

**MESSAGE TO THE SOUTH CARIBBEAN DISTRICT CONFERENCE
OF THE METHODIST CHURCH**

BY

**DR. THE HON. RALPH E. GONSALVES
PRIME MINISTER OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

I am deeply honoured to have been asked to bring you this message on the occasion of your 191st meeting of the South Caribbean District Conference of the Methodist Church on the theme “Holy Spirit: Renew Your Church Continually”. Given the glorious history of organised Methodism in the Caribbean I am sure that the process of continuous renewal in the Methodist Community would be infused, guided, and blessed by the Holy Spirit. I do so pray most sincerely.

The Preamble to the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms that our Nation is founded on the belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man. Our well-established fundamental rights and freedom, including freedom of consciences, of expression and of assembly and association are guaranteed in practice. My government places the utmost priority on constructively engaging all our churches and religious denominations, including our Methodists, in pursuance of the legitimate interests, principles, and ideals to which our people are deeply committed.

Methodism, a creed based on universal Christian values, was originally transported by the British within the ethos of colonialism into a Caribbean particularity. Over the years, Methodism itself became transformed, not in its theological essence but in its delivery fashioned by the evolving norms of that which is noble in our Caribbean civilisation. In the process a fascinating inter-play occurred between essence/content and form, text and context. A Wesleyan Vision had become actualised in a Caribbean reality.

It is to this contemporary Caribbean reality that modern Methodism ministers through an amazing grace and the uplifting and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit which manifests itself practically as the Kingdom values. Receiving and transmitting these universal values in a particular seascape and landscape known as the Caribbean have been a spectacular success of Methodism. Your Conference will undoubtedly enrich this monumental enterprise of Christian fellowship to the enduring benefit of the people of our Caribbean.

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The challenges facing our region cannot be successfully met by bread alone but by the Word, Faith, Hope, and Love. The Methodists are in the vanguard of this mighty army of Christian soldiers who enjoin us all to seek personal salvation and to contribute to social redemption and nation-building.

Accordingly, I humbly salute the Methodists on their historic work in our Caribbean and their quest for the on-going renewal of their Faith.

May Almighty God continue to bless you all!

Sincerely yours,



Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves
Prime Minister

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