

November 26th 2021

TESTED AND TRIED LEADERSHIP YOU TRUST

Introduction

The ongoing discussion surrounding the Covid-19 vaccine and the coming into force of the “Public Health (Public Bodies Special Measures) Rules 2021” on November 19, 2021 has sought to portray the ULP administration lead by Comrade Ralph as anti-worker. There has been much finger-pointing and name calling with individuals opposed either to vaccination, the Regulation, or both taking aim at our country’s leadership in the most vicious ways. From the position of leaders of some workers union and a representative sample, the actions of the government represent “wickedness in high places” and is absolutely draconian. As far as a few vocal church leaders are concerned, the actions represent the work of the antichrist and our leaders are branded “un-christlike”. Some of these individuals can be heard questioning the motive and genuineness of Comrade Ralph who leads the government suggesting that he has no love for the people of this country whom he leads. The reality is however, that nothing can be further from the truth, and Vincentians, regardless of political persuasion, religious practices or ideological beliefs have developed a high level of trust in the leadership of Dr Gonsalves over the years because he has stood the test of time. No other head of government has lead this country through so many challenges, undertaken major tasks thought impossible while ensuring that social programs focus on protecting the poor and vulnerable including the elderly and children. At the core of every policy of this government is a deep care and overwhelming concern for the wellbeing of Vincentians and our leader interrogates every proposal with the rest of his cabinet of ministers to ensure that no one is disadvantaged as a consequence of their implementation.

Compassionate Leadership In Times of Disaster and Tragedy

Since coming to office in 2001, the ULP has had to lead the recovery of this nation from a number of disasters and tragedies, both national as well as some localised in certain communities. As we reflect on the type of leadership our nation has been blessed with, and the head of government who has been at the forefront of the various recovery effort, we examine two such events.

December 2013 Floods

The floods of Christmas Eve 2013 are still fresh in the minds of most Vincentians who no doubt remember being busy preparing that night, only to be plunged into destruction and tragedy the next day. Heavy rainfall destroyed 17% of GDP, but beyond the numbers, many homes were damaged or destroyed, roads blocked, bridges washed away, our country was without electricity and water for extended periods and 9 persons were either dead or missing. It was a time of national mourning, and we knew the task of rebuilding was going to be a mammoth one. The Prime Minister got to work immediately bringing temporary relief to those who suffered loss or damage, and he offered the assurance that everything would be done to restore lives and livelihoods. In the coming weeks and months, affected persons were given brand new appliances and furniture to replace those damaged, homes were repaired where possible or families relocated to new homes where necessary. Comrade Ralph met with grieving families, pledged the assistance of the government with funeral expenses, doing everything to provide some comfort during the difficult times. All this while members of the opposition could be heard responding “that is not my job” when asked to collect names of those affected in specific constituencies or the leader of the opposition suggesting that affected families be allowed to import new appliances at concessionary rates. This country rebounded from that disaster stronger than ever and filled with appreciation for the swiftness with which our government acted and the compassion shown.

Rock Gutter Tragedy 2015

What started as a normal morning for the North Windward village of fancy on that fateful day, soon turned tragic, as an accident claimed the lives of 7 teenaged students on their way to school. The magnitude of this tragedy, shook the entire country despite the fact that it was localised, limited in direct impact to families living in Fancy. The entire country was plunged into mourning. Without delay, Comrade Ralph made his way to the village to meet with residents and the families of the children who had died in that tragic accident. Our comrade leader did his best to offer comfort to the grieving families with his presence, but also pledged support to the families to assist with the expenses associated with the burial of their loved ones. To the students who survived, Comrade Ralph committed his government to assisting them throughout their schooling. To this day, families of those children who perished in such tragic circumstances, remain grateful for the personal support offered by PM Gonsalves and the support offered by the government he leads. This disaster presented another example of our leader acting with compassion in the interest of citizens of this country.

Conclusion

A careful reflection on the two examples examined would immediately dismiss doubts anyone may have of the compassionate nature of this country's prime minister. For the last 20 years since taking office, he has shown through actions, that he takes the responsibility of his office seriously in leading this nation and ensuring that our citizens and residents are the ultimate beneficiaries of the policies of his government. Never once has he misled this nation; never once has he acted in a manner that put the lives or livelihood of our people at risk. He has always ensured that the policies of this ULP are in the best interest of Vincentians. Comrade Ralph is the leader you have grown to trust with educating your children for the future, caring for the elderly, planning for the impacts of climate change, building an international airport and with the health of this nation. The Comrade, and his family took the Covid-19 vaccine very early and now he encourages you to take it. You've trusted the Comrade in the past, you can trust him now!