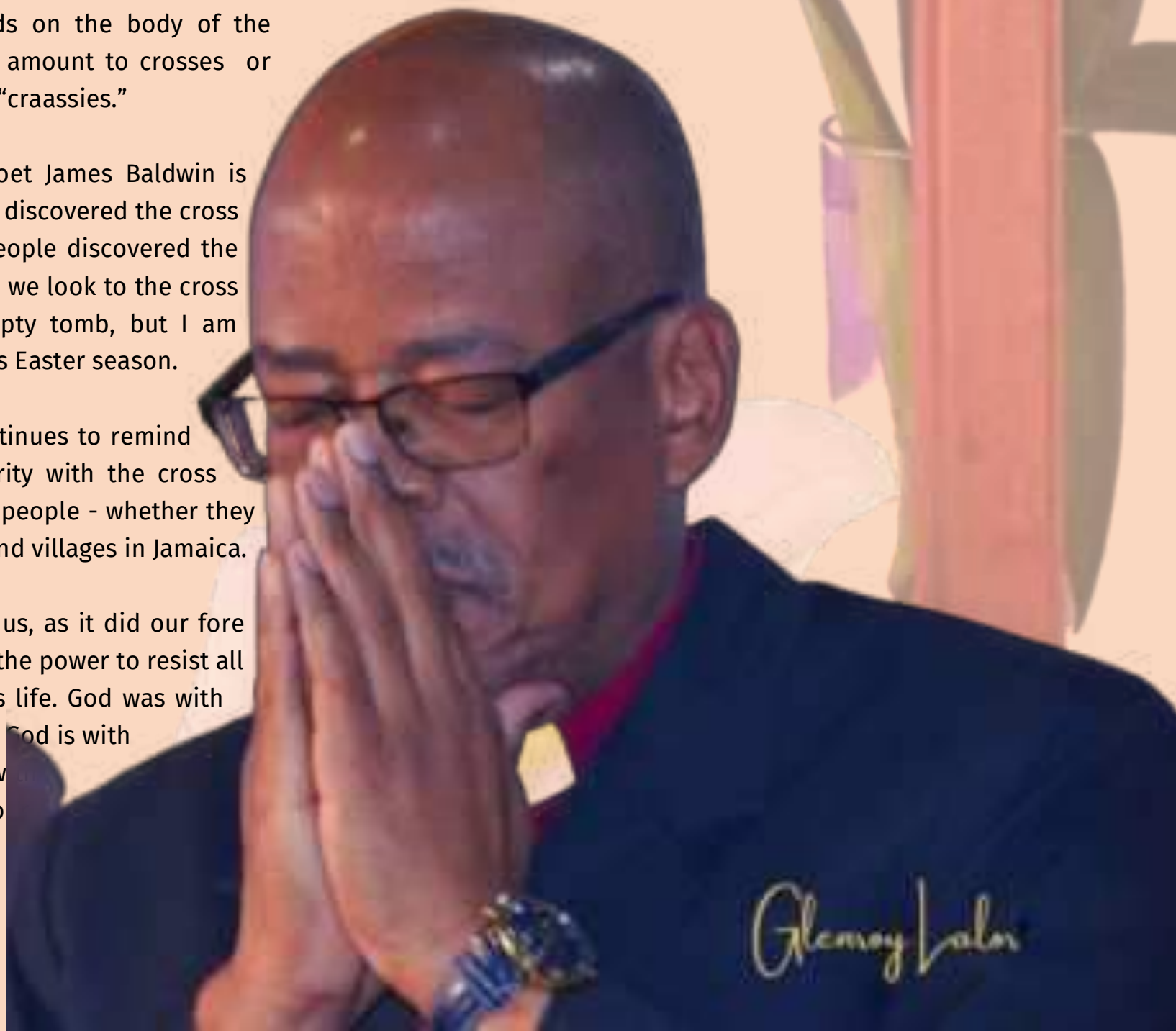
The cross for us is victory and not defeat; it is not shame, but the disarming of those who use shame as a weapon.

Although Good Friday has passed and we are basking in the joy of the resurrection, let us linger under the cross and proclaim that message of hope.

Let us live with the confidence that comes from the one who died on the cross.

Blessed Easter

Rev Glenroy Lalor, PhD
President, JBU





Jamaica

En tant que membre de la confession Baptiste Jamaïcain et Caribéen, je médite sur la signification continue de la croix du Calvaire.

S'ATTARDER PRÈS DE LA CROIX

Mes pensées ont été influencées par ma relecture de *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* de James Cone et de *The Cross and the Machete* de Devon Dick, qui révèlent tous deux que la croix reste un symbole puissant de la solidarité aimante de Dieu envers les plus faibles et les plus démunis, ceux qui font face à des « croix » dans leur vie.

En Jamaïque, lorsque nous disons que quelque chose est « sa croix », cela peut faire référence à des épreuves, des tribulations, des inconvénients ou de la malchance. Malheureusement, notre monde est encore marqué par des croix, notamment les effets persistants de la pandémie de COVID, la hausse des prix des biens de première nécessité due à l'inflation, les salaires insuffisants pour couvrir le coût de la vie, la criminalité, la violence et les meurtres qui rendent nos communautés dangereuses, ainsi que les impacts de la crise climatique et des guerres sans raison.

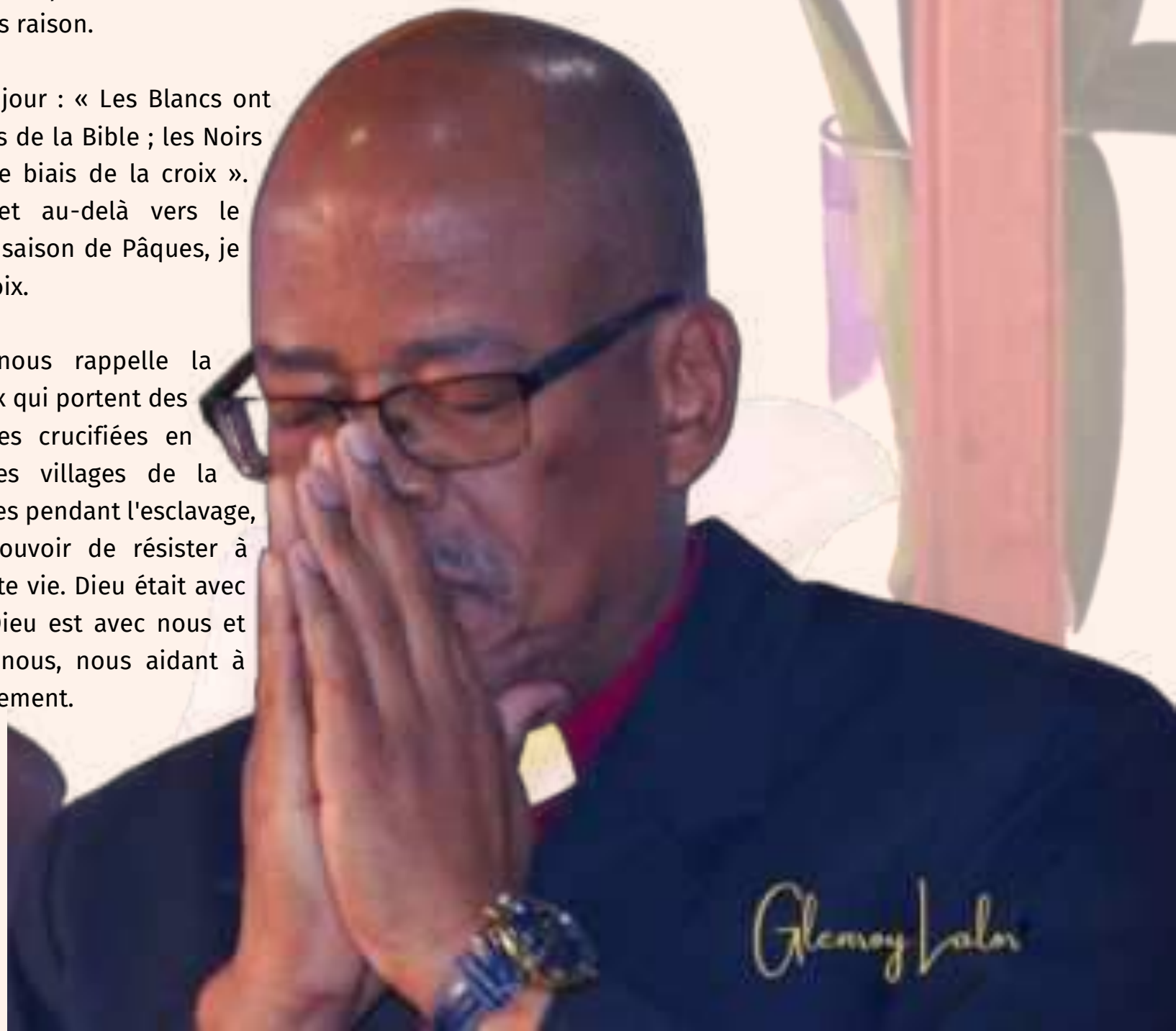
James Baldwin a déclaré un jour : « Les Blancs ont découvert la croix par le biais de la Bible ; les Noirs ont découvert la Bible par le biais de la croix ». Nous regardons la croix et au-delà vers le tombeau vide, mais en cette saison de Pâques, je reste sous le charme de la croix.

La croix de Jésus-Christ nous rappelle la solidarité de Dieu envers ceux qui portent des croix en 2023, les personnes crucifiées en Haïti, dans les rues et les villages de la Jamaïque. Comme nos ancêtres pendant l'esclavage, la croix nous confère le pouvoir de résister à l'injustice et au mal dans cette vie. Dieu était avec Jésus sur la croix et donc, Dieu est avec nous et continuera à marcher avec nous, nous aidant à porter notre croix quotidiennement.

La croix est un symbole de victoire, pas de défaite, et elle désarme ceux qui utilisent la honte comme une arme. Même si le Vendredi Saint est passé, continuons à rester sous le charme de la croix et à proclamer un message d'espoir. Vivons avec confiance en celui qui est mort sur la croix.

Je vous souhaite une joyeuse Pâques.

Rev Glenroy Lalor, PhD
President, JBU



Glenroy Lalor

From BAPTIST HAITI MISSION Go to the Cross...

An encounter will radically and irreversibly change your life

Jeanne Chantal Bonhomme, a Togolese lawyer, suffered from sickle cell anemia which caused her to have a stroke. During her surgery, she made a journey into the afterlife. She saw myriads of angels and felt the presence of Jesus.

In her heart, the Lord told her to return to earth and three changes occurred in her life: her progressive healing, her social commitment to the least of these, and her great love for Jesus Christ.

At the cross, there were three encounters: Christ's face-to-face encounter with the Devil where they fought a fierce battle that ended with the crushing of Satan's head (Gen 3:15). The Enemy had been tricked into blocking the way to Jesus' ministry by crucifying Him. But Christ's death was worse for Satan than His life, for He was disarmed and debased in the spiritual world. (Colossians 2:14-15).

The second encounter was between men. At the cross, two sworn enemies were reconciled: Herod and Pilate (Luke 23:12) on the one hand, and on the other hand, Mary, who was mourning the death of her son, found another son in the person of John, who had another mother. John was the last of the apostles to die because he had to take care of Mary until her death (Jn. 19:25-27/ Luke. 23:28-29).

The third and not the least was Christ's relationship with people. Jesus talked to the real samples of humanity: the two fellow robbers who were crucified. One of them questioned his existence, his power, and his love. But the other took the opportunity to change the course of his destiny after death with a prayer of supplication. (Luke 23:39-42).

EASTER ADVICE: Go and be reconciled with your worst enemy and find for yourself a mentor and a mentee.

EASTER PRAYER: Lord, I am suffering terribly, I am out of breath, remember me...

EASTER BLESSING: May God give you the power to overcome the evil one in the name of the precious blood of Jesus of Nazareth!

EASTER STATEMENT: I declare that an encounter will positively change your life during this Easter season!

EASTER WISH: To all who commemorate Easter this year, **CARRIBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP** prays that God will remember you and radically and irreversibly change your life!

Your Humble Servant

Claude Delaube Jacquet

From BAPTIST HAITI MISSION

Allez à la croix...

Une rencontre changera radicalement et irrévocablement votre vie

Jeanne Chantal Bonhomme, une avocate togolaise, souffrait de la drépanocytose qui a causé une attaque cérébrale. Pendant son opération, elle a fait un voyage dans l'au-delà. Elle a vu des myriades d'anges et a ressenti la présence de Jésus.

Dans son cœur, le Seigneur lui a dit de retourner sur terre et trois changements sont survenus dans sa vie : sa guérison progressive, son engagement social envers les plus petits d'entre eux, et son grand amour pour Jésus-Christ.

Au pied de la croix, il y a eu trois rencontres : la rencontre face à face de Christ avec le Diable où ils se sont battus dans une bataille féroce qui s'est terminée par l'écrasement de la tête de Satan (Genèse 3:15). L'Ennemi avait été trompé en bloquant le chemin du ministère de Jésus en le crucifiant. Mais la mort de Christ était pire pour Satan que sa vie, car il avait été désarmé et dégradé dans le monde spirituel. (Colossiens 2:14-15).

La deuxième rencontre a eu lieu entre les hommes. Au pied de la croix, deux ennemis jurés ont été réconciliés : Hérode et Pilate (Luc 23:12) d'une part, et d'autre part, Marie, qui pleurait la mort de son fils, a trouvé un autre fils en la personne de Jean, qui avait une autre mère. Jean a été le dernier des apôtres à mourir car il devait prendre soin de Marie jusqu'à sa mort (Jn. 19:25-27/ Luc. 23:28-29).

La troisième et non la moindre était la relation de Christ avec les gens. Jésus a parlé aux échantillons réels de l'humanité : les deux voleurs qui ont été crucifiés. L'un d'eux a remis en question son existence, son pouvoir et son amour. Mais l'autre a saisi l'occasion de changer le cours de son destin après la mort avec une prière de supplication. (Luc 23:39-42).

CONSEIL DE PÂQUES: Allez vous réconcilier avec votre pire ennemi et trouvez-vous un mentor et un mentoré.

PRIÈRE DE PÂQUES: Seigneur, je souffre terriblement, je suis à bout de souffle, souviens-toi de moi...

BÉNÉDICTION DE PÂQUES: Que Dieu vous donne le pouvoir de vaincre le Malin au nom du précieux sang de Jésus de Nazareth!

DÉCLARATION DE PÂQUES : Je déclare qu'une rencontre changera positivement votre vie pendant cette saison de Pâques !

SOUHAIT DE PÂQUES: À tous ceux qui commémorent Pâques cette année, la CARAÏBES BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP prie pour que Dieu se souvienne de vous et change radicalement et irrévocablement votre vie !

*Votre humble serviteur
Claude Delaube Jacquet*



Cecil Richards reveals the reality of our calling



Bernadette Duncan leads morning inspiration



Caryl Andrew translates for the President



Karlene Warrick presents the Women's report



More prayers



President Dick making his remarks



EST presents the Executive Report



Operation Andrew with David Serrant



Morning Inspiration the Montessorian way



We pray for God's direction of the Fellowship



Michael Friday leads the strategic planning



We pray for God's intervention in Haiti

CBF EXECUTIVE MEETING. DOMINICA. 20 OCTOBER



Herlin graced the stage with his titillating tenor



Warrick warrants kudos for his compere skills



Friday on keyboard was a Thursday night wonder



Julian Riviere is a balladeer of no mean order



Hilltop Band was tops

CBF MEN'S CONCERT. DOMINICA. 20 OCTOBER



Royalson Solomon thrilling the audience with his baritone



J-Crow at the controls



Bajans came and conquered



And you thought Victor McLeod could only preach!



Serrant actually preached for 10 minutes!



Leonard Glasgow sings with confidence

CLINTON CHISHOLM, DD

CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST, AUTHOR, TEACHER, SPEAKER, KINGSTON, JAMAICA



Rev Dr Clinton Chisholm, educator, theologian and author of several books; the most recent being *Controversial Clergyman*

DENOMINATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS BANE OR BLESSING?

This does not cut against the 'autonomy of the local church', properly understood. Denominational unions and associations are usually groupings of likeminded Christians so arranged for more effective/efficient activity and accountability on the ground. The various regional 1st century groupings like the church in Corinth in Ephesus, etc., were forerunners of our modern arrangement of say, the Baptist Association/Union in Grenada or in any other Caribbean territory.

Autocracy of the local pastor

Local churches within any such umbrella Union or association are subsets of the larger bodies and there is usually a foundational and fundamental spirit of amity (cooperative friendship) and accountability that govern the relationship of the subsets to the Union or association.

A serious problem arises when the autonomy of the local church degenerates into the autocracy of the local pastor arising from lack of vigilance on the part of local church leaders with reference to the local pastor's departure from and unwillingness to account for such departure from the principles of the Union/ Association.

Even within the early 1st century church a seasoned Apostle like Peter was publicly rebuked by the junior Apostle Paul for duplicity contrary to the essentials of the gospel (Gal. 2:11-16).

Beyond us as regional Baptists our Lord's prayer continues to be an embarrassment and a challenge for the multitude of denominations locally, regionally, and globally. My suggestion is that God is asking all of us from our various denominations to rethink our doctrinal distinctives and rethink dialogue between and among us.

Distinctiveness vs Divisiveness

Historically, denominations have mushroomed here and elsewhere because individuals and groups wish to emphasize or specialize in certain things or 'truths' that we regard as our denominational distinctives.

That's not a problem, so long as we do not allow distinctives to lead to divisiveness, where we sit in our camps and look down on others or speak unkindly against each other without even an intention of talking to or with one another.

The approach to distinctives which I would ask us to reject lovingly or surrender willingly is that approach which views our denominational distinctives, objectively, as 'what ought to be prized and thus what is prescriptive for all Christians'.

Even if this approach was correct and defensible there could still be far fewer denominations within Christendom and more Church mergers and there should be greater togetherness between and among churches because much or most of what many of us prize as distinctives of us is held in the same way by others.

The problem is that, denominationally, we do not talk to each other enough to know that we share common distinctives or we might not be as humble, honest and sensible as the Disciples of Christ and the Presbyterian Church brethren in Jamaica who merged as one denomination, the United Church, several years ago.

The approach to distinctives which I recommend is that which views denominational distinctives, subjectively, as 'what we prize and thus what is simply descriptive of us.'

It seems then, that denominational unions and associations can be defensible.

I am learning that some folk have a concern about the biblical rationale for denominational unions and associations and this modern development is said to impinge on the 'autonomy of the local church.'

The spirit and letter of John 17:21 provides hints though not much more than hints.

With reference to His present and future followers, our Lord prayed "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you..." This is in spirit and letter a prayer for unity, togetherness among Christians. Obviously the 'one' could not be ruling out groupings of believers in the widespread Roman empire but all such groupings would need to reflect fundamental oneness.

The Church is one

In a deep spiritual sense, the Church of Jesus Christ is in fact one, despite our exclusive denominational camps/claims and despite the rugged/carnal individualism within our local churches. This is what one can call the essential reality of Christian unity.

In another sense, at the level of functional reality the Church of Jesus Christ needs to be one, i.e., to behave as one and that depends on all of us within local churches and within denominations.

A serious problem arises when the autonomy of the local church degenerates into the autocracy of the local pastor ...



ST VINCENT BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Rev. Dr. Cecil A. Richards of the Kingstown Baptist Church is the new President of the St Vincent Baptist Convention.

Rev Richards also serves as Vice Chairman on the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship Theological Education Committee and a member of the Baptist World Alliance Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the current term.

He succeeded Rev Sylvester King of the New Creation Baptist Church, who now serves as Vice President.

In the past two years, virtual meetings were the order of the day, and despite our returning to face-to-face in the sanctuary worship services, many of our SVBC churches are now operating successfully beyond the walls, with regular online subscribers in numerous countries.

Even as we grow numerically, the matter of spiritual growth is our main concern: matters such as soundness of doctrine, awareness and practice of spiritual disciplines, basic knowledge of the Bible and obedience to God's words in the full sphere of one's life - these are areas of our walls that are constantly being built up and repaired to maintain its integrity.

This is becoming even more critical as we face a strategic and growing anti-church culture :

- ◆ The fight against spiritual adversity and the strange doctrines
- ◆ Issues of the virtual church and its accountability framework
- ◆ Church consumerism that undermines the development of loyal, faithful, committed and disciplined members
- ◆ The juxtaposition of faith and fear with respect to "the new normal."

The churches in the SVBC were historically led by foreign missionaries and supported by the sending agencies; a partnership that was gradually dissolved by 2000; after which the SVBC worked assiduously to equip our local, called out saints to becoming respected administrators and leaders.

Today, we act as hosts and partners in a mutually enriching framework to the glory of God; and are uncompromising as we speak to the social and spiritual matters facing our people.

We are grateful for the compassionate support provided through you, our Caribbean Baptist family, and our

extended Christian community.

As we pursue a robust vision in the face of adversity, we pause to give God praise, as we continue to overcome in faith! We are seeing renewed energy and intentionality amongst our leaders. In the midst of the storm, we have seen His provision, promise and protection. Indeed, God sustained us and we are stronger for it.

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

EDITOR'S PICK

PROOFREADS

READ ALERT!

READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES ...

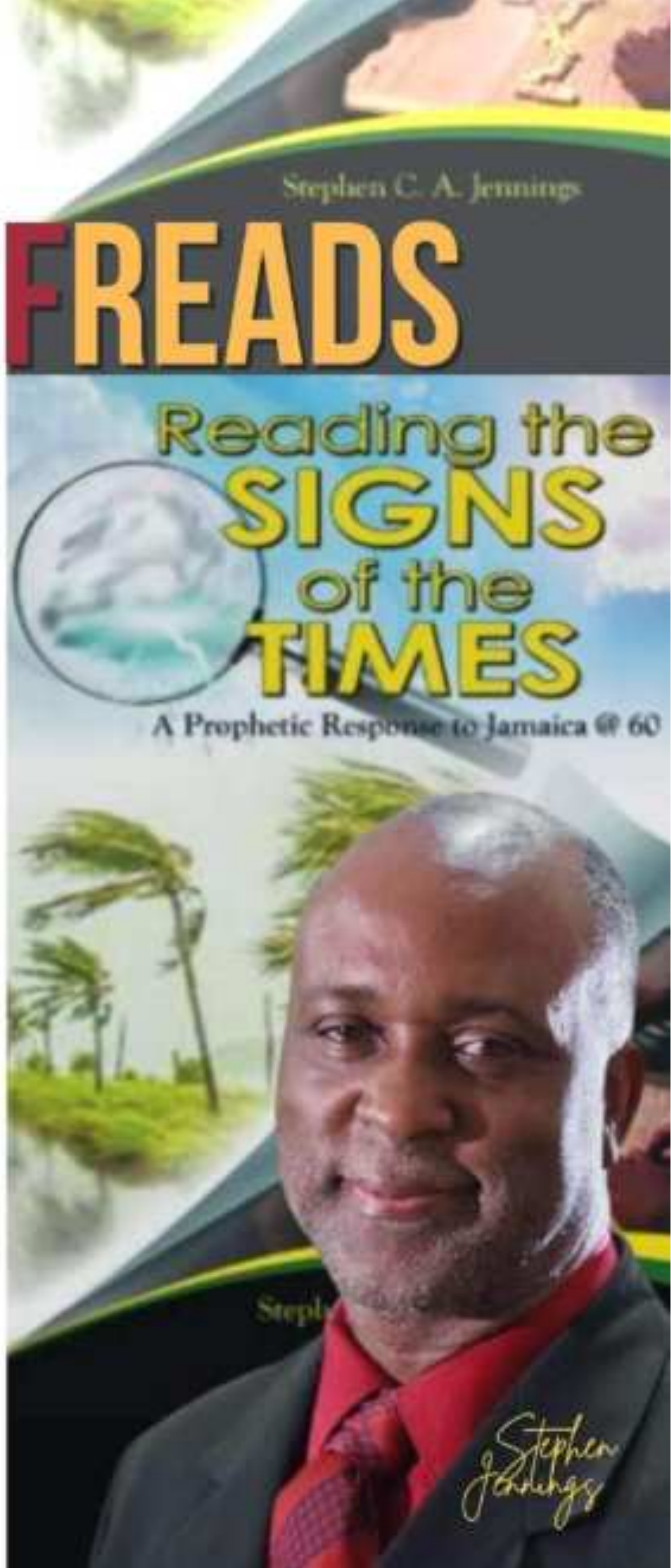
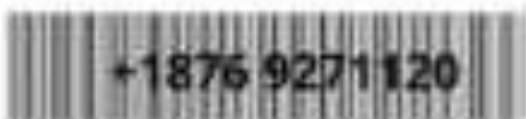
is the overlay of Rev Dr Stephen Jennings' first book, which explores contemporary Jamaica through a theological lens, as it celebrates 60 years of independence.

The author examines Jamaica's political, economic, and social progress and its several challenges in light of Christian faith, practice and its religious heritage. He then provides a description of the problems and symptoms; suggests the possible causes; and recommends several solutions.

The book is an excellent reflection on the role of the Church in responding to 21st century calamities, whether in Jamaica or any other parts of the Caribbean region. It is interestingly, intriguingly simple thought-provoking reading and an excellent resource for the church in the Caribbean.

The Rev Dr Jennings is the pastor of the Mona Baptist Circuit of churches and a past president of the Jamaica Baptist Union. CBF chats with him on page 23

Get your hard or kindle copy at Amazon. If you are in my neck of the woods, get a signed copy from the Mona Baptist Church



PROOFREADS

WITH THE AUTHOR

Stephen C. A. Jennings

CBFN: Rev Jennings, Congratulations on your publication, *Reading the Signs of the Times: A Prophetic Response to Jamaica at 60*. Share with us briefly the motivations that spawned this work.

SAJ: I was asked to present the David Jelleyman Lecture to the Jamaica Baptist Union in their 2022 General Assembly. After the presentation, I was encouraged to publish the work. On reflection, I thought that this was a good idea, especially as it dealt with issues that were current in Jamaica. I further reflected on the fact that 2022 marked the 60th Anniversary of Jamaica's political independence, and that there was the need for a theological evaluation as to where the country was, and a direction as to where it could go if it would fulfill the 60th Anniversary theme: 'Reigniting a Nation for Greatness'. I thus got to work, and this book is the result.

CBFN: Without giving away too much, when the readers start turning the pages what should they expect, and how should they respond?

SAJ: I first seek to describe some issues of concern in Jamaica today, then I give some reasons as to why these issues are occurring, and then I state how I think people who read / hear my diagnosis ought to respond. I hope that people in reading will seek to reflect on what is being said, and respond appropriately and promptly.

CBFN: I am aware that the case study for the book is Jamaica, but to what extent is this book relevant to the Caribbean; why should anyone outside of Jamaica read it?

SAJ: People outside of Jamaica should read it because 1) they could get a fair idea as to what is happening in the country and why, and what can be done about it; 2) reality elsewhere in the world in general and in the rest of the Caribbean is similar, in as much as many of the issues in Jamaica are generated by the same global system, and; 3) therefore, the solutions posited are applicable to other countries and peoples, albeit that each would need to adapt them to their own contexts.

CBFN: You have addressed the sticking point of corruption in different sectors of the Jamaican society, but what of corruption in the church. Is it at all possible that the church has not been unscathed and in some instances has lost its moral authority to respond genuinely to corruption in society?

SAJ: Yes, there is corruption in the Church. By corruption is meant that a number of members across the many denominations have been, and are guilty of ongoing vice which has not yet been repented of. So yes, because of this, some members of the church have lost their moral authority to speak about corruption, since they are guilty of the same kinds of sins. It is why the book indicates that the LORD's judgement (examination & accompanying action) begins first with the household (family) of Jesus-believers. I believe that that judgement is upon the Church at large, in Jamaica and elsewhere, now.

CBFN: "Jamaica is currently a place of concrete and cultural confidence;" quite an alliterative pronouncement, but what does that really mean and what are its implications for the church?

SAJ: By that I mean that in the first place, there is both a real confidence that people have in themselves as Jamaicans and that there is presently a lot of physical construction going on. Furthermore, there is a certain pride that people have in their history and culture, a pride that exudes in various aspects of Jamaican life such as the arts, sports and entertainment. For the church, this ought to mean that there are real things to celebrate, and that all ought not to be criticized negatively. When we critique, it ought to be that we recognize that there are good things about Jamaica, and that we are willing to work to make the good things better, and to help make the bad things become good.

CBFN: "While the Church tries to meet the social needs and the spiritual needs of people, some of the deeper political, economic, psychological and spiritual needs of people are not being met". What are some of those psychological needs and how should we meet them?

SAJ: Some of these needs include individual low self-esteem and serious fear of being shamed; an easily triggered anger, and; ongoing depression and anxiety. All of these, while personally processed and expressed, are influenced by the legacies of cruel enslavement, deceptive indentureship and oppressive colonialism. The Church and wider society can help to meet such needs by assisting persons to know their real worth and value; to manage their anger and work on helping people to receive justice and love, and; to receive forgiveness about the past and hope for the future.

CBFN: For you, the major challenge in Jamaica is the ineffectiveness of the church. What has contributed to this ineffective rut in which the Church has descended and how can it dig itself out?

SAJ: There are many reasons for this, but in this book I indicate that the church has moved away from a deep, impartial, wholistic engagement with the needs of society, and have focused on the religious and sometimes social needs of others, to the exclusion of people's other needs

CBFN: What next, should we expect a sequel any time soon?

SAJ: Yes, by the grace of God, I hope to produce and publish a sequel - really a fuller work - in 2023.

CBFN: Thank you very much sir. We look forward to what we are about to receive from you.

US\$ 100,000 GRANTS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

As part of the longstanding pledge to pursue racial justice, the BWA has committed an immediate US\$100,000 to empower restorative racial justice engagement within and by our BWA family.



\$30,000 USD in grants available to the six BWA regions to help research, establish, and highlight racial justice champions within the region.



\$30,000 USD in grants available to BWA member bodies that would help at least one member body in each region empower restorative racial and ethnic justice initiatives, training, education, or advocacy.



\$10,000 USD to help foster listening, learning, relationship building, and global engagement among grant recipients and to help sponsor at least two grant recipients or beneficiaries to an upcoming BWA Annual Gathering or Congress.



\$30,000 USD in pursuit of advocacy work at the United Nations, other multilateral institutions, or in national capitals on behalf of restorative racial justice and reparations.

FOR MORE DETAILS ...

Rev Everton Jackson
Director, Integral
Mission
everton@baptistworld.org

Merritt Johnson
Director of Communications
Merritt@baptistworld.org

Rev Dr Elijah Brown
General Secretary
Elijah@baptistworld.org



CARIBBEAN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION

Volunteers Needed

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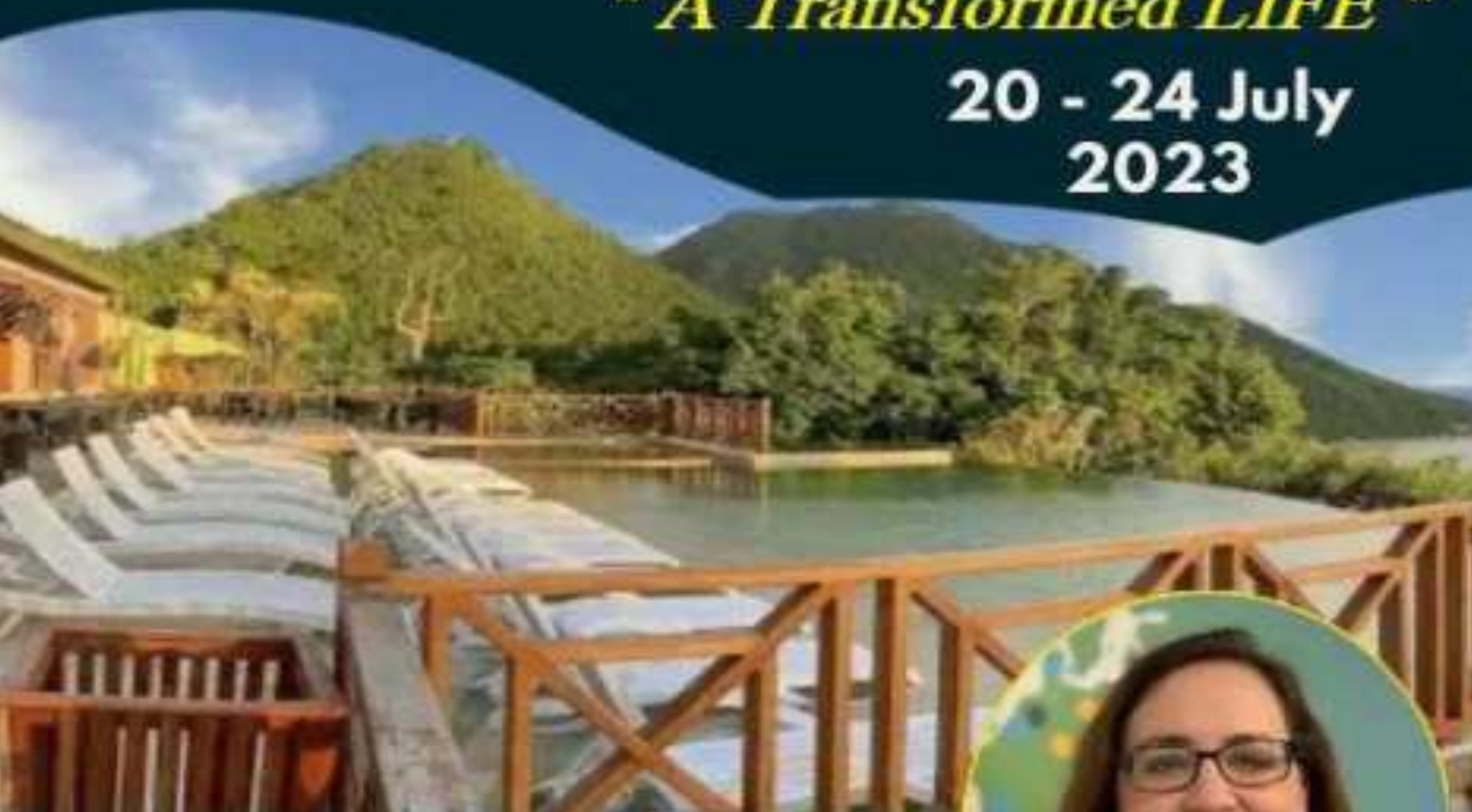


Caribbean Baptist Women's Union 39th General Conference



" A Transformed LIFE "

20 - 24 July
2023



Jungle Bay Eco-Resort & Spa *Soufriere* Dominica

- Registration Fee:
 - US\$100 (Before March 31, 2023)
 - US\$125 (From April 01, 2023)

Guest Speaker

J. Merritt Johnston
(USA)
BWA Women
Executive Director

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