



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REMARKS

BY

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE JENNIFER BAPTISTE-PRIMUS**

at the

Community Guest Day

of the

Laventille SDA Church

“Who is Your Neighbour”

Saturday, June 30, 2018

Pleasant Sabbath in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As we gather here today to give thanks and praise onto our Mighty Father for the blessings He has bestowed on this Holy Place, I would like to extend those blessings multifold to the members of the Laventille Seventh-Day Adventist Church as you continue to preach the Word of the Lord. I am pleased that you'll have invited me once again to speak in your Holy Space on Guest Day and bring greetings on behalf of my Ministry, my Government and myself. This year's theme is one that I hold dearly, because I am a product of the neighbourhood/village raising the child.

I, and I am sure many of you here today, grew up in a time where your extended family included your neighbours. Neighbours who would help you in times of need, whether it was to borrow some salt or to watch over your children while you ran errands. Neighbours who showed love, gave food and found time to instil discipline in all those around. Neighbours who would intervene and sometimes come to your rescue in times of trouble. Neighbours who were exemplars. Not so much so now.

Today, we live in a society where we really do have to ask, “Who is your Neighbour?” Too many of us live our lives for ourselves and are absorbed in our daily existence without keeping God at the forefront of all we do. We trot from work, to home, to school. Leave before sunrise and arrive after sunset. On weekends we are at Church and other activities and never take the time to know our community. That same neighbour that you just say Good Morning to could be suffering internally and wishing for someone to reach out. Someone to ask them how they are going. Ask them out, even here to Church so they can hear the word of the Good Lord.

In the Holy Book of our Good Lord, there are several references to loving one’s neighbour with Mark Chapter 12, Verse 31 being the most highlighted. This verse states that “The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” But the quintessential question lies, do we really love, or even view our neighbour as our self? Or is it that we don’t love ourselves and this prevents us from extending the love to others? So today, I challenge you my brothers and sisters to do some introspection and find your inner

love and turn it into a mustard seed of love and spread it to not only your neighbours but to all those who you encounter.

As God's Pilgrims we are often faced with narrow passages and challenging obstacles and it is these trials that test our faith, but it is our commitment to the Lord that sees us through. This is a recommitment we enter into today as we focus on our neighbour. I am sure not one person here today wants to live the type of life where he or she functions as a loner; nor do you want to merely eke out an existence. No one here enjoys going around in circles, always passing through the same territory - returning to the same problems, same frustrations, same mistakes and same limitations. We want to share these experiences, because it is that same neighbour who can share in your problems, frustrations, mistakes and present solutions that break the cycle.

We want to live with a sense of purpose in our lives. We want to abound in God's love and blessings. And this quality of life can only be achieved within the power of God; and the only way to receive

His power is through prayer and praise, which we are sharing in today.

My brothers and sisters, God wants us to praise Him and bring our family, friends and neighbours to praise Him too. He wants us to praise Him with fellow believers and encourage his Army to grow. Corporate worship makes the way for wonderful changes in each of us that may never occur otherwise, so I implore you to continue on your journey. As long as we have breath, let us continue to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything we do, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us.

In the writings of Ellen G. White, Chapter 27: "Who is My Neighbour?", based on Luke Chapter 10, Verses 25-37 she too recognises the need to be our neighbour's keeper and show no disparity to race, gender, class or economic background. And she states "We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. "Freely ye have received," Christ says, "freely give." Matt. 10:8. All around us are poor, tried souls that

need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance.”

God places these rays of promise to brighten our journey and hopes that we share this light to others so that they don't have to walk in the dark and cold paths. Brethren, sistren, as we journey upward, let us speak of the blessings along the path and walk with our neighbours, focus on them to bring them to God's worthiness and His reflection of daily life. Keep in mind the parable of the Good Samaritan, where He showed that our neighbour does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, colour, or class distinction. Our neighbour is every person who needs our help. Our neighbour is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbour is everyone who is the property of God.

May the Heavenly Father continue to impart His blessings upon this House, and upon this Blessed Nation of Trinidad and Tobago and upon each and every one of you and all our citizens.