

Productive Visioning

The issue of faith has been alluded to within the Bible when it is stated, “Now faith is substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 10: 1) and “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14 & 26). What clearly comes out from the preceding is that the process of moving from a dream towards success, must involve disciplined effort or as the older folks might say ‘elbow grease’.

This year has been another one in which several Barbadians have received recognition at the national, regional and international level, by having combined their dreams with perseverance in the pursuit of excellence. These persons have come from a variety of backgrounds, but the commonality has been their determination to excel in their field of endeavour and conquer all obstacles. That’s 100% Bajan! Productive behaviour starts with a plan or a dream, moves with appropriate and sustained effort and ends when the competition stops fighting.

As we proceed into 2004, we will be collectively faced with several opportunities and challenges associated with the intensification of undertakings within the local, regional and global arenas. Amongst these demands, will be the need to prepare ourselves for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy; the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which is to be ushered in by Jan 2005; the ongoing negotiations associated with the World Trade Organization; the Olympic Games in Greece; the liberalisation of the local telecommunications market; the tender process for World Cup 2007; the adjustments within the corporate landscape of Barbados due to mergers and acquisitions; and the evolving socio-cultural environment of our island.

Due to such fundamental influences upon the socio-political and economic well being of our nation, it is imperative that we jointly chart the wisest course towards a desirable destination whilst having ample hands on deck to execute the voyage. We need to be ever cognisant that the ‘Pride and Industry’ which brought us this far must be modified to propel us further within an evolving context. Interdependence rather than dependence should be the hallmark of our approach to life, as we cannot expect other people to solve our problems, for they not only have their own issues, but their solutions may not work within our context. At the risk of using a cliché, it is necessary that we, as mutual dwellers of this rock called Barbados, harness our physical, intellectual and financial resources in a way that sustainably improves our competitiveness and standard of living. The failure of our country to do well will negatively affect us all; the only difference will be to what degree we respectively suffer.

The Social Partnership process that occurs at the macro level amongst the Government, private sector and trade union movement has become a model for many persons outside of Barbados. However, we need to cascade this systems-approach throughout our society, so that we foster a culture marked by the pursuit of success, cooperation and mutual gains.

I believe that the following quotes put things into perspective.

- With ordinary talent and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable;
- There is real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment;
- Some fellows dream of worthy accomplishments, while others stay awake and do them;
- It is no profit to have learned well, if you neglect to do well;
- Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand;
- The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm;
- We all make mistakes. We vary only in how willing we are to admit to them and to make amends;
- Courage is the mastery of fear, not the absence of fear;
- What cannot be altered must be borne, not blamed;
- We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles;
- Leadership is impossible without a guiding vision and a purpose that generates passion for accomplishment;
- It's difficult to inspire others to accomplish what you haven't been willing to try;
- Those who do not plan for the future will have to live through it anyway; and
- Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

I would like to sincerely wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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