



SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DONNA COX
**MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
FAMILY SERVICES**

ADDRESS
**PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WEST
INDIES (PAWI) PENTECOST RALLY 2022**

SUNDAY JUNE 05, 2022
REVIVAL TIME ASSEMBLY, SAN FERNANDO

4:50 p.m.

Good afternoon,

It is indeed an honour to be here with you today, on the occasion of Pentecost 2022. We are here to commemorate what is recorded in the Book of Acts, Chapter 2, the Day of Pentecost, which is considered a turning point in the history of the Church. When the Holy Spirit filled the disciples in the Upper Room, the power of God was released in such a way that the Church grew by leaps and bounds. I know that the Church today desires to see that kind of growth once more. However, it will require the commitment, collaboration and consecration of each one of us. Therefore, I commend the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (PAWI) for coming together during these past two weeks of Pentecost observances, just as the disciples spent several days praying and worshipping together in one accord in the Upper Room.

This year's Pentecost theme is, **“Building Together, Experience the Reconnect (Nehemiah 4:6).”** It recognises that there have been divisions in the Church and, to a certain extent, between the Church and the State, particularly in recent times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme therefore calls us to heal our relationships with one another and to work together once more towards our common goals. Like the Israelites in Nehemiah 4:6, we must have “a mind to work.” The wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt because the people set their mind to rebuilding it; they

accepted the fact that they had to complete the work despite any difficulties they might experience along the way.

The task to which the Church and the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services must set their mind, is to transform people's lives for the better. In the case of the Church, we must endeavour to make disciples of all men, according to Matthew 28:19 and for the Ministry, it is to address the social challenges of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us. In a time of devastating loss of human life, severely impacted industries and economies, and significant shifts in the way we work, learn, play, live and worship, there is tremendous need for our services and ample opportunities for the Church and State to support each other in the fulfilment of our mandates.

As a nation, we continue to witness the various issues affecting the family today, particularly as we continue to navigate through perilous times, worsened by the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges have seen a massive burden being placed on families, whether psychologically, socio-economically, and spiritually. Hence, it is critical that as the nation recovers from these challenges, that emphasis be placed on providing families with the support needed to navigate these unprecedented times.

The Body of Christ therefore must play a vital role in this undertaking. Scripture speaks to the importance of restoration of relationships, where in Colossians 3:12-14, we are encouraged to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We are further admonished to put on love, which binds us all together in perfect unity.

Recognising the Church as a beacon of hope for persons in distress and acknowledging it is able to reach individuals the MSDFS might not be able to, the MSDFS enlisted the Church's help in distributing food hampers during the pandemic. We have made it a priority to ensure that all our stakeholders, including faith-based organisations, have accurate information with which to provide the public about the Ministry's grants and services. To this end, we recently held one of our Virtual Public Information, Education and Sensitization Series (PIES) sessions with Open Bible Church on The Rock, Morvant. We are continuing to conduct these sessions with faith based organizations.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has recognized that collaboration with the Church is also crucial to sustainable development.

Within recent times, the Ministry has been more intentional in establishing partnerships with Faith Based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations who are dedicated to ensuring that our vulnerable populations are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Recently, there has been an increase in family violence, resulting in the death of many persons. This upsurge of violence being perpetrated by family members against each other is quite alarming. This vicious cycle of abuse needs to be broken and it can only start with us. Crimes of passion are impulsive and in that moment, most times, it is only the perpetrator has the ability to stop what is taking place. Based on the frequency of these incidents, it is clear that it is not solely a physical war that is being waged against the family but also a spiritual one.

There is a need to return to the values of honouring and cherishing life and return to putting God at the center of our families. We all have a part to play in helping, empowering and intervening in a meaningful way that will bring healing and restoration to families. I therefore encourage the Church to continue to partner with the Ministry, so we can collaborate to provide support to families in their most critical time of need. It is indeed important that we build together.

We are grateful to the Body of Christ for the support provided in reaching the poor and vulnerable. We will continue to pursue initiatives to support faith based organizations through capacity building, partnerships and other collaborative mechanisms within the Ministry.

In the spirit of Pentecost, let us refuse to allow our differences to hinder our commitment to and effectiveness in fulfilling our mandate. Let us follow the example of the disciples in the upper room. Let us take pattern from the Israelites rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Let us become part of the answer to Jesus Christ's prayer in John 17:23.

On behalf of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, I congratulate PAWI and all the full gospel churches of Trinidad and Tobago on a successful Pentecost 2022, and pray that you will continue to build the Kingdom of God for His honour and glory.

Please be assured that you have the Ministry's support and that of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as *we rebuild together to impact our citizens, and our society as a whole*. We are living in uncertain times but one thing we are sure of is, we serve a certain God.

Let us build together; let us experience the Reconnect.

I thank you.

God bless you.