



Methodist Lay Preachers' Association (MLPA) Jamaica Methodist District

MESSAGE FROM THE METHODIST LAY PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION (MLPA) IN OBSERVATION OF CONNEXIONAL LOCAL PREACHERS' LORD'S DAY - APRIL 25, 2021

Greetings to you - our brothers and sisters in Christ's service, on this Connexional Local Preachers' Lord's Day 2021. The Methodist Lay Preachers' Association (MLPA) of the Jamaica District, is delighted to have our congregations joining the Connexion in this observation for another time, in a more synchronous way than over the past few years. We are grateful for the efforts made by the District, to move us towards this show of unity with the wider church community on this very important day in the life of preachers in the MCCA.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." – Isaiah 52:7. Today, amidst the current global realities which continue to restrict our usual freedoms to normal daily activities and even our engagement in corporate worship, we give God thanks for consistently enabling us to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to people in all spaces and via various means. It is no doubt, that our church continues to rely heavily on the ministry of local preachers too advance the work of God in the church, as evidenced by the persons in the pulpits each week, outnumbering those who have being spent in the ordained ministry. Today we salute our local preachers across the District, who have continued to avail themselves to announce the peace and salvation of Christ though the local preaching ministry.

As we navigate these challenging times, we urge all preachers to remember that moment when we first expressed a sense of call to this preaching ministry, the commitment we made to our Circuit Preachers Meetings and Pastoral Councils, and those declarations made at the time of being commissioned – for those who have been accredited. The challenges are indeed immense, with new protocols, vocabulary, and manner of engaging in our daily tasks, including how we worship. We are called upon to face the times with energy and fortitude, mindful that we are overcomers. The onslaught of COVID-19 has affected us all, but we know that as Soldiers of Christ, we must arise, "armed with the strength which God supplies, through His redeeming grace".

Assuredly, these times call for us to remain steadfast and immovable, as we continue to commit ourselves to this area of ministry in the church. Notwithstanding the fact that these times require greater preparation, energy and other resources, and we feel drained or perhaps on the flipside, we may have been disengaged to some extent, we cannot shirk. In the Name of Jesus, we must continue to *"press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* – in like manner as Paul in his letter to the church in Philippians 3:14.

We encourage our preachers to continue to seek God during this season of our lives as a people and more so as a church, and ask you to stay tuned for the details to be shared in the coming weeks for our first Virtual District Local Preachers Convocation, which will create a space for us to share, check-in and engage in sessions that will strengthen our a capacity to better meet the needs of the church community via the preaching ministry.

As we labour on, let's always recall the words of our Methodist forefather - Charles Wesley:

***A charge to keep WE have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.***

May God bless us, as with beautiful feet, we labour on in this vineyard!