

It is an honour for me to bring greetings to you on behalf of Prime Minister Dr. the Honourable Keith Christopher Rowley, who could not be here tonight. Do know that my presence here reflects the Prime Minister's full support of this Conference and all it offers to Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean region. In fact, just Tuesday, the Prime Minister pleaded with the Church to have a greater influence on society. He urged the Church to take on more responsibility to help fix the problems we are seeing and reverse the trend of its decreased role.

As you know, for centuries, the Church has been a cornerstone of many of our communities and its impact on society cannot be overstated. It is the Church that everyone expects to be the main teacher of moral values and ethical principles. It is the Church that has historically promoted the importance of community and a sense of unity. It is the Church that taught us and continues to teach peace and nonviolence. It is the Church that has provided a space for many to overcome feelings of loss and hopelessness. It is the Church that advocated and continues to advocate for social justice and the rights of the oppressed, marginalized and vulnerable.

Brothers and sisters, there is no arguing that at its core, the Church is a community of believers that provides a sense of belonging and support that is invaluable in our society. But as the Prime Minister highlighted, the Church's role has been diminished, which is why I am heartened by the theme for this Conference, "*Your Kingdom Come*." It is a timely reminder that we must never give up in our quest to have the Kingdom of God come on the Earth, and His will be done in this Nation, the Nations of the region, and the rest of the world.

As you assemble here over the next three days, it is my prayer that this Conference raises the level of righteousness in our Nation, after all, the Bible declares in Proverbs Chapter 14, verse 34 that righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to all people.

My personal conviction and commitment to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ tells me that we, as a Church, can declare what we want to see in Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean. The precedence is set in 1 Kings 17:1-2, where Elijah demonstrates the power of the word of God and the role of prophets in communicating God's will to a nation.

And that is but one example; the Bible provides us with other instances of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

In Exodus 14, we read about Moses stretching out his hand over the sea; and the miracle that proceeded: the temporary separation of the sea, which allowed the children of Israel to flee from the Egyptians. In Matthew 14:14-21 we again see God's manifestation of his Kingdom on the Earth when Jesus is faced with the dilemma of feeding a large crowd with what was originally five loaves of bread and two fish.

Brothers and sisters, we are living in a time when we need to see God's Kingdom come and His will be done in the nations of the Earth. There is no denying that we need Him and our Nations need Him. Therefore, it is time for us to arise and declare what we want to see over our Nations. Amos 3:7 tells us, Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants, the prophets. Let us not take the prophetic voices for granted.

And today as you respond to the call to let God's Kingdom come on this Earth, I encourage you to reflect on how you can advance the Kingdom of God in your respective communities and countries. Whether through prayer, service, or advocacy, let today serve as a renewed call for us to work together towards creating a world where God's will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

I wish to commend Prophetess Charmaine Noel, Apostle Honoré and the Caribbean Apostolic Council for having the spiritual foresight to organize this prophetic convocation.

We look forward to a mighty move of God that will bring revival with signs, wonders and miracles manifesting in our midst.

I thank you!

Brothers and Sisters, may God bless you.

May God bless our Nation.

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services