

HARRIS AT LARGE

O P I O N I O N C O L U M N
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By Ed Harris
Freelance Journalist

Always looking at the brighter side of things.



Harris At Large
Opinion Columns
2021

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Freelance Journalist

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ABOUT THE WRITER

Edward Alphonso Harris is Guyanese by birth, currently a nationalized Saint Lucian who has travelled extensively. He has lived and worked in several countries outside of his homeland, Guyana, including Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

Ed Harris has been writing for 25 years. His column Harris at Large has been published in many newspapers and are archived at www.stluciasimplybeautiful.com He currently contributes in the Opinion Column of the Voice Newspaper.

He is tireless in his quest to share the Principles of Affirmation and to set alight the power of the Entrepreneurial Spirit as a means of assisting in alleviating poverty in the Caribbean and around the world. At 79, he is not about to retire and is actively engaged in the areas of Business & PR Consulting, Real Estate, Networking, Freelance Journalism, Motivational Speaking and Private Sector Advocacy. Currently, he owns and manages Ed Harris Real Estate & Consulting Services and holds the position of Broker/Consultant with offices at 31 Commercial Street, Vieux Fort, Saint Lucia.

Ed is passionate about changing lives for the better - financially and socially through education and Entrepreneurship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To all the wonderful persons who continue to encourage me in the writing of my weekly column, especially the team at Millennium Investment & Consultants Brokerage - Myrna George-Harris and Curtisha Flood, I am truly grateful.

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Mobile/WhatsApp: 1 758 485 1456

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HARRIS AT LARGE IS BACK!

To my readers everywhere,

Happy New Year!

I am happy to inform you that Harris at Large is back in The Voice Weekend Newspaper from today, 16/01/21.

I promise to give you my honest perspective on what is happening in the world today, especially in the areas of business and politics.

After eight years of relative silence, I feel compelled to return to providing my readers with information that will assist them in navigating the challenges of a world plagued by the COVID 19 pandemic.

It is my sincere hope that together, we will make life easier for all of us.

May you be blessed in every way.

Your Friend,

Ed Harris

#stluciagreatpropertydeals

THERE IS HOPE FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD IN 2021!

First appeared in The Voice Newspaper, St. Lucia – 16/01/21

Here's wishing my readers a New Year of Miracles!

I am moved to return to writing my weekly column after an absence of eight years. The year 2020 was like no other in recent history. As we look back at what transpired, we see a world exposed to many segments of trials and challenges, where business as Usual transformed to business Unusual, amidst the despair of the pandemic disaster of COVID -19.

Saint Lucia continues to cope with the pandemic, with limited deaths. Thanks to the efforts of the medical and security personnel for exercising strict supervision of the protocols. As a result, we are able to control the virus and maintain a reasonable level of economic activity.

Most of us survived on the basis of resilient determination and inspiration which stimulated and sustained our faith and determined spirit throughout the regimen of wearing masks, observing social distancing while washing our hands regularly. We are now living in the era of the coronavirus, where we are left with no other choice, than living under restrictions that became necessary in an effort to control the pandemic where we experience lockdowns, and curfews, resulting in our freedom of movement being curtailed.

We learned to work from home, home school our children, and discipline those who were accustomed to study in classrooms, to study online remotely. Restricted regional and international travel caused major setbacks, especially in the tourism industry, while experiencing the highest level of unemployment, resulting in many citizens' inability to provide food and shelter, reduction of medical care, by giving priority to COVID 19 patients, among many other changes that we are currently experiencing.

As the New Year dawns, it is relieving and reassuring to note that 3 vaccines are currently being distributed and dispensed by medical professionals. It is likely that it will take months to effectively vaccinate the majority of the world's population. However, concurrently, the citizens must apply restraint in their behaviours, and observe the established protocols. While the voices of the medical experts are calling upon citizens to adhere, there is open season as the majority of citizens refuse to be restrained when it comes to holidays, family gatherings, political rallies, and protests. The reluctance of the USA to follow in the footsteps of the UK and Canada has begun to show substantial increases in cases with the numbers climbing to as many as 4,000 deaths in a single day. The UK and Canada are currently on Lockdowns which were extended. Should the surge in cases continue in the USA, it might become necessary to implement lockdowns in certain states if not in the entire country.

In spite of our best efforts, no one can predict with any certainty when this pandemic will end. In the meantime, life must continue, and like other past disruptions in our lives, this too shall pass. It is not about laying blame for what is happening as a result of putting the stock market ahead or caring for the lives of the people, but it is necessary to be cognizant of the importance of good

leadership in all aspects of our lives, especially political leadership. Leaders must display Empathy and Vision. The Bible says “where there is no vision, the people perish”.

Who would have thought that the great United States of America – the bastion of Democracy would have fallen into such dark days? The hopes of many have now become fears as President Donald J. Trump continues to create confusion even as he prepares to exit the White House. A new leader will emerge and it is clear that President-Elect – Joe Biden is doing and saying all the right things, and there seems to be an apparent silver lining.

Having made the foregoing observations, I can only conclude that our world is in dire straits and solutions must be found in the shortest possible time. This is by no means the end of the world. As an optimist, it is my firm belief that our best days are ahead of us.

Remember Almighty God is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

NEVER GIVE UP!

First appeared in The Voice Newspaper on 23/01/21.

“Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong.” – **Richard Armour**

In spite of the surge in the COVID 19 Pandemic, it is with a sense of hope that I write this column. I was glued to my television all day of the inauguration of President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. I told my friends at the start of the Democratic Primaries that VP Joe Biden was the man for the job to bring change from the Trump doctrine to an orderly democratic government. We can now look forward to the return of a world that will be humane, where dignity and respect will be honoured. The words – God bless America will be real once again. Congratulations to President Joseph Biden, and his Vice President Kamala Harris who is the first female and first black Vice President of the United States of America. The world can now breathe again.

During this week, we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, when we the people of the world shared his dream which is very likely to come alive under the Biden/Harris administration. On Wednesday, we witnessed the inauguration of President Joseph Biden and his Vice President Kamala Harris. In spite of the disruption to the Capitol, a well choreographed ceremony was held to introduce the new President and Vice President to the nation of the United States of America, and the rest of the world.

It has been a long road to the White House for President Biden. After two failed attempts at the Presidency, he finally succeeded on the third. **Never give up!** President Biden is well prepared for the job and will definitely hit the ground running. His heart is in the right place, and equality and justice will prevail. Unifying the nation will be a huge challenge for him but if there is anyone who can achieve this feat, that person is President Biden.

Going forward, the world is left to grapple with the COVID 19 pandemic and the economic fallout as a result. While the development and production of vaccines have been encouraging, it will take some time for the world’s population to be vaccinated. It has been reported in the USA that putting shots in arms have been slow, and supplies are not at the expected level. Hopefully, this situation will be corrected shortly.

On the economic front, President Biden’s 1.9 trillion dollar assistance package will put some money into circulation which will help citizens to settle some bills, and assist those with relatives overseas with remittances. In so many ways, the people of the Caribbean region are dependent upon what happens in the USA to determine their level of survival. The USA based Diaspora means a lot to the poor people in the world.

It is unfortunate, that we in Saint Lucia, just when business persons were beginning to feel that the COVID 19 surge will not affect them in relation to the level of economic activity that returned to the country, it was necessary for the government once again to hold back and return to restrictions that were previously instituted. Hopefully, the duration of 10 and 21 days will be all that will be

necessary. With the new strain of the virus and increasing number of cases in the USA which is our major source for tourists, it is time for serious concern.

The time has come for the Government of Saint Lucia to initiate an **Economic Council** that will engage the public and private sectors, and civil society to make recommendations to navigate the challenges of maintaining economic balance, while taking care of the health issues in general, and the pandemic in particular. There should be opportunities for citizens to contribute by hosting town hall meetings to get ideas and feedback. The challenges that confront us require all hands on deck. This is a good time to encourage participatory governance.

I encourage my fellow Saint Lucians to seek out information in relation to political and economic developments in the USA. Our future is inextricably linked to the state of affairs in the United States of America. It is a great time to be alive! **We, the people will Never Give Up!**

Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

RESET 2021

January 27, 2021

“The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.”– [Winston Churchill](#)

We are almost at the end of the 1st month in the first quarter of 2021, and what a start to a year that is set to be a sensational year. It is going to be a year of Miracles and Reset. Things that are not right will be reversed and put in order. This is no prophecy but stay with me and enjoy the ride.

One year ago, our world was thrown into a dilemma, that unlike any other time in our lives, a pandemic emerged and threw the dreams and achievements of many into a tailspin. Anxiety and uncertainty invaded the minds of many and the world was thrown into emergency mode. As we came to the end of 2020, two vaccines were ready to roll out. However, it will take many months before the impact of vaccination will be felt.

Now, with just over a year, the pandemic remains with us and has killed millions of people around the world. It has slowed down our pace of life. We endured lockdowns and restricted activities in our daily routine. We were requested to wash our hands regularly, wear masks and maintain social distancing. It was necessary to engage in self-audit and in many instances adapting to new ways of living. The pandemic caused a RESET as many took the opportunity to chart a new course. It is not all doom and gloom, apart from record-breaking gains in the stock market and the remarkable performance of the real estate industry, many individuals have adapted to the new measures introduced by industrial and commercial enterprises, such as working from home and communicating through digital platforms such as ZOOM and others. We now attend funeral services from the comfort of our homes and celebrate special occasions on Zoom. We are learning to stay within our immediate family, and sometimes wonder if life will ever return to the way it used to be. However, past experiences have shown that in our darkest hour, we will be able to stand upright and say that this too shall pass.

It is evident that the COVID 19 pandemic will be with us for the greater part of 2021; it is time to take a serious look at how we reset our lives going forward. Many of us have taken the time that is available to us to improve our lives, by spending more time with our families, expanding our knowledge by reading, doing things around the home, getting our children to settle down to the new routine of online studies, etc. It is definitely a challenge as many of us seek to reset our domestic and professional lives, in the face of transitioning from being fully employed to partially or unemployed with no current assistance from the government or otherwise.

Hereunder are my recommendations going forward, regardless of whatever state we find ourselves at this time.

1. To build our FAITH to believe and accept that there is a higher power. Pray as a family, and individually, along with reading a few verses from our holy book.
2. To develop self-confidence in all our undertakings by affirming positive statements every morning and evening.

3. To plan our finances to ensure that a path to generational wealth is charted.
4. To set aside time for personal development by reading, and where possible expanding our professional skills by studying through online course/s.
5. To reach out to those family and friends who due to our busy schedule, we were unable to maintain communication.
6. To be grateful, giving thanks at all times regardless of whatever state we find ourselves.

Generally, we must take time to look back at our lives, assess our current situation, and challenge ourselves to be better human beings – expressing the gifts of love, empathy, and respect for all going forward.

This is a time to live purposeful lives that will impact our immediate families and the wider community. We must be each other's keeper. It is time to RESET our lives. Let us do what we have the ability to do, and the divine spirit will take care of the rest. Just do something to make a difference that will transform lives for the better. Blessings!

Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

THE TIME TO INVEST IS NOW!!!

February 11, 2021

“When you allow people to get back in the game and have a job, everything moves”. Joe Biden.

It has taken much longer than I anticipated to bring me to this headline which was due to the disruptive political and economic developments in recent months in the U. S. A. and other parts of the world. Yes, the time to invest is now, as there has never been a better time in our lifetime to invest than now. To prove this fact, look at who is at the top of the list of richest persons in the world – it is Elon Musk.

The principle of Buying Low and Selling High is very relevant at this time. Certain types of investments are definitely in line with this trend. Demand is outstripping supply in many areas. Manufacturing and Commerce will prosper, and Business in general will be great. Better days are coming; the United States of America is back!

Nothing is stopping the U.S.A. from moving ahead with its economic agenda, and so is our CARICOM neighbour Guyana. With few exceptions, since the new variants have introduced themselves, restrictions have been placed on residents of some countries at home and others seeking to enter the U.S.A. Looking at cable news, we see President Biden and the officials around him are wearing their masks and maintaining social distancing, while carrying on the business of government – ever conscious of the presence of COVID 19.

There is no need for the average investor to panic in spite of the Reddit users on Wall Street Bets triggered a buying frenzy on GameStop, and as a result, some serious damage was done to the industry in general, and hedge funds in particular. The experts predict that this is just the beginning. However, the situation begs the question – is the Stock Market endangered by this development? The answer is NO! Life continues on Wall Street but one thing is certain, the Governments of the developed countries such as the U.S.A. and others will intervene and enact legislation to prevent this type of situation from happening in the future. Many times creative Entrepreneurs are ahead of Governments, with the latter having to play catch up. Very few things are perfect the first time. Even the great American Constitution needs to be revisited, especially after the experiences with President Donald J. Trump, his enablers, and supporters.

There is an urgent need to put our people back to work. Jobs! Jobs! Jobs! is no longer a slogan, it is now a reality. Most people must have a regular income to put food on the table, and pay their bills. Those who are in a position where they are able to maintain their jobs and receive wages and salaries at pre COVID 19 levels are very fortunate, while others take home reduced earnings or are working fewer hours. If there is one lesson to be learned from the instability of the JOB market during COVID 19 is to have one or more Side Hustles. Multiple streams of income is the answer to employment security whether it is investing in Stocks, Mutual Funds, Futures, etc., or Real Estate which is considered one of the most guaranteed form of investments. Beyond investments that require substantial funding, there are other businesses that can be just as profitable with smaller investments. Find a business that you are passionate about and go for it; even turning a hobby into a business.

The time is rife for community businesses to expand. Small shops and bakeries have led the way but have not moved along with the times. There is room for much improvement to the surroundings and the range of products being offered. It is time to turn Dancehalls into Discotheques, Bars into Game Rooms, introduce Pop Up Stores (method of taking your business to the people), by collaborating with established related businesses which should be aggressively promoted. Put your creative energy to work and become a business person with the joy of living life on your own terms. Take responsibility for your own survival and be successful in whatever endeavour you chose.

Next week, I will share with my readers a business that has eluded me for several decades but I firmly believe that “Winners never quit and Quitters never win” – Vince Lombardi.

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

#multilevelmarketing

THOUSANDS CAN BE ENGAGED IN A HOME-BASED BUSINESS IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS!!!

February 18, 2021

“NETWORK MARKETING is no longer on trial. It is a proven and viable profession. A profession that’s helping millions of people get ahead financially and moving them closer to their dreams.”
Art Jonak.

The people of the Caribbean and by extension the world, given the state of the COVID 19 pandemic are all suffering from FINANCIAL ANXIETY. The pain of Joblessness has overwhelmed citizens everywhere. Everyone is trying to find ways to make money, and as a result, scammers are very busy giving false hopes and depriving persons of the little they may have. It is a cruel world.

World Influencers such as Robert Kiyosaki, Tony Robbins, Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Warren Buffet, have all commended the Multi Level Marketing – (MLM)/Network Marketing industry, with two of the named individuals actually owning MLM companies. It is time for us to heed the advice of great motivational and entrepreneurial leaders.

People in all walks of life have at one time or another participated in the Network Marketing business, many, only to drop out after the promised financial and leisure rewards eluded them. Most persons after trying to convince family and friends without success, and facing rejection after rejection decide the industry is not for them. The industry has come a long way. In the early days, Independent Distributors were required to pay for Start Up Kit and request Auto Shipments, where they were locked into monthly credit/debit card payment for product/s, and in some cases even encouraged to carry stocks.

The evolution of the industry saw the introduction of services, offering digital products in the Travel & Leisure markets, and in more recent times – Foreign Exchange Training & Trading programmes.

Persons seeking ground floor opportunities are usually taken for a ride as over and over when companies promote prelaunch programmes lasting for several months, only to disappear, in some cases not before collecting the monthly subscription from thousands of Distributors.

The Industry statistics are not favourable to persons seeking to participate as only one-quarter of people who get involved in multilevel marketing manage to make money, as outlined in MLM business statistics. However, individuals continue to flock to the industry which is served by hundreds of companies in the U.S.A., attracting over 18 million Distributors, with a current annual sales volume in excess of 36 billion US dollars. While the Caribbean is suffering from MLM fatigue, the urge to join every type of MLM business opportunity is high. The MLM industry is a substantial contributor to the Home Business sub-sector in the U.S.A. in terms of business opportunities, and should be adapted in the CARICOM region. This business model can assist in

alleviating the chronic unemployment situation which is further being exasperated by the present COVID 19 pandemic.

The recent spate of Investment scams, luring persons to invest money for high returns in every type of financial offering, points to the fact that people of the region are looking for opportunities to supplement their incomes. The warnings about Ponzi and Pyramid schemes have not stopped them. As a result, alternative legitimate programmes should be readily available to citizens.

Up to this point, MLM opportunities have been unsustainable for many reasons, including, 1. The high cost of Sales kits and products/services. 2. In the instance of products, the cost of shipping and customs levies. 3. Customers limited to family and friends who are generally hostile towards the industry, ignoring the fact that in many cases the opportunity is a global one. However, there are many instances where participation in certain programmes is not possible because the territory is not opened up, due to financial and other government regulations.

The private and public sectors should be involved in a comprehensive study to indentify to the pros and cons of the MLM/Network Marketing Business Model. Maybe, Invest St. Lucia, given its interest in the MSME sector with such programmes as <https://startupspace.app> and www.boostsaintlucia.com should be encouraged to facilitate such a study, and assist in the implementation if found feasible. There is no other opportunity that could be as accessible to the small man as a MLM business, founded on the principle of equity for all. Apart from the opening up of self-employment and training opportunities, Saint Lucia will take centre stage in aggressively promoting its Tourism product, Citizen by Investment Programme, and attractive Incentives to Foreign Direct Investors, alongside the proposed MLM business.

I am confident that a Digital product, providing Lifestyle Guidance will make St. Lucia a model country to the developing world where any person with a smartphone and a Social Media Account can experience life-changing results.

In the words of Rod Cook – “MLM is the only hope of the little guy.” Let the dialogue begin.

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

MLM/NETWORK MARKETING, THE WAY TO GO – PART 2

February 25, 2021

“Network Marketing gives people the opportunity, with very low risk and very low financial commitment, to build their own income-generating asset and acquire wealth.” Robert T. Kiyosaki.

In my last column, I highlighted the ability of the MLM industry to provide the Home Based Business subsector with opportunities unmatched by any other industry in its category. Just released figures show that the top earner (team of 2) walked away with in excess of US\$31M for the year 2020.

Why am I so excited? Here, I am pointing to two major achievements of the MLM industry. 1) MLM generates substantial self-employment opportunities for Independent Distributors, and 2) MLM has the ability to transform lives, giving its Distributors independence, coupled with Financial and time freedom – fuelled by the power of residual income. “MLM is the only hope of the little guy.” Rod Cook.

Over the years, I participated in several MLM opportunities and met the heavyweights of the industry on two MLM cruises. While I have not made a success of any of the MLM opportunities I joined, my exposure to the industry has provided me with the knowledge to identify the problems within the industry. A way has to be found to minimise the hype and provide a level playing field where everyone will be treated equitably.

I am persuaded that the MLM industry is the only vehicle that can bring about massive change among individuals who seek to transform their lives from being unable to make a contribution to themselves and society, into being an active citizen, living a life with purpose. Life can be made simple for everyone, where the type of product and compensation will be among the best in the industry. I see the possibility of bringing some innovative features to the industry with the launch of a DIGITAL PRODUCT which will provide LifeStyle Guidance, dealing with problems that plague our society and pointing to the virtues of a purposeful life. I envision a product that will inform and educate, touching all aspects of human existence. Some of my recommended subject areas are Vocational Training, Personal Development, Family Life, Societal Behaviour, Healthy Lifestyle, Business Opportunities, Environmental Awareness, Tourism Experiences, etc. A network of persons will be providing the content for the core programmes.

Participants in the proposed MLM business opportunity will receive daily updates, and invitation to attend weekly webinars to further discuss developments in their Company, and receive training in their business. I see an opportunity that will encourage full participation of its Distributors.

Anyone with a smartphone and is active on social media platforms can be a success. There will be no excuses such as I can't get a job, there are no jobs in my community, and all the other usual excuses. Both young and old, male and female will be able to make a contribution to their own upkeep, and living life with a sense of purpose.

I see a global opportunity for a Caribbean MLM project. We cannot ignore any longer, the opportunities this industry presents; the figures below tell the story.

Commission Payout to the MLM Industry in the U.S.A. in 2020 (35.22%)

* Per year: \$42.58 billion

* Per month: \$3.55 billion

* Per week: \$818.82 million

* Per day: \$116.65 million

* Per hour: \$4.86 million

* Per minute: \$81,009

* Per second: \$1,350.15:

Source: Business For Home.org

A great example of the success that can be achieved in the MLM industry demands an introduction to Holton Buggs who opened the door to the glorious possibilities of the business. Now still a young man, after achieving great success with Organo Gold, where he earned as much as 1.3 million dollars in a single month, went on to establish ibumerang, a Travel and Leisure Company, and shortly, he will be launching Ellev8 – A Legacy Management Educational platform providing financial literacy and Forex-trading philosophies.

I present the MLM business opportunity to my reading audience with the hope that the leaders in our society will take the necessary action to put the people they represent first. There is no better way than to put money in their pockets. The choice is ours. Either we sit and wait for someone to do it for us, or we do it for ourselves, providing our own unique perspective regarding justice and equity. Let us stop wishing that we can improve the lot of the little guy, let us make it happen. Are you ready?

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

A BETTER WAY IS POSSIBLE!

March 4, 2021

“Those who believe that Politics and Religion do not mix, understand neither.” Albert Einstein

Something is happening that the citizens of the world need to stand up and take note. There is divine intervention in our world today, calling upon us to be still and recognise that human beings by themselves are nothing. How much clearer do we need to see the writing on the wall? We are called upon to wear masks and apply social distancing to protect ourselves from COVID 19 and its variants. As a result, we are no longer able to exercise the freedoms we so much enjoyed. We are called to righteousness.

COVID 19 pandemic has slowed its pace of infection and deaths in recent days. With the gains we have made, many are hastening to get back to business as usual, in spite medical professionals continue to caution us concerning our behaviour, and exhort us not to let our guards down. However, because of the leadership style by those in authority in recent years, obedience to authority is no longer observed in the manner it used to in the past. Today, confrontation under the guise of human rights seems to be the order of the day. We are at a stage where reasoning about what is right from what is wrong is lost. As someone who was brought up in an era when it was a virtue to obey the law, I stand in awe as I witness the disruptive forces at work.

We have lost many virtues along the way that would have made the peoples of the world more humane. One which comes to mind is STORY TELLING. Growing up in a small village, stories were shared in all institutions where minds were molded. We need to share our life experiences in groups so that we can learn from each other. Story telling was once the way in which we were challenged to be better citizens.

Many organisations were established in the areas of education, religion, culture, and sports to promote virtues that were platforms for building admirable attributes. The process of socialisation in the past guaranteed that the majority of our population will be honest, decent and respectful human beings. We grew up where phrases like Manners maketh man, Honesty is the best policy, and many other sayings that were drilled into our consciousness. Repetition for emphasis mattered. By the time we became young adults, we automatically acted upon the principles that taught us to be good citizens.

What has happened to our wonderful world? Are our people overly materialistic, just thinking about fun, frolic and lewd behaviour where loud vulgar music, excessive use of indecent language have become the norm?

It is time for a wakeup call encouraging all people of goodwill to return to the former things where caring and sharing were the hallmarks of a loving existence. The incidents of homicide and suicide are much too high and must be reduced substantially. We must lower the temperature. Let us invite God back into our lives and give him a place of pre-eminence in our hearts. The scripture declares that the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom.

All is not lost but the urgency to do the right things has never been greater. There was a time when priests and pastors were responsible for shepherding the flock. They were not only responsible for feeding the flock with spiritual food but also for their physical needs. Today, the physical needs of the people are expected to be met by politicians upon whom they rely for their very existence. In another life, as a young Evangelist, I always maintained that the Spiritual Things cannot be divorced from the Physical Things. It is necessary that modern day politicians lead the way back to God, and in collaboration with religious leaders work towards making this world a better place, putting God first.

Lots of things that we have become accustomed to are in reversal of past norms to which we must return.

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

UNCERTAINTY & ANXIETY ARE TODAY'S BUZZ WORDS!

First appeared in the Voice Newspaper – 13.03.21

“I used to be scared of uncertainty; now I get a high out of it.” Jensen Ackles.

The path to the future has never been more blurred than today. The year commenced with the availability of vaccines to deal with the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic. However, there is no clear indication as to how COVID 19 and the new found variants will react to the current vaccines going forward. Already there is talk about boosters, with no exact indication of what form it will take.

St. Lucia is continuing to keep its death rate reasonably under control. In recent weeks older folks seem to be in the majority of cases due to underlying health issues. While COVID 19 restrictions continue in place, it remains the duty of all St. Lucians, and visitors to our shores to adhere to the protocols of washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing. It is important that everyone contributes to observing the protocols that will make it possible to reduce instances of the spread of COVID 19.

Moving away from the issues of COVID 19, it is necessary to turn to the economy. However, it is unfortunate that every time the USA seems to be making some form of progress in the reduction of deaths and hospitalisation related to COVID 19, some Governors rush to open up their states without any concern of possible reversal of their gains. The advancement of our tourism sector is vital to the survival of our economy and should be seriously guarded to ensure that the protocols are maintained. It is interesting to note that under President Biden's administration, everything is being done to bring relief to the citizens of the USA. The passage of the 1.9 trillion COVID 19 Economic Relief Bill sets the stage for further progress in advancing the health of the citizens, and the economy of the USA in general.

It is evident that when the citizens of the USA are satisfied with the efforts of their government, the world benefits from increased travel, American investments abroad, and remittances to family and friends. Let us pray that the new guidelines recommended by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) will be helpful in bringing the pandemic under some measure of control. There are lots of expectations beyond summer 2021, when it is hoped that by that time, businesses will be back, and schools fully reopened.

Many jobs will not come back on the market, and many companies will take on new methods of operation. Working from home will continue and freelancing will grow substantially. Employers and employees will continue to find new ways of adapting to the new normal. Many employees will transition to their own businesses, and home-based businesses are likely to see massive expansion.

It is a well known fact that out of disasters come opportunities. COVID 19 is a wake-up call for many persons who have been unwilling to advance themselves with professional studies, and new skills so as to afford them some degree of upward mobility. Going forward, the challenge is for

persons to do better with their lives. It is time to stop settling anything, and design a future with the type of advancement that will be life-changing.

Internet Communication Technology has presented a platform for any ambitious person to succeed. Online learning is the way to go. Study from home and achieve your goals. Your challenge must be to turn the inconvenience and loss that COVID 19 has caused into astounding successes.

The world is watching the progress that the USA is making under the leadership of President Biden and his team, as the USA re-establishes itself as a truly democratic nation, providing a model of democracy for the world to follow.

No one knows for sure what the future holds. The future is filled with Uncertainty and Anxiety. With the help of God, we shall overcome!

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

LET US KEEP HOPE ALIVE!

1st Appeared in The Voice Newspaper – March 20, 2021

“Accepting that the world is full of uncertainty and ambiguity does not and should not stop people from being pretty sure about a lot of things.” Julian Baggini.

If we have HOPE, we have joy and peace, and all the other virtues that make life worth living. I cannot overemphasize the point that we live in chaotic times when nothing seems to be moving towards making the world a better place. It is unfortunate but POLITICIANS are at the centre of the myriad of problems that face the citizens of the world today. What is happening in China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Israel, Syria, Pakistan, and the USA today? Uncertainty and anxiety are rife. No one knows what to expect next. The political leaders of the developed nations must take responsibility for the state that the peoples of this world find themselves.

The world’s leaders at one time were guided by what is best for their citizens and many conflicts were averted. Major human disasters were handled collectively, and as a result gave birth to many multi-lateral institutions. Prior to the arrival of Donald J. Trump as President of the USA, the world was a different place. America led the way economically, and demonstrated the virtues of a Democratic State. America was at the forefront, and was considered the leader of the free world. President Trump created a following of persons whom he taught to create their own laws and took unconstitutional actions in many instances, trampling upon the rights of the majority. The insurrection of January 6, 2021 demonstrated the impact President Trump has on his followers. God does not give his people more than they can bear. In spite of President Trump’s continuing efforts in sowing seeds of discord, the entry of President Joe Biden and his team in a couple of months have redirected the affairs of the United States of America, and have taken their rightful place on the world’s stage.

The turn of the century has seen a constant deterioration in the way citizens react to instructions set out by Governments. Many defy legislative decisions and behave in ways to their own detriment. Obedience to the law of the land is important. COVID 19 presented an opportunity for citizens to obey the protocols but until now, too many citizens refuse to adhere to the protocols, especially the wearing of masks and social distancing. There is always an event or holiday that puts persons in a position to choose between Health and Sickness – where too many choose the latter. Rather than giving the gains an opportunity to advance, there is in almost every instance, the progress is receded. People must learn to control their emotions and apply patience.

In the midst of all the uncertainties, how do we keep hope alive? There has never been a greater need for **Inspired and Highly Motivated Leadership** in all areas of life. It is evident that the politicians will be the principal players. It is incumbent upon them to encourage **Collective Thinking and Decision Making**. This is the time to bring the best minds to the table and encourage meaningful participation. Political leaders must be able to get beyond party politics and involve persons who can make a contribution to the future progress of their country and by extension the world. This is a time to exhort the citizens of every nation to be hopeful. It is necessary for Story Tellers and Motivational Speakers to embark on a crusade to tell the citizens

about the journey of their race throughout the years. In the case of the English Speaking Caribbean, to share pre-independence and post-independence history. The proposed national exercise should be well documented and produced in books to be distributed in schools and for general readership.

There should be a parallel group seeking out creative avenues of providing much needed jobs to give the citizens, the independence they so desperately need.

Regardless of the state of the world today, we can be assured that if the right principles are applied, there are a number of solutions that could be found to make our world a better place.

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

COVID 19 IS WITH US, NOW LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANO ERUPTION IS LOOMING, WHAT'S NEXT?

April 1, 2021

“There’s no harm in hoping for the best as long as you’re prepared for the worst.” Stephen King

It is that time of year when Christians everywhere celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no other time in our lifetime that can be associated with this current time. Easter will not be the same. Many religious leaders are suggesting that these are the end times and Jesus will put in his appearance very soon. I have been hearing the end of time, doomsday preaching since I was a boy. Now I am an old man. I fully agree with anyone who claims that these are not ordinary times, but this is definitely not the end.

The COVID 19 pandemic is still with us. This time last year Saint Lucia was under Curfew with attendant protocols, and the world was without answers as to what the future holds. Today, we are in a much better place with access to vaccines, and we know for a fact that the virus can be controlled by the washing of hands, wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing. However, like in most things in life when persons are told by the authorities to adhere to certain instructions, they do everything in their power to circumvent those instructions. We are currently hearing about a surge in the COVID 19 virus with all the possible variants invading the United States of America. The overwhelming evidence shows that mass crowd events can create surges in cases as exist in the USA at this time. Everything is being done in St. Lucia to prevent the further spread of the virus due to mass crowd events. We should be patient and assist in ensuring that we do everything necessary to control this deadly virus.

There is never a period without uncertainty and anxiety in the lives of those of us who live in this complex world. While we continue to be concerned about COVID 19 and the toll it is taking on us, we are now confronted with the thought of a possible eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano in St. Vincent & The Grenadines. It is definitely weighing on the minds of the residents of SVG and Saint Lucia. Already, the Government of St. Lucia has begun to put arrangements in place not only for its residents but also in the event we have to open our doors to our neighbours in their hour of need. St. Lucia in recent years has been fortunate to escape the ravages of storms, and other acts of God. This is a period of fasting and praying. The prayers of the faithful saints in our midst are in most cases heard in heaven, for the prayers of the righteous availeth much. Let us pray that we may be spared of the impending eruption. This Sunday, voices will be lifted up in worship services islandwide as Easter is being celebrated around the world.

What’s next? No one can predict the future with any precision. If there is any time that without a doubt as to who is in charge, it is now. The mixed signals due to the posture of men, denying the will of God caused men to shift their allegiance away from God but today God is glorified and more persons are turning to him seeking forgiveness from their sins, and proclaiming the power of salvation. What a privilege it is to serve a risen saviour? Be still and know that God is in charge. The Bible declares that no one cometh to the Father but by the Son.

More persons are mentioning the name of God in their conversations. Families are healing because of the Good news. The times are not what appear on the surface. Look deeper and you will see that in spite of these turbulent times, the prospects are that we are heading towards better global collaborations beginning with the COVID 19 pandemic.

Have a blessed Easter!

Stay safe. Remember Always, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

A CALL FOR A SERIOUS LOOK AT INVESTING!

April 8, 2021

“When it comes to investing, nothing will pay off more than educating yourself. Do the necessary research and analysis before making any investment decisions.” Benjamin Franklin

I am always appalled at how little knowledge is shared about the things that are most important to our existence, especially relating to matters that decide how well we participate in the life we live on this earth. Money is on the mind of every person, for some the thought of money brings joy, while for others, it is a nightmare. We live in two different worlds – it is either you have, or you don't have.

1 Timothy, 6:10 **For the love** of money is the root of all evil. Too many people have simply held on to the part of the verse declaring **that money is the root of all evil**. In the event you have not heard this portion of scripture as recorded in the Old Testament – Ecclesiastes, 10:19 – A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: **but money answereth all things**. It is all about how you acquire money, and how you use it. Get to know more about money and how you can have it in abundance.

We need Influencers, people who will tell stories that will ignite the fire of prosperity in us. Everyone would like to live a good life, having the ability to enjoy financial freedom so that their bills can be paid on time, they can save money, and buy what they want, when they want it.

The United States of America is a country of storytellers where Influencers tell rags to riches stories, stories of being homeless, living in old cars, giving up on life when no hope can be seen on the horizon. Influencers evangelise prosperity, bring tears to the eyes of their audience and in many instances, participants resolve to rise up and take their rightful place in society. Have you heard names like Holton Buggs, and David Imonitie? They are MLM superstars. They heard the stories of possibilities and made financial fortunes. Now Holton Buggs owns two MLM companies in the Travel and Forex categories. The latter was launched just a few days ago.

Today, I make a clarion call to all who consider themselves leaders/influencers and have knowledge of Investing to step up and encourage the formation of Investment Clubs across St. Lucia. Our people need to learn to invest in instruments that will work best for them. Give them options to decide whether they will invest in Stocks, Penny Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds, Crypto Currencies, Real Estate, etc. Everyone has the right to live a life of abundance; however, most of us will need a teacher. It is time that a few persons take the responsibility to guide our people to the promised land of financial prosperity which is now only enjoyed by a few.

It is time for the Influencers in our midst to take a stand and reach out to their fellow citizens by educating and enlightening them in areas of financial empowerment. I have been doing a lot of reading in the past year on a number of subjects such as Investing, Small Business, Personal Empowerment, and Politics; I am amazed how a few individuals who are willing to share their stories can bring about phenomenal changes in the lives of others.

I have a suggestion that will accelerate the sharing of ideas. It is time that church leaders seek to extend their care to include the physical and financial needs of the members of their congregation, and not only confine themselves to the spiritual needs. I remember in my other life as an Evangelist, I preached a sermon entitled – “The spiritual needs cannot be divorced from the Physical Needs.” That theme remains as real as it was after so many decades.

In the main, Caribbean people have so far failed to succeed in Investing because we have resisted all efforts at bringing us together. There are fundamental things that can begin to open up the door to investing by acquiring stocks in local and regional companies. Make it easier to raise capital and trade stocks, etc. Give the little guy a real opportunity at investing. Together, we are strong. Let the dialogue begin. We can do a lot to bring joy to the hearts of many. Let's do it!

Stay safe. Remember Always, Keep the Faith, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

WE MUST BE EACH OTHER'S KEEPER!

April 15, 2021

“Sometimes it takes a natural disaster to reveal a social disaster.” Jim Wallis

There is a clarion call for greater cooperation among peoples and nations of this world whether in periods of prosperity or disaster. Ever so often, the need for cooperation is thrust upon our leaders, especially in the area of health. In recent times, the world is severely challenged with the COVID 19 pandemic, and in our own region, we are experiencing the added discomfort caused by the eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano in our neighbouring island of St. Vincent & The Grenadines.

Because of the close proximity of St. Lucia, we were expected to receive the brunt of the initial volcanic ash; however, due to wind shift, Barbados was first to be affected. Some individuals claim that volcanic ash and dust can be around for several weeks.

Heads of Governments in the CARICOM region are acting in consort to bring relief to the citizens of St. Vincent & The Grenadines. Donations are pouring in from governments, companies, organisations, and individuals, along with coordinated efforts by a few banks operating in the region. It was heartening to note that two cruise ships offered assistance in evacuating Vincentians, and in short order began to execute their offer. Prime Minister, Honourable Ralph Gonsalves should be encouraged with the initial response from his colleague Prime Ministers as they, along with their citizens are rallying to the urgent needs of the situation.

We, Saint Lucians should be counting our blessings, and take a stand to be ever supportive of our neighbours. Do not allow the challenges of controlling the influx of visitors, who are seeking refuge to dampen the reason for which the assistance is being offered. It will be necessary to exercise patience in our dealing with the housing, feeding, and clothing needs of our brothers and sisters. This is a time for prayers, asking for God's intervention in the affairs of his people, to save and comfort them.

The COVID 19 pandemic does not make the situation any easier, and we can only hope that with the availability of the vaccines, our people will take every opportunity to be vaccinated. It is unfortunate that the hiccups with AstraZeneca, and Johnson and Johnson vaccines, where it is claimed that blood clots are possible side effects, and as a result, the latter vaccine was paused a few days ago. It is my feeling that like the AstraZeneca vaccine, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will also be cleared for continued use. Let us stick with the science. Millions of persons have received the jab without any cause for concern. I can attest to that. My first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine was without any side effects. I can't wait to receive my second shot. We must encourage each other to do the right thing.

As we welcome our brothers and sisters from the neighbouring islands, let us lead by example as we adhere to the protocols of washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining social distancing.

There are hundreds if not thousands of stories of Disasters to be told about events around the region as those who were affected, rose from the ruins, and in many instances, started all over again. We need to hear those stories. Enough is not being done to educate our people about disaster survivors.

Media houses throughout the region need to get involved in the production of survival stories that normally follow disasters. Storytelling is a vital part of informing and educating our citizens in all aspects of life.

It can be a source of motivation, when we salute our brothers and sisters in the streets or speak with them on the phone, to assure them that – EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT! Words have power. In these extraordinary and challenging times, when there is seldom any good news, we can only be a source of encouragement to each other. **We live in a time, when we should be our brother's keeper.**

Stay safe. Remember Always, Keep the Faith, Yahweh is in charge; dream big and expect daily Miracles!

Edward Harris

JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

April 22, 2021

St. Lucia is inextricably linked to the economic and social fortunes of the United States of America. This week Canada and the United Kingdom went on lock down in an effort to control the surge of the third wave of the COVID 19 pandemic. However, it must be noted that in spite of St. Lucia being ranked at Level 4 by the CDC for COVID 19, aircrafts are still flying, and tourists, investors, and St. Lucians are still arriving from the USA.

President Donald Trump principal objective was to make America Great Again! He did very little in that regard. In looking back, after his four years in office, there is very little he and his followers could be proud of. He was referred to as the Disruptor. The highlight of his legacy was visible to the world on January 6, 2021 when the Capitol was stormed by his followers. Many of the actions he took had to be rolled back by President Joe Biden to ensure that America is governed humanely at home and be an example to the world based on Democratic principles.

Upon assuming office, he moved to tackle the COVID 19 pandemic, challenging the Health services to deliver 100 million vaccines into the arms of Americans. Apart from the numerous Presidential Executive Orders that he has signed, he immediately moved to get financial assistance in the hands of the most vulnerable persons regardless of their political affiliation. Both Democrats and Republicans benefitted.

What I am most excited about is the makeup of President Biden's cabinet. The Cabinet Secretaries are truly representative of the diversity of the races of the United States of America, who are eminently qualified to undertake their functions. Unlike his predecessor President Trump's cabinet which lacked racial diversity and a proven track record of performance by those whom he appointed.

January 20th, 2021 signaled an important milestone with the inauguration of Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. as the 46th President of the United States of America. The entire process from his announcement that he was running for President to the day he entered the white house, and sat at his desk in the oval office was ordained by God. God came to the rescue of the world, where America will once again present an orderly and gracious approach to doing business with other leaders around the world. In spite, the world is very different today, with many rogue states and outright dictators at the helm of government in many countries, the United States of America, with the gentle charm of President Biden and his dedicated team will do everything in their power to coalesce among the leaders of the world. Today, there are signs that give hope. The machinery of government is working, professionals at all levels are doing their jobs uninterrupted by presidential interference. The communication department is properly staffed and news correspondents can go about their profession with pride.

A new day has dawned for America. The two branches of government, although the Democrats have very slim majorities have demonstrated their ability to navigate the process and produce results, as in the case of the 1.9 trillion dollar American Rescue Act. The Filibuster is currently posing some difficulty in the US Senate as President Biden seeks reconciliation wherever possible,

although he is not prepared to lose sight of his agenda, especially the promises he made to the electorate. The next Bill to be presented to the Senate will be the Infrastructure Bill. However, there is an urgency for the legislative branch to act now on Race Relations, Gun Control, and Policing which may see the latter emerging at the top of the agenda in a few days.

The victory in the courts just a few days ago in the George Floyd matter where convictions were awarded on all three counts has set into motion a process that will promote justice for all Americans regardless of race, colour or creed. The Black Lives Matter movement in a short period has changed the whole approach to race relations in America. It is important to note that Black Lives Matter embraced all races. All races reached out. Their actions demonstrated that it was not about race, it was about a principle that all men are equal. Joy came on the morning of the 20th of April, 2021 when the jurors who deliberated for just under eleven hours returned a verdict of GUILTY on all three counts. Derek Chauvin is now awaiting sentencing. JUSTICE prevailed. Congratulations to all those who participated in the process that brought truth to the fore and secured a victory for the family of George Floyd and the people of the United States of America. May the soul of George Floyd rest in peace. He did not die in vain.

In a few days, President Joe Biden will observe 100 days in office. We can be assured from his early actions that DEMOCRACY is once again in safe hands. Let us continue to cheer him and his team on, as they seek to serve the people of the United States of America with dignity.

We have every reason to keep the faith, knowing that God is in charge and all things will work together for good to those who trust in him. Greater things are about to be bestowed upon us. Stay safe!

Edward Harris

THE FUTURE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE UNPREDICTABLE!

April 29, 2021

“In the times of uncertainties, it is best to focus on ‘what we can control’ and just drop ‘what we can’t control.’” — Abhishek Ratna

There was a time in this generation when there was joy in living, everything was beautiful. Even when there were downturns in the economies of developed nations, and epidemics, there was confidence that things will bounce back and life will return to normalcy. Today, we are caught in a situation where no one can predict with any certainty what will happen next, especially as it relates to the COVID 19 pandemic. These are truly times of anxiety and uncertainty.

As a young sales executive, I was expected to produce an annual sales budget, making projections for the ensuing year. In those days, it was even possible to produce a five-year sales budget. We could have projected a steady growth path in most cases. The luxury of this type of projection for several years now has not been possible. There have been too many surprises that demanded adjustments to budgets, sometimes a couple of times in a year. It is almost impossible to chart a course of action for any year, not only in business but in all aspects of life. In times past, it was very easy to predict future developments. Today, it is not so, even though there are many more persons trying to predict what will happen in the future, it is extremely difficult for anyone to take a definitive position.

Over the years, the saying **Health is Wealth** has been universally accepted but the impact of those three words has never been more applicable than today. There has never been such level of financial assistance given to the people of the United States of America as extended under the Biden administration. Thank God that President Joe Biden is a president who feels the pain of the people and delivered on his promise that Help is on the way.

What happens next is definitely not in the hands of mankind. These are times when it is very likely that the greatest conversion of un-believers into believers will occur when many people will accept that there is a higher power. The world is in turmoil. There is uncertainty at every level of our existence. A divine move is afoot to humble mankind so that they will come to the realisation that there is a higher being, and that the people of the world will be called into account for their actions, either in life or in death.

The challenge that is laid before the leaders of this world is for them to humble themselves and do what is right. The leaders, and by extension the people they govern must with one accord make a commitment to live righteous lives in peace and love. There are too many hidden agendas. When there is righteousness, nothing needs to be hidden from the people. Good governance is established in the laws of every nation, and good governance will always produce a blessed and happy nation.

It is easy to offer solutions, and many times good solutions get lost in the noise. There is another saying – **the Voice of the People is the Voice of God**. The leaders of this tumultuous world need to listen to the people. In the USA, polling is done for everything. President Biden’s approval rating is at 53% (NBC News) and is as high as 58% (CBS News/YouGov). After his first address

to the joint congress on 28/04/21, he is expected to get a further bounce in his popularity. Working-class Americans love Joe Biden. He is a president for the times. His actions are guided by EMPATHY. A person is never too old to do what is right. All indicators are showing that President Joe Biden is forging ahead with a plan that sets the stage for a humane and prosperous future for the people of the United State of America, and by extension the rest of the world. It is not going to be easy, but it is doable. With the acknowledgment that there is a higher being – all things are possible.

We have every reason to keep the faith, knowing that God is in charge, and all things will work together for good to those who believe and trust in him. Greater things are about to be bestowed upon the citizens of this world.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

COVID 19 CONTINUES TO RAVAGE NATIONS!

May 6, 2021

“Be fast, have no regrets... If you need to be right before you move, you will never win”, said Mike Ryan, epidemiologist at WHO

It is with a deep concern for the upsurge of the COVID 19 pandemic that I write this column. The news on COVID 19 is very **humbling** as the citizens of the world continue to watch and pray for this **plague** to be eradicated. Today’s hot spot is India where the amount of deaths resulting from COVID 19 is alarmingly high. We must extend whatever assistance possible to the government and people of India where on occasions, they reached out to many other nations of the world. Their most recent donations of AstraZeneca vaccines to many nations in the region were outstanding.

The government of Saint Lucia has decided to maintain the 9.00 pm to 4.00 am curfew claiming that it is in the best interest of citizens to maintain the existing State of Emergency, whilst receiving push back from the leader and members of the opposition, citing that such stringent measures are not necessary at this time. This is an election year and it is obvious that the upcoming elections will be like no other. A number of politically related activities will have to be curtailed in keeping with the existing COVID 19 protocols.

It is disconcerting to look at what is going on in the world where we see the United States of America testing the ground to return to some degree of normalcy with the opening of schools, restaurants, offices, and allowing professional sports activities, with advances being made to ease up the situation regarding the movement of people – while at the same time, it is reported that the demand for vaccination in the USA is in decline. With the push to relax the protocols, it is unfortunate that persons in the USA are no longer as enthusiastic as they were prior to the PAUSE of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, even though the vaccine has been cleared for continued use.

The St. Lucia experience is somewhat different as many persons are anxious to get vaccinated, in spite of anti-vaccination individuals and groups have been peddling a lot of disinformation to which many citizens take pride in disseminating. Those who seek to dissuade persons from taking the vaccine should accept responsibility for any serious illness or death occurring from their persuasion. The writing is on the wall that many persons will have to make a choice of having their freedoms or having a few of them curtailed. Certain industry officials are already demanding that their workers be vaccinated. Other areas of activities are very likely to have demands placed upon persons participating in them to be vaccinated. We hear about Vaccine Passports; however, it is very likely that we will see before the end of 2021, the introduction of Vaccine Ids.

Let us for a moment look at the types of adjustments we have had to make in our lives as we sought to cope with the COVID 19 pandemic. The protocols demand that we adhere to 1. Washing hands. 2. Wearing Masks. 3. Maintaining social distancing. Those who practice the three foregoing protocols have in the main continue to save themselves and others. Not everyone is comfortable with wearing mask but the evidence has shown that it works. Washing of hands has brought about greater attention to personal hygiene. In the end, we will all benefit. Regarding social distancing, the nostrils have always been an area for dispersing germs including sneezing and blowing of the

nostrils. Now, we are learning to keep our distance. However, many persons still insist on hugging, squeezing, and kissing rather than elbowing and fist jamming. We have made great progress; however, we still have a long way to go to be fully compliant with the protocols.

I am pro COVID 19 vaccination, and when next we meet through this medium, I would have received my second jab of the AstraZeneca vaccine. I had no problem with the first and I am hopeful it will be the same with the second.

Let us continue to pray that God will intervene and remove the COVID 19 pandemic from off the face of this earth. Keep the Faith, God is in charge and he will grant us a healing miracle.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

TELL YOUR STORY- SPEAK YOUR TRUTH!

May 13, 2021

“The only thing that’s keeping you from getting what you want is the story you keep telling yourself.” Tony Robbins

In the midst of all the anxieties and uncertainties in the world today, there is hope. So much is happening all around us. It is impossible to keep up with developments in the areas of health and economy, especially in the USA.

Those persons who have taken the wise decision to take the vaccine are now about to be given some freedom to live with fewer restrictions once again. We are now hearing that very soon the need to wear a mask may be relaxed. This is one of the best things that could happen to those of us who love to live free. It is now easier to travel in the Caribbean Travel Bubble. In the USA, children 12 years and over are being vaccinated, schools are actively considering returning to a 5 day week. A situation that is very likely to be much the same in many countries.

In some regions of the world, COVID 19 is not as ravaging as in others. Regardless of wherever in the world we find ourselves, business executives are pressing ahead with finding opportunities to continue or even expand their organisations. COVID 19 has provided everyone with an opportunity to take time to look inward and seek out their real purpose in life. Many positive outcomes have been shared by those who are willing to help others and give hope to them. It is not all doom and gloom, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The financial sector is booming. More millionaires are being made today than in any other time in modern history. We have moved from being excited about Millionaires to Billionaires, and soon it will be Zillionaires.

It is time for our political leaders in the region to open up opportunities to everyone with a story to tell, to share it with their immediate community and the rest of the world. Self Education/Knowledge Industry is the new multibillion-dollar industry that is currently emerging. I am bold enough to say that thousands of home-based businesses are possible to come on stream, beginning today, if we will find a way of bringing our great, and not so great minds together, to develop and implement ideas that will help to alleviate the unemployment scourge which is causing a decline in social standards. We can never provide the massive impact that is necessary to hit the core of the unemployment situation.

Let us begin by taking the thousands of niches and products that are already available in the world, apply them as they are, or tweak them to meet the current demands of consumers. There are massive amounts of money to be made in this crazy world. This is not an individual game, it is a team game. The team brings life to the dream. Together, we are strong. It is not about any one individual, it about our communities and the wider world. Your idea may have the potential to reach out to the world and bring joy to the hearts of many.

The past few days have been mind-boggling as I joined the Own Your Future 5 Day Challenge with lead presenters Tony Robbins and Dean Graziosi along with other superstar Coaches. The

stories challenged me and I now challenge the brightest and the best in St. Lucia and the wider region to seek out the niches and implement products and services that will change lives.

What can be done to change the mindset of our Caribbean people? We always chose to follow and seldom strive to lead. Too many of us are left to do it alone without any support.

It is all about storytelling. I continue to listen to story after story over the years as I continue to participate in webinars in several areas of business. Storytelling is very powerful, especially when people speak their truth. As I experience my sunset years, I feel there is a lot that can be done to motivate our people toward a higher purpose. I wish to be a part of the group of Evangelists to tell our stories. I cannot do it alone, but definitely with several persons who have stories to tell. I am waiting to hear from you.

Keep the faith, help is on the way. Let us continue to dream big, and expect miracles.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

WHICH POLITICAL PARTY WILL REGULARISE THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY IN SAINT LUCIA?

May 18, 2021

“In the real estate business, you learn more about community issues, you learn more about life, you learn more about the impact of government, probably than any other profession that I know of.” Johnny Isakson.

Both the United Workers Party (UWP) and the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) in the past 24 years have held office for a minimum of two terms. During each administration’s term, representation was made at the highest level by the Realtors Association in an effort to get the industry regularised. Unfortunately, we are almost at the end of yet another term of government, and no decision has been made regarding the future of the industry. As far as I am aware, the most aggressive representation was made to this current Government to regularise the industry, even to the point where the Association presented draft legislation to the Attorney General, in an effort to speed up the necessary action.

Since 1989, Mrs. Karleen Greenidge has been at the forefront of organising the association to represent Real Estate Agents, and putting forward their position in respect of regulating the real estate industry. She introduced a professional approach to the industry many years ago. The story of the industry must be told, and at the core of blazing the trail, stands a woman of strength and vision. She owned the first REMAX international real estate franchise in St. Lucia.

I am appalled at the way pacesetters and dedicated leaders are treated in relation to recognising their contributions to the industry and civil society. I will always recognise the contributions of those who are dedicated to a cause. After Mrs. Greenidge failed at sustaining the membership of the association on the first attempt, she continued to carry the vision, and on the second attempt, she succeeded in bringing together a team of practicing Realtors who formed a steering committee to spearhead the formation of a “non profit organisation” namely, the Realtors Association St. Lucia Inc.

It took almost three years of negotiations, and filing of the necessary documentation to attain “nonprofit organisation status”. When it was finally granted, a meeting was subsequently convened to establish the Association as a legal entity in the later part of 2009. At that meeting, the writer relinquished the position as Chairman and handed over the administration of the association to a new Board of Directors, headed by Ms. Heather Floissac, who officially became the first President of the Association.

The Association continues to maintain a high level of membership and places high priority on education where it collaborates with Monroe College to train new entrants to the real estate industry, and established, practicing Real Estate Agents. It is interesting to note that in spite of successive governments’ failure to recognise the industry, the industry is still being recognised for its ability to generate employment. Monroe College is currently offering various certified FREE courses, including Real Estate Training. The courses are sponsored by Monroe College in collaboration with Skills for Youth Employment in the Caribbean, and the UK government. The

programme targets young persons aged between 15 to 30, who have recently been displaced, or need training to enable career advancement in their current job. It is very clear that the sponsors of the courses see opportunities for young persons to be engaged in worthwhile professions. It is time for the government to step up! Let those persons who have kept the profession alive, and those who seek to enter the industry at this time be given the recognition they deserve.

Other professions within the Construction Sector are regulated – Valuation Surveyors, Land Surveyors, Engineers, and Architects, all these professions are governed by legislation. What is so different about Real Estate Agents, that there is no urgency to regulate their industry? The Realtors who promote their businesses through websites and on social media platforms make a serious contribution to promoting tourism and investment on behalf of St. Lucia. This further proves that Real Estate professionals should be recognised.

It is time for the political parties contesting the upcoming general elections to make a statement on the future of the real estate industry, and meet with all persons who are engaged in the marketing, sales, and services in the real estate industry in St. Lucia, in an effort to understand at first hand, the opportunities available within the sector and challenges being encountered by real estate agents. Every opportunity should be taken to energise all sectors of the economy with the goal of achieving maximum productivity and economic returns.

Keep the faith, help is on the way. Let us continue to dream big, and expect miracles.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

WHERE ARE THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESS PERSONS???

May 27, 2021

**“A small business is an amazing way to serve and leave an impact on the world you live in.”
– Nicole Snow**

The contribution of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Sector to the St. Lucian economy, especially in the areas of employment and skills training cannot be overemphasised. The MSMEs sector is a major contributor to national employment in St. Lucia. Small business persons impact their communities by setting examples in self-employment and entrepreneurship.

This is a great opportunity for all private sector associations to reach out to their members, and potential members to ensure that there is continuity post COVID 19 pandemic. With all that is going on, there is a need for established associations such as the St. Lucia Industrial & Small Business Association (SLISBA), the Southern Business Association, St. Lucia Manufacturers’ Association, and the Realtors Association St. Lucia Inc. to aggressively represent the interest of operators in the sector. In spite of the pandemic, there are many things that can be done to ensure that small business persons can survive now, and beyond COVID 19.

Too many of us give up and behave as though nothing can be done at this time. The world has not stopped. We are fortunate that COVID 19 is not as aggressive on our beautiful island as in many parts of the world, even in some other states in our region. It is alright to do what has to be done, and if we adhere to the protocols, we can continue to be productive citizens. The leaders of Associations should be proactive as possible in bringing together all the actors and finding solutions to the problems that confront their sector.

The St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture has been reaching out to small business persons with programmes to educate and inform them. Their most recent initiative was the Small Members Programme. This is commendable. It is now time for private sector associations to seek out new areas of business activities to recommend to their membership and the wider business community, especially in the services sector.

In an effort to help to alleviate serious crimes, one of the principal objectives of all politicians should be to provide incentives to existing and potential Entrepreneurs that will facilitate job creation. Government should invest in Skills Training and New Product Development. Innovation should be encouraged and funded by Government.

This is an opportunity for Associations representing small businesses in all sub-sectors within the private sector to be visible and proactive in assisting small businesses in resolving the many challenges that they are facing due to the COVID 19 pandemic which has been with us for almost eighteen months. As the pandemic continues, apart from redundancies, many small businesses may have to consider further downsizing. In some cases, employees were requested to accept reduced remuneration of between twenty-five and thirty-three percent, and in extreme circumstances, many

businesses were forced to close. This void of heightened unemployment has to be filled. It is all about Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!

To date, the government has not offered any real direct financial assistance/grant to the small business sector. Apart from the intervention by banks to offer a few concessions, the banks are not likely to get involved in direct assistance/grant programmes, it is for governments to offer direct assistance/grant to established operators within the sector. This is a time to think outside of the box. Banks have to account to their depositors but the government has to account to the people, and there is no way, the people will go against themselves. In the U.S., in spite of varying political positions, 72% of Americans backed the American Rescue Plan of 2021.

In the midst of my writing this article, a prominent businessman visited my office and told me that he is now purchasing products offered by the Knowledge Industry and following industry leaders like Tony Robbins and Robert Kiyosaki. I was elated. The question follows, how can we get involved in the Personal Development space such as Online Education/Elearning, Coaching, etc. which is estimated to be a 325 Billion US Dollar industry by 2025? What about other businesses such as launching the Caribbean's first MLM Company with a Digital Product? There is also the opportunity to expand sales by recruiting Affiliates. It is time for us to get in line with current trends. This is not a time to be cautious in advancing new ideas and applying different approaches. I am confident that with all hands on deck, we will bounce back better. Let us be bold. Let's do it!

Let us pray for the intervention of our Creator in removing the scourge of violence that is plaguing our island. Keep the faith, help is on the way. Let us continue to dream big, and expect daily miracles.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE???

June 3, 2021

“Your mind will naturally gravitate towards the negative. Start becoming deliberate and intentional about living a positive, purpose-filled life so that you can have the joy and fulfillment that you dream of. ” – **Germany Kent**

It is my sincere hope that the above headline will be a wake-up call to many, as it is very important to live a Purpose-Filled Life. When someone is able to answer that question, it sets the course for their life’s journey. The earlier it is answered, the better. This world is filled with DRIFTERS and when you are a drifter, you are a victim of negative forces. There is an old saying that the devil finds work for idle hands. A mind is a powerful tool that should not be wasted.

A purpose-driven life begins with accountability to the Creator and a commitment to live exemplary lives. We sit and wonder why so much violence exists in our society today. The simple fact is that a majority of parents in this generation have failed to provide attention and care to the development of their children. It is not simply parenting, it is all about the values that are instilled in the children, and support from family members. In times past, grandparents dedicated their lives to bringing up their grandchildren. The argument of a single parent was not an issue, children were brought up learning life principles, such as Honesty is the Best Policy, and Manners maketh Man. Words like respect, decency, politeness, God-fearing, etc. were rooted in the minds of children from an early age.

I am hopeful that in spite of developments in other countries, we will continue to have prayers in schools in St. Lucia. Business meetings and social gatherings used to commence with a prayer. It was never omitted because someone with the fear of God was always around to give a timely reminder. However, when I actively participated in Associations, I heard members demanding that prayers be discontinued in future gatherings. I can only imagine that in these days, many agendas do not include prayers. Be careful what you wish for. In this short column, there isn’t enough space to enter into a discussion as to the possible reason/s why persons might have taken such a position. However, even if prayer was no longer acceptable, I believe that it should have been replaced with a Declaration of Purpose or something that will lift the spirits of persons present. Whether we like it or not, there must be a higher being – a supernatural force. Being an Atheist, Agnostic, Evolutionist, or whatever you choose to call yourself, you are not in control of your fate. The end result is that in cases when prayers were discontinued and were not replaced with anything, we are left with nothing to lift our spirits. We are almost stripped of our values, but still, we desire to live in an orderly society where persons are respectful, decent, law-abiding, along with all things that are loving and peaceful. Are these things possible in today’s reality? I believe they are. Let us bring back the good old days with the values that made life worth living. Our leaders at all levels of society will have to be courageous, and institute measures that will bring about a reversal in the attitudes and behaviours of our citizens – young and old alike.

There has never been a greater need for storytellers in our midst who will be bold enough to look backward, assess where we are today, and what the future holds going forward, spelling out the

alternatives of what will happen if nothing is done, as against if something is done. The present situation regarding the behaviour of our citizens, especially the youth is a reason for concern and demands urgent attention and action. It is necessary for everyone to do their share of making St. Lucia the island State, where our people are friendly and law-abiding, and visitors to the island can feel safe and enjoy themselves. The need to secure the future of the youth and the tourism industry has never been greater. Our Psychologists, Sociologists, Behavioural Scientists, and related professionals should all spring into action to help with the current situation. The solution is to get citizens to live purposeful lives that will redound to the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the nation.

Take a few minutes to answer this question – What is your purpose in life?

Let us pray for the intervention of our Creator in removing the scourge of violence that is plaguing our island. Keep the faith, help is on the way. Let us continue to dream big, and expect daily miracles.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

INDECISION IS NOT AN OPTION!

June 10, 2021

“Each of us must confront our own fears, must come face to face with them. How we handle our fears will determine where we go with the rest of our lives. To experience adventure or to be limited by the fear of it.” – Judy Blume.

The cloud of COVID 19 Pandemic is lifting and countries are beginning to move towards some degree of normalcy. The COVID 19 protocols are being adjusted in many countries; here in our dear land St. Lucia, we are now enjoying some flexibility in our protocols, especially for those who received two shots of the vaccine. While there may be adjustments to some restrictions, it is my opinion that the onus should be on each of us to act responsibly. With respect to the protocols, let us continue to adhere to the recommendations of Washing Hands, Wearing Masks, and maintaining social distancing as necessary.

As we continue to navigate through these difficult times, my simple advice is to stay in a positive state of mind and do the best we can as we move ahead with our lives. In this fast pace world, indecision is not an option. The clock is ticking and many of us claim that time is shortened. We will like to get so much more done in the limited time we have. An answer that was given to me some years ago was that time seems to be shortened because we are packing so many activities into a single day. Many of us are busier than we have ever been, and for most of us, that is the reality these days.

As the 21st century progresses, there are so many astounding things that are taking place that sometimes are difficult to comprehend. In recent years we have seen that LIES have become the acceptable norm and TRUTH has been queried and swept under the rug. The reality of these times is not what we are accustomed to when compared to what life was in the past.

In spite of all the negative happenings in the world, many fearless persons are going about their businesses attempting to reach new heights. Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon is headed to space. The world as we know it can no longer contain him. This is a major decision for a man with such wealth to enter into the unknown and venture into a new frontier. He will risk his life to conquer space and if all goes well, and he achieves his objective, he will be the man of the future and can only get wealthier. This new age is not for the fainthearted. Once again, we see that explorers will continue to be the most successful people in acclaim and wealth.

One thing about the super-wealthy in our world is that they are prepared to take risks. How can we cultivate the spirit of Explorers? We must be inquisitive about the unknown. Always looking to challenge ourselves to do more, to get beyond the known and receive the EXPLORERS' BADGE. How many St. Lucians have climbed Mount Gimie? What's next for those who have done so? Shouldn't those who have climbed Mount Gimie be talking about climbing Mount Everest? The sky should be the limit.

Caribbean people must make the decision to be different and no longer be contented with the known and reach for the unknown. We must remove fear and get beyond our current

achievements? Reach for the stars. The process has to begin with cultivating the MIND to be boundless. Get on top of FEAR, be fearless – replace inaction with action and indecision with decision. A new Mind Set is necessary. Fear is man's worst enemy.

Indecision is not a good thing, especially when confidence is lacking. Those who seek to lead nations and take decisions that will impact the future must be resolute and decisive.

We are challenged to the point of being fearful about the future. However, we must be resilient and confident in moving forward.

Keep the Faith, expect miracles, and the will of our Creator will prevail.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

PRESIDENT BIDEN IS ON A MISSION TO BUILD BACK BETTER!

June 17, 2021

“This pandemic has magnified every existing inequality in our society – like systemic racism, gender inequality, and poverty,” Melinda Gates.

There is so much happening in the world today that it is very difficult to decide on what developments should be presented to my reading audience. There is never a dull moment, even in the midst of a pandemic. In recent weeks, there has been a reduction in the COVID 19 restrictions, including in our beloved Saint Lucia. It was an atmosphere of jubilation in New York as fireworks welcomed the return to normalcy. It is my sincere hope that the new freedom was not rushed too soon, especially as we learn about the latest Delta COVID 19 variant.

I have not been hearing anything in our local news about the severe flooding that is currently taking place in several regions of Guyana. The situation demands extensive relief efforts. It is nothing short of a Natural Disaster. There is substantial infrastructural damage that will cost billions of dollars to be repaired. It is time for us to pay some attention to the developments in Guyana and reach out to help our brothers and sisters in their time of need. It is amazing how suddenly life can change from hope to despair.

The past week saw leaders of the developed free world coming together at the G7 Summit held in the UK to discuss pressing issues of the day including the COVID 19 pandemic. President Biden was warmly welcomed by his colleagues and committed to building back better. It is interesting to note that President Biden, along with other G7 leaders to commit to donating 1 billion COVID 19 vaccine doses for the world. After the G7 Summit, President Biden moved on to Geneva, Switzerland to meet with President Putin where he raised issues regarding human rights, cyber-attacks, Ukraine, etc. during the summit. In spite there are obvious disagreements between the two leaders at the moment, the meeting had a positive tone and the dialogue will continue in the months ahead. Ambassadors will be returning to their posts shortly. It is obvious, that it is the sincere desire of all people of goodwill that President Putin and his comrades in leadership positions will bring Russia in alignment with other nations as together they work towards the objective of building a better world.

It finally happened, after a 12-year run, Israel’s parliament approved a new government, where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was ousted by right-wing nationalist Naftali Bennett who was sworn in as Prime Minister, leading a government of change. The new Government has a razor-thin majority of 60 to 59. It is also important to note that the new prime minister is expected to lead the government for 2 years as part of a power-sharing deal before handing over to a Centrist Yair Lapid in 2023. A razor-thin majority and power-sharing in an environment of a coalition of parties are not easily sustainable. Mr. Netanyahu, the astute politician as he is, promised to be back.

The call is getting louder for the UWP government to call elections now. In the meantime, party flags and symbols are being placed along the highways and in other conspicuous places. The Green Party is back and seems ready to do battle. Recently, another Independent Candidate entered the

race and maybe a few more individuals will seek to offer themselves to the voters. It seemed at one time that the election campaign would have been affected by the pandemic but a recent lifting of restrictions give us hope for a very vibrant campaign period.

Here's wishing Fathers everywhere, a Happy Father's Day 2021!

Keep the Faith, expect miracles, and the will of our Creator will prevail.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT???

June 24, 2021

[Proverbs 19:9](#) A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

What a world in which we live today? What is your world like? You have an opinion and so do I. Prior to March 2020, it was still easy to say it loud – what a wonderful world? A song made popular by the late, great, Louis Armstrong. I have always been accused of being an optimist. Some of my well-wishers at one time even called me a perpetual optimist. I don't think they see the level of optimism now that they once saw in me just a few years ago. We are living in the most challenging times of our generation. Although my optimism is waning, I am holding on, only because of my abiding faith in my Creator. However, I am fully convinced this too shall pass.

Life has changed so much; confidence has been replaced by uncertainty. Everybody wants to know what the future holds. Saint Lucia finds itself in an election mode with the nation anxiously awaiting a date to be announced for the national elections. All those who have followed politics should be well aware of what happens in an election year. The simple truth is that Government goes into MOMENTUM, the business class takes a back seat and awaits the outcome of the elections, while the electorate decides who to vote in or who to vote out. The debates get heated but it all ends on the night of the elections when the votes are counted and the winners are declared. There are always lots of anxious moments during a political campaign. All candidates are hopeful until the winner is declared. There are many non-starters and they know it, but that is how politics work. You may ask, why then do people put themselves forward to participate in elections?

Representing one's constituency is an honourable thing to do providing that the intention is to faithfully serve their constituents. All politicians should confirm to the motto that Rotary subscribes to "Service Above Self" and follow the 4-way test which is recited at every meeting. An essential aspect of Leadership is training, and going forward the KAISAN approach of continuous learning should be applied to all politicians in and out of office. In today's world, informed leadership is vital to the success of any nation. The political case study when it comes to dealing with leadership is how unprepared was Donald J. Trump for office. He created a new set of norms and procedures for dealing with matters of State. He broke several conventions. The United States is worse off for the past four years of The Donald, as the damage which was done will take several decades to repair. The GOP has to be reorganised, and new men and women elected to office have to put people first. It must be – We the People!

Fake News, Misinformation and Disinformation aggressively promoted by the media and social platforms have become the norm. The voting pattern in the Congress and Senate are all about disrupting the smooth process of the work of the legislative branches. On the outside, the new groups such as QAnon and others are peddling lies, and stories promoted by Donald Trump, fuelling racial divide and political chaos. This is a situation which is so entrenched that it frightens the world and affects the U.S.A.'s standing in its relations with friendly nations. President Biden's greatest challenge is to get the fringe groups under control so that Representatives in Congress and Senate will not be fearful of losing the midterm elections.

The state of the current COVID 19 pandemic, although there have been great improvements in our interactions at school, work and play, there must be concerns about what's next? Is it the end or it is just a lull? It is for this reason, the CDC is still calling for caution as we wait and see what the end game will be. There is evidence that the vaccines are working and as a result some restrictions were lifted. I call upon all influencers in our nation to reach out to those who are yet to take the first jab or to have the second jab to do so without any further hesitation. Expert advice is freely flowing on the internet with contenders for and against the vaccines. We have always followed our leaders and this is one time we should, because if the gainsayers are correct, the world will be leaderless. Is that a situation that you will like to be a part of?

Who would have thought about living in a world like what is today?

Think on these things.

Keep the Faith, expect miracles, and the will of our Creator will prevail.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

GENERAL ELECTIONS ARE UPON US!

July 1, 2021

Matthew Chapter 7: Verse 7. [Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:](#)

I cannot ignore the fact that while the COVID 19 vaccines have been recognised for helping persons to achieve some form of normalcy. However, I bemoan the unfortunate reality that there has been a falling off of interest in persons presenting themselves to be vaccinated. Every effort must be made to get those persons sitting on the fence to get vaccinated. There should be some kind of incentive given to get jabs into arms again, at a rate that will get us to the level of immunity in the shortest possible time. The Delta Variant is coming. Let us do everything possible to save lives.

While we continue to cope with the challenges of COVID 19, as we ease restrictions and open up our border, Tropical Storm Warnings were issued last Wednesday with the possibility of Dorian strengthening. Hurricane conditions may be expected as well. It is my prayer that we will be saved from these weather systems. A disaster of any kind at this time will be more than our nation can bear.

It is very clear that General Elections will be announced within the next three months. Already, the protocols governing normal election activities have been announced by the Commissioner of Police. The leaders of all political parties and independent candidates have begun to lay out their plans to the electorate for the next five years. It is important to note that it is the political leaders laying out their plans to the citizens who are expected to buy into their programmes. I am of the opinion that it should be a two-way process where the aspirations of the people must also be taken on board.

There is hardly a time of day when politicians and their surrogates are not actively campaigning on the airwaves. The campaign has been ongoing for several months now to the frustration of many that an election date has not been announced. Timing is everything and in the end, it boils down to one simple question – did the timing of the elections give the incumbent party an advantage? I have witnessed at first hand that the lack of proper timing caused the incumbent to suffer loss at the polls. It is unfortunate that on a few occasions, it would have been so much better had the incumbent remained in office.

Which political party will have the political will to take the necessary steps to enact the legislative reforms to ensure better governance? I am ready to predict that the next general elections will not produce a simple majority but will give the winning party a two-thirds majority in parliament. My projection is against the background that both major political parties are already claiming landslide victory at the upcoming polls.

With an effective majority, legislation should be instituted to:-

1. Streamline and strengthen the tendering process.
2. Introduce elected Local and Municipal Councilors, allowing party and independent candidates to freely contest the elections.
3. Establish closer ties between the leaders in Government and the membership of economic, social, and cultural organisations.
4. Regulate all professions to ensure ethical standards.
5. Allow citizens to freely participate in all categories of economic opportunities with supporting incentives from the Government.

The foregoing suggestions are by no means exhaustive and as the election campaign continues, I will further highlight areas of concern that should be of interest to every Saint Lucian.

It can be assumed that politicians during their term in or out of government would have been exposed to the basic needs of the people in their constituencies. However, there must be a mechanism for getting the people to talk about things that affect their communities and themselves, and together with their Parliamentary Representatives seek to find solutions.

During the run-up to elections, the voters must ask for what they need and hold their candidate accountable when he/she enters office. The term is five years and things must not be left to the run-up of elections when there is a hive of activities. Now is the time to Ask, Seek and Knock on the door of the politician you propose to vote for, so that when elected, he/she can begin to look into your needs from day 1. Let your needs be known.

It is my hope that when we meet again through this column that all will be well with us.

Keep the Faith, expect miracles, and the will of our Creator will prevail.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

TOO MANY INFLUENCERS HAVE LOST THEIR VOICES!

July 15, 2021

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Saint Lucia’s General Elections Campaign 2021 is very much advanced at the moment with candidates of all political parties contesting for the hearts and minds of the electorate. Each politician needs to be at the top of the minds of their constituents. The contest is fierce, and at this time everyone who registered on nomination day is a winner, at least in their mind. This is going to be a hectic ride for the next nine days as politicians race to the polls.

Let us not forget that regardless of whatever need there is to participate in mass crowds, we must remember that the world continues to be under the COVID 19 pandemic siege. Ensure at all times when out of your residence that you wear a mask. Continue to wash/sanitise your hands and as far as practicable maintain social distancing. Do all that is necessary to stay safe and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

Now, to the business of this week’s column. I keep listening to hear the voices of influence in our society. We, of simple minds, are looking for our influencers to give us guidance through these moments of decision. The noises are deafening when it comes to which party will serve the nation best as a government. Both major parties feel very confident about their victory at the polls.

The Green Party must be congratulated for their efforts, although not fielding candidates in all seventeen constituencies. Small parties have to be consistent and in some cases trying many times before limited success is achieved, ending in a coalition with an established party. Independent candidates have not been successful in the main. However, it appears that the tide may change on this occasion with two independent candidates who seem very likely to cross the finishing line.

The print, visual, and social media are ablaze with wishful thinking, in some cases promoting the impossible. It is necessary that all Bible-believing Christians seek guidance from the Almighty to direct their decision-making when it comes to marking their ballot on the day of elections. These elections will be won based on the will of our Creator concerning his disciples. Prayers will move mountains and his people will be granted the desires of their hearts. Saint Lucia is not only beautiful but blessed. Sunday, the 25th of July, 2021 should be designated a national day of prayer. Instead of jumping in the streets, we need to call upon Yahweh’s intervention in our affairs. He is able.

I listen to all the parties as candidates present their platform to the nation. I have a fair idea of the promises that are made in this election cycle. The party that promises to provide an inclusive government has my ears. For too long our country has been divided. It is time for all our citizens to unite for the good of the country. This position can be achieved if the party which forms the next government invites members of other parties/independent candidates to be a part of their cabinet. I have faith that this suggestion will be adopted sooner rather than later. I am reminded about the power of Local Government in grooming young politicians where the process will be

opened up to persons who wish to render their services to members of their community and the nation as a whole.

I still continue to see the possibility of a two-thirds majority in the next parliament. Next week, I will make my final declaration on the possible outcome of the elections.

I pray that as the date for general elections draws nigh that peace will prevail and voters are respectful of each other.

Keep the Faith, expect miracles, and our Creator will work all things together for good.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

IN THE POLITICS OF SAINT LUCIA – WILL IT BE CONTINUITY OR CHANGE?

July 22, 2021

“To thine own self be true.” Shakespeare

I am writing this column with a prayerful mind, in the hope that through this medium, I will bring honour to my Creator and by extension to my Bible Believing Faith. I am pleased to hear many new voices since my last column when I called upon Influencers to make their voices heard.

This is decision time, and those who consider themselves in the category of the **Moveable Middle** must take a stand and do what is right for their country. I mentioned in a previous column that the 2021 General Elections in Saint Lucia will be the **Mother of all General Elections**. Saint Lucia is at the Cross Roads.

All politicians who seek the endorsement of voters must commit to all of the principles that contribute to GOOD GOVERNANCE. When I listen to the political rhetoric, certain words move me and I pray that those words will not be taken lightly but will be translated into action. Words like Inclusive, Integrity, Transparency, Honesty, Respect, Empathy, Leadership, and Fairness, just to name a few; these words should be posted in every office as a constant reminder to those politicians who gained the voters' confidence and are elected to govern.

Both parties have presented their manifesto to the electorate and it is now for the voters to decide. It is my opinion that the incumbent is always at a disadvantage as their manifesto promises in many ways could be measured by their performances during their government's term in office. It may be possible that in some cases the incumbent failed to prioritise effectively and as a result, there is always a rush to deliver projects in the final year, leaving many projects yet to be executed. On the other hand, the Opposition in their manifesto is allowed to present policies that are based on their vision for the future. In the context of Saint Lucia, a lot of initiatives can begin in the first year. It is also very important to keep the citizens informed on how the government is progressing in achieving their stated goals as presented in their manifesto. I recommend that you read both manifestos and arrive at your decision sooner rather than later, so you will be able, willing and ready on the 26th of July, 2021 to exercise your franchise. Go out and vote as it may be your vote that will make a difference in the outcome of the elections for your party. Elections are never won by the noises you hear; instead, they are won in the ballot boxes. Go out early on Monday, 26th of July, 2021, and VOTE.

Here are my predictions regarding the results of the upcoming elections. 1. I continue to maintain that the next government will have a two-thirds majority in the house of assembly whether independently, or by relying on the support of Independents. We should all hope and pray that a two-thirds majority will be achieved at the polls, if we are to progress at the rate that will be required to transform our nation. 2. There is a possibility that the front runners in Castries Central and Castries North can win their seats. This will be a loss to the UWP. If we are to accept the foregoing projection, on election day, the UWP will be at the starting gate with 9 seats and the SLP with 6 seats. With the possibility of the support of the 2 Independents, the SLP will only be looking to take one seat from the UWP to form the next Government. Here is where the situation

gets interesting. Each of the two major parties is exuding confidence and already claiming victory. The UWP is seeking at least to maintain its nine seats while the SLP is looking to convert 1 seat from Yellow to RED. This is a simplistic approach, but the reality is that the tide can change and any one of the major parties can win a majority of seats. **I anticipate an upset as the youth votes are very likely to push the party of their choice to victory.** May the best party in the judgment of the voters win.

Finally, it will be remiss of me if I failed to turn my attention to the COVID 19 pandemic. I expressed my concern in one of my earlier columns that the U. S. A. returned to normalcy too fast, and today, we hear that COVID 19 Delta Variant cases are on the rise, and many states are going back to demand wearing of masks in public places. **It is reported that almost 90 percent of new cases are not vaccinated.** Please get vaccinated at the earliest so that together, we can save lives. I recommend that we keep our eyes on the COVID 19 pandemic and maintain the protocols as citizens seek to get involved in pre-election activities. Please exercise caution. It is my wish that all those who are alive today, will live to enjoy the benefits of the next elected government. **Will it be Continuity or Change?**

I look forward to congratulating the winning team next week.

Stay safe!

OUR CREATOR'S WILL IS DONE!

July 29, 2021

“Democracy is not prescribed in the Bible, and Christians can and do live under other political systems. But Christians can hardly fail to love democracy, because of all systems it best assures human dignity, the essence of our creation in God’s image.” — Charles W. Colson

It is a great time to be alive; this is a time when our Creator is on a mission to set his people on a path to righteousness, and for all who will hearken to his voice, they will have a Miracle working experience. It is time for us to be still and let Yahweh take charge.

CONGRATULATIONS are in order for all people of Faith. Our prayers caused Yahweh to intervene and granted the people of Saint Lucia a victory in keeping with the desires of their hearts. We place Honourable, Philip Joseph Pierre, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia and his Cabinet of Ministers in the protective care of Yahweh, that they will govern in righteousness so that their every action will bring honour and glory to his name.

Fear of the CREATOR is the beginning of all wisdom. We must return to Bible Believing/Christian Principles that governed our actions. There should be a Biblical standard for all to strive for, but instead, some of our leaders are bent on breaking down established standards that worked in the past. However, if those standards are reintroduced, they will work for us today and in the future if the leaders are respectful of the higher power. We must return to Biblical Values. The Bible teachings exhort believers to seek first the kingdom of the Creator and his righteousness, and everything else will be added on.

I have no doubt in my mind that Yahweh not only hears the prayers of Saint Lucians – he answers them. There could have been no other intervention that gave us a SLP victory in the recent elections. Only a few persons saw it coming in such a resounding fashion. In last week’s column, I predicted that 1) the new Government will have a two-thirds majority in the house, 2. the youth will push the winning party over the finishing line, and 3. the two Independent Candidates in Castries were likely to emerge victorious. Many political pundits were far off of reality. Maybe, after running two campaigns in Guyana, I should have been able to make a few bold predictions.

I feel the urge to make this point. The time has come for us to get back to biblical basics and redirect the path of the nation to a gentler, kinder and more spiritual life. Our people must once again submit themselves to biblical principles, when we will begin to honour and respect our Creator, and as a result, we will honour and respect our brothers and sisters. There has been a falling away from religious activities. Church membership is dropping at a staggering rate; mostly women are now in congregations. Only a few children attend Sunday services. In times past, the family went to church. Let us get our spiritual house in order, and all will be well with our souls. I am well aware that there has been new thinking as it relates to principles of the Bible but one thing is certain that the fundamental principles of the Bible have served us well. We must believe and look up to a supreme being that has authority over us.

One of the priority areas for this new Government should be tackling crime. Crime is on the increase. What standards do we employ to have persons deviate from crime? The Ten Commandments in the Bible point to how we should conduct ourselves in this life. In today's world, persons have gotten brave and no longer suffer from fear of Yahweh. We have noted recently in the U. S. A. that even persons who claim to be Evangelicals have attacked Capitol Hill and sought to hang Vice President Pence. What is happening in our world? How much worse can the situation get? These are the acts of men that tell me that Yahweh is currently re-establishing his presence on earth, and selecting men and women who fear him to execute the task of letting his people go, so that they can enjoy what has been prepared for them – abundant living.

To all the persons of Faith including those who have the gift of PRAYER and are called to pray, aka as Prayer Warriors, their work has just begun. **We are called in this present time to pray without ceasing.** I invite you to visit my Facebook Group “The Bible Challenge” which was launched on August 21, 2016, and join members in prayer and reading of the Holy Scriptures.

Let us continue to give thanks, and pray that the new government will serve Yahweh's people in a manner that will bring glory and honour to his name.

Stay safe!

Edward Harris

IT IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT!

August 5, 2021

“I guess truth can hurt you worse in an election than about anything that can happen to you.”
Rogers

It has been 12 days now since the UWP government, headed by Hon. Allen Chastanet lost at the polls. It was a crushing defeat. Expectations for the new Government to deliver on its campaign promises are high.

Prime Minister Hon. Philip Joseph Pierre has an unenviable position. He will need the prayers of all St. Lucians to help him tackle the tumultuous tasks ahead of himself and his team. It is time for all hands to get on deck regardless of party colour (red or yellow), or otherwise. It is time for all to come together in unity and put people first.

While some citizens are in a state of jubilation, others are more reserved as they look toward the future. There is deep admiration for the men and women who were successful at the polls. Those elected officials, now Parliamentary Representatives are likely to be part of the Cabinet of Ministers, and should be seen as soldiers heading to the battlefield. Our prayers for a special anointing must be continually made on their behalf. With Yahweh's help, we can be confident that it is going to be alright. In recent weeks since I return to writing my weekly column, I continue to exhort all men to seek after righteousness. Many of us are well aware of the scripture that states – **RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.**

The Government is being called upon to return the country to its democratic ways by upholding the rule of law which must prevail at all times. Transparency has to be paramount in the execution of the functions of government. If there is one principle that has captured my attention is that for the first time Saint Lucia will have a government that is **INCLUSIVE** in nature as is set out unambiguously in the SLP manifesto of 2021. All citizens and well-wishers, regardless of Gender, Race, Colour, Creed, whether by birth, nationalisation or otherwise, religious background, education, straight or LGBTQ must be allowed to contribute to the development of the nation.

We hear a lot about a Youth economy but I want to feel that **the involvement of Elders is so fundamental and can only be taken as a given, that it needs not to be over-emphasised.** I hope I am correct in thinking that we must forge collaboration between the young and the old if we are going to accelerate the progress necessary to transform our economy.

We need Story Tellers, people who are willing to talk about their journey in all aspects of life – their failures, their successes, and even those who have been born into money. In the latter instance there are some heartbreaking stories to be told. Money does not always bring happiness. It takes a balanced approach to life.

Along life's journey, we have lost our way of helping ourselves. While we are supposed to be independent, we depend too much on foreign assistance. The term Self Reliance is no longer used to propel citizens to seek out their independence. Wherever necessary, we must return to basics. We should adapt the Self Help principle which assisted communities and individuals in the past.

It seems that in today's world, we can only get things done if we have the funding. Roads will deteriorate to the point where it is impassable and we forget that a grader could be used to take out the potholes and make life easier until it can be asphalted. Let us find ways of applying the KISS principle going forward. **My special advice is to take care of the simple things first. Do not ignore them.**

I am not in a position to share my opinion on the selection of the Cabinet due to deadline constraint in the submission of my column. The electorate chose CHANGE over CONTINUITY. I expect a Cabinet of men and women of vision, as the Bible states, where there is no vision the people perish. Let us continue to give thanks, and pray that the new government will serve Yahweh's people in a manner that will bring honour and glory to his name.

I wish you well, until next week when I will share my thoughts on the Cabinet selection. Stay safe!

Edward Harris

WHAT CAN WE DO TO AVOID THE RAVAGES OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC?

August 12, 2021

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” KJV [2 Chronicles 7:14](#)

It is heartening to witness what is happening in our country today. Our people are turning to Yahweh in prayer and humbling themselves in his presence from the field to the highest office in the land. That is the Change that every Bible-believing person hoped for. We have strayed from the path of righteousness for too long. Let us return to the Biblical principles we once stood for and the faith of our fathers.

The new Saint Lucia Labour Party Government is challenged on every side, in just two short weeks, the country is almost heading for a shut down due to the raging COVID 19 Delta Variant which is wreaking havoc in Martinique and is also present in other states in the region, and yet to be confirmed in Saint Lucia. However, our daily cases are rising at an alarming rate and as a result, gave cause for action from the government. While the government has declared that it will not seek mandatory vaccination of its citizens, it is necessary for all citizens to understand the importance of being vaccinated so as to save themselves and others from catching the deadly virus. We must without any undue hesitation seek to be our brother's keeper.

There has been far too much misinformation about COVID 19. The first step is for those who willfully disseminate information that creates doubts in the minds of others to desist from such actions forthwith. It is dangerous and those persons must take responsibility for the suffering and death of others who follow them. Let us be guided by the advice of the people we have always relied upon for guidance in the area of health. Let us heed their warnings, let us do what seems right in the absence of no other clear recommendation as it relates to the control of this COVID 19 pandemic. If you are in doubt, check with your family doctor. Unless advised otherwise by your doctor, take the vaccine.

Last week, I promised my take on the Cabinet of Ministers. I thought long and hard and decided that the Cabinet has been selected under the guidance of the Hon. Prime Minister, Philip Joseph Pierre and the hierarchy of the Saint Lucia Labour Party whose judgment should be accepted. The Cabinet when looked at as a whole has a very rounded group of men and women, who will be supported by the brightest and best advisers available in our country and in the Diaspora. So my approach is simply to let them settle down and see what fruits they will bear.

We will never get everything we want in life, so as in most things, we have to live in a state of compromise. Let us give the government time to perform and we will be back to take a first look after 100 days. I hope that my readers are willing to live with that. In previous columns, I laid out my expectations of the government that would have formed the present administration. They are well documented in my columns, even to the point where I gave projections for the outcome of the elections.

The Hon. Prime Minister in his address to the Nation last Wednesday evening amended the curfew hours, commencing from 9.00 pm and ending at 4.00 am, making it very clear that businesses should close latest 8.00 pm to allow employees to be home for 9.00 pm. Almost all of the previous restrictions were reintroduced. The arrangements will be in place for the period August 13 to 31, 2021.

Let us be guided by the adjusted protocols and seek to do all things necessary to keep us safe.

Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

WHERE WILL COVID 19 TAKE US?

August 26, 2021

“This pandemic has magnified every existing inequality in our society – like systemic racism, gender inequality, and poverty,” said Melinda Gates

Let us encourage each other to do the right thing. We are heading down a road where unless Yahweh puts a hand, it will be chaos. Many among us insist upon maintaining their democratic right to do as they please when it comes to taking the vaccine, even at the risk of others. The science is clear. Those who are vaccinated stand a better chance of staying out of the hospital, than those who are not. The statistics show that as much as ninety-seven (97) percent of persons who are hospitalised are unvaccinated.

While cases of COVID 19 pandemic continue to surge, there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the Pfizer vaccine, and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is showing great promise for its booster shot which is supposed to strengthen immunity. I feel that many people who were hesitant to be vaccinated will now have a change of heart. This scourge will at some point give the people of the world a break. We can be confident that help is around the corner, and COVID 19 will not be allowed to bring the curtains down on our dreams for an abundant life and a better world.

It finally happened. Former President, Donald J. Trump recommended taking the vaccine to his followers at a rally at Cullman, Alabama on Saturday 21st August, 2021. Now that he has acknowledged that he took the vaccine and recommended that his followers be vaccinated, where do the anti-vaxxers stand now? Will “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) members fall in line or continue to refuse to take the vaccine? There are indications that some MAGA members are feeling a sense of betrayal, to the point where they booed him. Only time will tell.

If the current situation is not checked, the issue of mandatory vaccination will have to be brought to the fore and serious steps may have to be considered to assist in saving lives. To do nothing and allow Herd Immunity to take its course seems too costly an alternative to be considered. We have to pray that with the all out assault against Anti-Vaxxers coming from governments, medical professionals, media, and influencers including celebrities, there can be a turn around by enough persons for countries to arrive at the 70-85 percent vaccination level to achieve herd immunity in the shortest possible time.

The situation in Saint Lucia is somewhat manageable as apart from social media shares, the voices of Ant-Vaxxers have been somewhat subdued. There are so many crazy ideas about possible cure for COVID 19 that persons are even encouraged to use drugs that are intended for animals. How can intelligent human beings subject themselves to such an unscientific recommendation? There is no scientific validity to this recommendation. Let us stand with the science.

Here is my story about Vaccination. I was plagued with influenza for most of my life until five years ago when at a Community Clinic Day in Black Bay, the opportunity was presented to me to get a Flu Shot. After reasoning with myself for a short while, I decided to take the shot and from

getting a serious flu a minimum of 4 times per year, I don't bother about the incidents of Flu anymore. When AstraZeneca vaccine was introduced to St. Lucians, I had no difficulty after reasoning with myself. I feel very pleased with my decision so far. I will stick with the SCIENCE. I have always taken the advice of my doctor and willingly take whatever is prescribed. I am not about to do otherwise at this stage in my life. Do what is right for the sake of yourself and others.

COVID 19 will take us where we want to go – the choice is ours!

Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF URGENCY!

September 2, 2021

“In the face of adversity, we have a choice. We can be bitter, or we can be better. Those words are my North Star.” Caryn Sullivan

It has been a week of intense activity on the political front here in Saint Lucia. We saw the first sitting of parliament and urgent bills presented to members of that august body. It should be the hope of all Saint Lucians that the country navigates a path to establishing transparency and accountability that will strive in a state of inclusiveness, especially those citizens who uphold the principle of good governance.

Based on the developments of the past two and a half years, most persons have had to adapt to the new normal that operates in a restricted environment. The situations that emerged with the lockdown in the first instance which lasted three months, followed by curfews, working from home wherever practicable, and limiting outdoor activities, while adhering to the protocols of wearing masks, washing hands, and social distancing. Staying ahead of the COVID 19 pandemic has brought about changes in the way we live, work and socialise.

In turning our attention to work ethics, it should be no surprise if we find that productivity has suffered and many persons are taking advantage of the situation to deliberately do very little. In some cases with no thought that whatever has to be done, should be done efficiently and in a timely matter. Employees and professionals in the public and private sectors will need to step up and commit themselves to serve our citizens in all areas of human existence with empathy. Persons who were fortunate to have maintained their income at the pre-COVID 19 level should be extremely grateful to their employers. Going forward, we should commit ourselves to do all things necessary to play our part in ensuring that we perform to our optimum level. In so doing our country's economic performance should achieve an acceptable level in the shortest possible time.

There is a lot of frustration being experienced by individuals seeking to do business in the private and public sectors where simple transactions are taking much too long. It is clearly a situation that there is absolutely no sense of urgency. Our citizens need to be energised and programmes should be put in place to stimulate productivity. The new political leadership needs to meet with their employees collectively and individually to set out the vision and expectations for the involvement of their ministries. On the other hand, members of the private sector must also engage and motivate their employees in achieving expected goals that will provide acceptable returns on their investments. To achieve a positive impact on the economy, continuous communication will be necessary. There is a lot of work to be done. It will take all hands on deck, and teamwork to make the dream work. The fact is that a sense of urgency is vital to the future progress of our nation. Deferring today's activities which can be executed during the course of the day for a future date, is not an option.

An update on COVID 19 which is surging in our beloved island must be discussed. St. Lucians are being exposed to every form of misinformation and disinformation which certain persons among us take pride in sharing with their friends on social media and groups. They feel a sense of

importance as having privileged information but this is far from reality and they should be held responsible.

Adjustments to the COVID 19 Regulations are continuing and it is hoped that the steps taken will bring relief to the scourge that is upon us. We must be willing to take the necessary steps to arrest the situation. It will take the cooperation of all of us to ensure that we return to some form of normalcy in the shortest possible time. This is a health emergency that needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. While some of us may not be willing to accept actions that are mandatory, it is obvious that only those who are willing to apply discipline in their lives and adhere to the Protocols will survive these trying times.

Stay safe, stay home. Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

EDWARD HARRIS JOINS NETWORK OF 1 MILLION+ REALTORS

Castries, Saint Lucia: September 8, 2021 – Edward Harris of Ed Harris Real Estate & Business Consultancy Services has joined the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), connecting to a worldwide network of more than one million trusted real estate practitioners. Only members of NAR are properly called REALTORS, and are identifiable by the REALTOR “R” logo on their marketing and sales literature.

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PUTTING YOUR LIFE ON HOLD IS NOT AN OPTION!

September 9, 2021

“I don’t know if what I’m afraid of is the state of the world. Rather, I think what I’m afraid of is the state of my attitude about the state of the world.” — Craig D. Lounsbrough

Politicians in the lower and upper houses of parliament in our beloved island state, Saint Lucia are busy working on behalf of their citizens in an effort to take action that will bring about progress and deal with pressing issues of the moment. However, there will always be those, who will seek to derail the train of progress.

The detractors are at their best these days. Let no one prevent you from getting ahead with doing things that are necessary to realise your objectives in life. Good will always be good, and the truth will always set us free.

Reset your life, follow the science, get vaccinated and stop putting your life on hold. The world is not waiting on you. You have to do whatever it takes to ensure that life is productive. Stop listening to the naysayers; we continue to live in a dynamic world. “There is nothing to fear but fear itself.” Put on a positive attitude. Be an actor on the world’s stage. Put some excitement in your life. Dress up, make yourself attractive, even now, you can still live your best life.

No one should put their life on hold – waiting for COVID 19 to end. Get vaccinated and get on with your business. Follow your leaders in all areas of human endeavour as they strive to execute their responsibilities. Work harder than you ever did before. The world is moving ahead, millionaires and billionaires are on the rise. Persons operating in the Crypto space are pointing to unprecedented gains in the future. There is money to be made everywhere.

Dubai is currently hosting a series of international Trade Exhibitions. Governments and Entrepreneurs will be flocking to these events. COVID 19 has not prevented the exhibitions from taking place. Deals are being made and every participant is looking to the future to preserve and grow their business, and ultimately their country’s economy.

The time has come for all persons involved in ensuring that we build back better to make a commitment to give of their best in whatever field they are engaged. Do not be a bystander; I challenge you to be an active participant. Fresh ideas must be encouraged. Our brightest and best minds must be put to work. No resource, human or otherwise must be left untapped. Every opportunity must be sought to put idle hands to works. The first task of our leaders must be to motivate their fellow citizens to be the best they can be.

Our citizens are currently preoccupied with discussions about COVID 19, and the state of the economy. Very soon, the next hot topic will be JOBS. We will need to revisit Old Ideas, and introduce Fresh ones that are fuelled by CREATIVITY. We must find ways of bringing our thinkers together to explore possibilities to motivate and empower our people. I humbly suggest that these THINK TANKS must not be limited to the established associations only but to encourage Open FORA islandwide. It is important to plan from the ground up. The needs are best

known to the people on the ground. It should be interesting to note that in many instances, they can provide the solutions.

It is not easy, but doable, with our eyes fixed on our Creator, he will lift us up. It will not be done by persons who are willing to stand by and let others do for them what they should be doing for themselves. Put your creative mind to work. Don't go looking for a job, create a job. Establish a group of persons who are unemployed and brain storm. Be hungry for change and financial empowerment.

Let us be mindful of what we do today. Whatever that is within our power to do for yourselves and others – do it. There is overwhelming evidence that COVID 19 Vaccines save lives. Get vaccinated, and continue to wash your hands, wear masks and maintain social distancing. Observing the Protocols is the right thing to do. Just follow the Science and live life to the full. Putting your life on hold is not an option.

Stay safe, stay home. Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

PLANNING LIFE BEYOND COVID 19!

September 16, 2021

“You can’t predict or control the future. You can only adapt. You can, however, live in the present.
– Raghav Mathur.

It is time to wake up to the reality that we have to adapt to the New Normal. Failure to do so will result in stagnation and life will simply draw to a halt. Regardless of whatever state we find ourselves, our best weapon is to be optimistic. It is with a sense of frustration that we awake daily with the scourge of COVID 19 staring us in our faces. We hear about the death of loved ones and friends. It’s a daunting experience and no one could have predicted such a state of affairs in this modern era where human advancement has never been greater.

This year, everyone hoped that Back to School would have been different with our children in the classroom but rather, it is back to online learning. Our children and grandchildren are being robbed of the joys we experienced during school days which many of us like to refer to as that period when our minds were being developed with education being at the very core. The good old days were truly good old days. Nothing today can compare to that time when little things meant a lot and respect for parents, elders, and our friends was engraved in our hearts. Love comes from the heart. The greatest commandment is – that we love one another.

In our quest to get on with our busy lives, we compensate and pamper our children with gifts that are addictive and in many cases cause them to become oblivious of what is going on around them. Manners maketh Man is no longer instilled in the minds of our children. Many children find it difficult to greet adults. It is so uplifting when we are greeted by Good Morning from a youngster. It is no wonder that we find ourselves in the state that the world is in today. The virtues that were taught in the past were undermined for decades now.

Technology has given our children their independence at a very early age when parental control should be at its strictest. In many homes today, youngsters ignore the presence of other persons in their immediate surroundings when they are logged on to their iPads and Smartphones. Storytelling which is the foundation of local and family history is not encouraged due to a lack of interest from our youngsters. The method of delivering education has to be revisited to produce a more rounded student/citizen.

Most times our governments within the region are being reactive rather than proactive. The time has come for our leaders in every sphere of life to take stock of the present position and plan for the future beyond COVID 19. It is time for a RESET. GO BOLD, GO BIG! This is our moment to be creative and venture outside of the box. Explore opportunities that are consistent with the new normal – whatever you presume it to be. It is all about PLANNING, PLANNING, PLANNING! Our ability to win tomorrow depends heavily on how we plan today.

Strategic Planning was applied in all sectors of our national economy. Many of those plans will have to be modified or scrapped altogether. In the past thirty months, things have really changed. In many instances, things will not return to the way they were. It is because of the various

uncertainties, it has become necessary to return to the drawing board with vision and energy. Let us challenge ourselves to do what has never been done before. However, we must be prepared to be flexible with our planning as we live in an era that is fluid.

In spite of COVID 19, the state of New York has reopened to business a few weeks ago with a concert that showcased a great line-up of musicians, singers, and personalities in show business. This week, we saw the return of shows to Broadway. New Yorkers should be proud of their achievements. This entailed planning and financing with the cooperation of leaders in the public and private sectors. A Festival Planning Committee should be set up to make 2022 our best year of festivals ever in Saint Lucia. The energy should be spontaneous and contagious.

There are a few promoters who would no doubt be working on plans to get on the road with entertainment programmes even before 2022, because for most of them, this is all they do. Cultural and Social programmes should be encouraged with granting of meaningful incentives. It will be one sure way of rejuvenating our citizens. St. Lucia! St. Lucia! Let the show begin! Let us begin to plan aggressively for life beyond COVID 19.

Follow the science, get vaccinated, stay safe, and stay home. Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

LET US GET INTO THE RIGHT MINDSET TO DEAL WITH COVID 19!

September 23, 2021

“You will get through this. Don’t stop fighting. There are wonderful things waiting for you on the other side of pain.” Daily Motivational Messages

COVID 19 pandemic continues to be a major concern of the government and citizens of our dear land – Saint Lucia. We must get into the right mindset to deal with COVID 19. We should not allow misinformation to divide and destroy us. Families are divided on the issue of Vaccination. We must begin to place some degree of faith in our leaders. Efforts are being made to control the number of cases and deaths caused by COVID 19 with some success. However, it is very clear that the future control of the virus depends on the population embracing the science and getting vaccinated.

The statistics are overwhelming. Unvaccinated persons are at a substantially higher risk to get the virus than those who are vaccinated. Unfortunately, everyone has an opinion and in most cases, one that is not aligned to the science. Religious, political, and social leaders who are the leading Influencers in our society must step up with unambiguous positions regarding the vaccines that are available at this time. The media needs to devote more time to Health Bulletins and testimonials from Influencers and ordinary people who have a story to tell about vaccination. My story is simple “I took the 2 vaccines as prescribed, and I feel very confident as I go about my business meeting with persons who seek out my services.”

St. Lucia is ranked at Level 4 by CDC and the US government has indicated that effective in November, 2021 persons travelling to the USA will have to receive two vaccines prior to their entry. While vaccination is not mandatory in Saint Lucia, it does not prevent employers and agencies from making it mandatory for persons seeking to enter their place of business or accessing their services. Everyone seeking to enjoy the privileges of life must be prepared with the necessary documentation to access them. Vaccination ID seems to be the next document that will open doors to the lifestyles many of us seek.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda has recently enacted Mandatory Laws in the state to deal with COVID 19 and the issue of Vaccination. We should be looking at this development to see how it plays out while governments of other states are expressing frustration with their citizens’ response to taking the vaccines. This situation calls for us to get into a new mindset to deal with COVID 19.

This week, the United Nations General Assembly met in New York, and the spotlight was on President Joe Biden. Apart from the pressing issues on hand related to Afghanistan, France, China, and Australia, his intention to provide Vaccines to poor countries was well received. It must be noted that the White House is not doing as well as is expected in communicating with the public, and has been landing in hot water with a few of their announcements. There seems to be a lack of cohesion. What is worse is that President Biden is slipping in the polls at home, a situation which is not helped by the Democratic lawmakers in both houses who are not united in their approach to

getting President Biden's agenda passed as they relate to Infrastructure, and other social benefits, in an effort to build back better. These were all campaign promises.

Previously, bananas were readily available on the local market. Currently, there is a shortage of the staple – green figs. This is something that we must take seriously. Our Food Security should be given top priority. It is important that our main food crops be spread across the island and not concentrated in only certain areas. Today, it is food crops; tomorrow, it is likely to be water. Shortages are the signs of the times. The situation demands an audit of all-natural and human resources to identify location and production capacity. After the construction of roads and bridges around Saint Lucia, equipment and transportation of supplies, and crops should not pose a problem as it is likely that there may be many unutilised vehicles.

One of the most vital areas of economic planning is the ability to provide statistical data in every sphere of activity in a country. This is one area that Caribbean Governments have been lacking, and every effort should be made to update our information gathering. A simple Skills Bank within the Ministry of Labour was suggested several years ago, and so far nothing has occurred. During this period when planning is critical, there should be no better time than now to lay the foundation for data collection at all levels.

Let us pray for complete eradication of the COVID 19 pandemic as we follow the science, get vaccinated, stay safe, and stay home. Keep the faith, Yahweh is in charge. We shall overcome.

Edward Harris

DO THE RIGHT THING – LIVE BOLD, LIVE FREE!

September 30, 2021

“All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honour, duty, mercy, hope.” – Winston Churchill

In spite of the current pandemic which is wreaking havoc in the world today, if we follow the overwhelming evidence of the science that has been established, and do the right thing – follow the protocols and get vaccinated, we can have the confidence to Live Bold, and Live Free!

I can imagine how the modern-day prophets are having their say as it relates to the end time, without any special effort on their part. You don't need a special anointing to see where the world is heading. The times have never been more predictable. We are heading towards self-destruction. It is time for the voices of all leaders to be deafening, exhorting their followers to do the right thing to save themselves, their loved ones, and their communities.

Many of us can attest to the fact that in recent weeks, death has become more real as relatives and friends fall to the vicious attack of the virus. Gone too soon is such a relevant statement as we witness the passing of so many young people who are called to higher service. COVID 19 nineteen has joined with homicide to cut down our young people. Many are tempted to devalue life but let us see this period of trial and tribulation as a test of our faith, and that when it is all over, as it will, we can return to the freedom we once enjoyed. In the meantime, those who are doing what is right are continuing to live on their terms with the freedom they never lost.

The word obedience takes centre stage in today's suffering. Those who failed to respond positively to the science and follow strange and unprofitable noises, simply wanting to be different suffer the consequences of disobedience, and in many instances too late, too late are their last words. Misinformation has taken over the minds of persons with itching ears, in some cases who were never expected to be so gullible. Now, these persons have emerged as leaders and are challenging those who follow the science and make decisions based on tested and proven evidence.

We cannot say enough about the COVID 19 Pandemic and the Delta Variant. The more said about it, is the better. It must be top of the mind. I cannot help myself as I feel compelled to add my voice of encouragement to those who are reluctant to take the vaccines. I am proud that I followed the science and made the decision to be vaccinated in the early stage when the Astra-Zeneca Vaccine was introduced. I was not forced to do anything. I did it because I thought it was the right thing to do then and I sincerely feel the same today.

This holiday weekend, we have an extended No Movement period and going forward the curfew will be 6.00 pm to 4.00 am. This is all in an attempt to keep people in their homes. Follow the protocols and let us assume control over the virus. It is amazing what one person with the virus can do. We have to exercise all necessary precautions to stay safe. Let us support the government in its efforts to control the spread of this virus. Together, we can do it.

I received an email from a gentleman who is by no means someone who can be easily detected as a religious person. Surprisingly, he was suggesting that the government request the involvement

of all media houses for a period of religious observance during this holiday weekend with extended No Movement days. Let us tone down the high volume and vulgar music as far as is possible. Through this column, I suggested that the government call on all religious groups to observe a National Day of Prayer. It would have been great to dedicate this entire weekend to fasting and praying for the living and the dead, and the total elimination of the virus from around the world. Those of us who got vaccinated and continue to follow the protocols, let us continue to live confidently, always seeking to get others to do the right thing.

I fully support the Bus Drivers throughout the island during this difficult period and whenever possible we should freely give a tip to them for their courageous service in defying COVID 19.

Make every effort to stay safe and meditate upon the state we find ourselves in today. Let us pray for deliverance and that in the end, it will be well with us. Keep the faith. Yahweh is in charge!

Edward Harris

LET THE VISION BE ACTUALISED!

October 7, 2021

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.” – Albert Einstein.

The flow of misinformation keeps coming with no end in sight. We are currently experiencing a state of moral decline with persons refusing to accept recommendations from their legitimate leaders, and hold on to things that are fuelled by misinformation. It is amazing how people can buy into lies and hold fast to what is being falsely promoted. An interesting development is that this disruptive and evil sharing of information is not limited to the uneducated. It is shocking to note how many intelligent people who should be promoting positive messages are caught up in peddling of outright disinformation. It is time that we save some people from themselves and institute laws that will make it a criminal offence for acts of disinformation that will put their fellow citizens at risk.

In recent years, where there was prosperity, we now hear about bankruptcy and debt. There is not much good news coming out of many Capitals of the world. The disrupters of the world are at work, some covertly, but in these days men are emboldened to speak up and they are showing their true colours overtly. **This is the age of defiance.** It is also an age when persons don't care about morals. Telling untruths has become the norm. This is truly the era of itching ears, when persons are more ready to align themselves with agents of misinformation or downright disinformation. Confusion is rife in this era. There are many who fail to apply reasoning in their everyday lives, and disregard exercising their ability to discern right from wrong. When these situations are being manifested, there will be increased lawlessness, including homicides and burglaries.

All the disruptive behaviours that are being exhibited in our midst did not happen overnight. Too many persons in positions of influence have turned a blind eye over time, and year after year things have deteriorated. It is time to stop talking, and institute timelines to execute the many recommendations that are collecting dust on storage shelves in offices. Everyone has an idea as to what has to be done. Let us bring pressure to bear on the government of the day to just do what has to be done. The time for implementation is now. It is said that new broom sweeps clean. Have you ever given thought to why the 1st 100 days are so important to a new USA administration?

The time has come for TRANSPARENCY and ACCOUNTABILITY. To me, these two words mean – Tell the people what you are doing, and provide regular updates until final implementation. Communication is key.

The government has established four pillars for setting the country on a manageable path. These are: 1. Putting People First, 2. Inclusiveness, 3. Transparency, 4. Accountability. At this juncture, the stage is set for the current administration to implement legislative reforms with penalties for politicians who fail to carry out their functions in conformity with the law. St. Lucia can be a model state within the region for its approach to governance if the pillars aforementioned are effectively implemented and executed.

In spite of all the crazy things happening in our world, with every passing day, we see things that we thought were impossible to happen in our lifetime. However, there is still hope. Every corner of the globe has been affected by COVID 19 which can be seen as the great equaliser. As I look around and take note of the exciting possibilities that are before our very eyes but so few are noticing them, this moment presents fantastic opportunities to build back better.

It is time for the visionaries of our nation to get to work to establish good governance so that we can rise from the confusion that exists in our world today. Don't stop asking questions. It can be done, let's do it!

Let us make every effort to stay safe, adhere to the protocols and pray for deliverance from the COVID 19 pandemic so that in the end, it will be well with us. Keep the faith. Yahweh is in charge!

Edward Harris

SMALL BUSINESS PERSONS NEED TO HEAR FROM SLISBA!

October 14, 2021

For several weeks, I wanted to write a piece on the St. Lucia Industrial & Small Business Association (SLISBA) but being overwhelmed by COVID 19 misinformation, I needed to take a stand, including my own testimony in relation to the issue of vaccination. I deferred until now when I decided that saying nothing about this vital organisation is not an option. My decision was further hastened when I saw in Issue #41 of the Government Gazette dated Monday, 11th October 2021 (Page 19) that the St. Lucia Industrial & Small Business Association Ltd. will be struck off the Register of Companies in 30 days if a certain action is not taken.

If there is ever a time that SLISBA is needed, it is now. SLISBA has always been an important voice of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector. This voice has been silent for several years with small business persons left to fend for themselves. It has been almost three years of very little representation of the sector, with business persons relying on the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture to know what is going on in the Private Sector. There was a time when SLISBA's members were vocal and visible, making their presence felt. As a past Secretary/Treasurer and President of the Association, I have an interest in the Association and will like it to be a viable and vibrant entity where its members can prosper and grow.

SLISBA was blessed with exemplary leadership in past years and the organisation, although it did not get the level of support needed from international agencies and governments, its committed members ensured that the association was involved in the economic affairs of the country. Our members sat on Boards and the association was a reliable source of information sought by regional and international agencies. SLISBA played an active role within the Private Sector of Saint Lucia. It is my humble opinion that at this juncture there is a need for SLISBA to play an even greater role. It is worth remembering SLISBA's role in the extension of Article 164 representing a list of Approved products within the LDCs. There are many areas where SLISBA's members can play a meaningful role in sharing their expertise.

The situation as it relates to supplies to the retail industry is getting serious. This will not be the usual Christmas season. Already, there are shortages in the USA and vessels with supplies are being anchored at sea or held up at ports due to a lack of truckers. COVID 19 is not only about bringing about suffering and deaths in our communities but has created a new dynamic in the work environment. Many people will not be going back to their regular work, at least for now. These impending shortages may not have been of such grave concern to us if the same level of small and medium businesses had been maintained even with the challenges of COVID 19. Our grocery supply is locked into a hand full of distributors who are latched on to established brands. As a result, new brands entering the market are likely to be almost nonexistent. We must build back with a broader base, by giving small businesses the necessary support, especially financial, to better serve consumers. SLISBA's intervention is needed.

The Speculator Shops as we used refer to them are no longer seen as serious competitors. Large Fashion stores are experiencing declining sales due to eBay, Amazon and Alibaba. New businesses came on the scene as a result, including a new profession which I refer to as Online Order Consultant. SLISBA should be a well supported organisation to get the MSMEs on the move to fill the gap wherever it occurs and forge new areas of business to facilitate dislocated business persons. Small business persons must regain their voices to contribute to the development of our country.

Let us make every effort to stay safe, adhere to the protocols and pray for deliverance from the COVID 19 pandemic so that in the end, it will be well with us. Keep the faith. Yahweh is in charge!

Edward Harris

AMERICA STRUGGLES TO MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY!

October 21, 2021

“Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.” – George Bernard Shaw

Caribbean people are more connected to the free world, especially due to the fact that we cherish our freedoms. Our people have migrated in the main to three countries, United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, while it is claimed that West Indian people can be found in almost every part of the world. The USA has the largest block of migrants from the Caribbean. We are inextricably connected to the economic and social culture of the USA. It is said that when America sneezes, the Caribbean catches the flu. We take our cue from the USA. The big brother relationship is fuelled by the media, especially cable television which makes some of us in the Caribbean more informed than many citizens of the US.

A whole new breed of politicians now represents the citizens of the United States of America. In the past, many of us admired politics, and democracy as applied in the USA. That was until President Donald Trump arrived on the political scene. In the four years of his presidency, he changed the way business is done in Washington. His legacy is being continued in the House and Senate by his GOP colleagues who are doing everything to make it possible for his return to the White House in 2024. Voters' rights are being trampled upon by State legislation that will see his supporters taking over the administration of elections in several states.

In recent times people of colour are being threatened by the political disruption that is taking place in the USA for almost five years continuously by President Trump and leaders of the MAGA Movement which attempted to trample upon the wishes of the majority of the people on January 6, 2021. That was a day that will long be remembered as the day not for the acts of insurrection but rather as a day when DEMOCRACY triumphed. I believed that on that day many persons who did not believe on a supreme being came to the realisation that Yahweh is real. The most interesting take away is that the near death situation that occurred that day is forgotten by men and women who are willing to say that the insurrectionists were mere tourists touring the Capitol. How much more can the influence of one man be on people who claim to be free? It was a sad day for the USA. Politicians who continue to peddle a LIE that the elections were stolen and encourage persons to Stop the Steal should be disciplined. The reality is that this is today's America which was once the bastion of democracy.

The gains made by Black Americans can be severely eroded if the Filibuster is not amended to facilitate the voting rights bills. President Biden must support this initiative and forego his initial bipartisan approach to getting his transformative programmes passed in the House and Senate. Negotiating across the aisle is just not a working proposition when it comes to dealing with the new breed of Republicans. The GOP membership is bent on ensuring that the transformative agenda of President Biden does not succeed.

In spite of all the disruptive racial attacks on people of colour, especially Blacks, they continue to achieve positions in the current administration that give us hope. In recent years, many important

positions were held by persons of colour, including that of the highest office in the land which was held by President Barack Obama who served the maximum of two terms in government. The battle to ensure that there is no hindrance to the gains made in the past must continue and every effort made to expand those gains to ensure humane conditions for all citizens regardless of colour.

It would be amiss of me if I fail to pay my respects at the passing of an illustrious public servant General Colin Luther Powell who served as Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and Secretary of State in President George W. Bush's administration.

In the end Democracy will prevail.

Let us continue to pray for life to return to normalcy when we will be able to live to the full, the life we love. Stay safe.

Edward Harris

CHANGE IS HERE – IT IS BUSINESS UNUSUAL!

October 28, 2021

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new.”
— Socrates

The winning game appears to be played by many unscrupulous individuals who apply the survival of the fittest strategy. In an environment that no longer conforms to the ethical norms of yesterday, the new buzz phrase is BUSINESS UNUSUAL. Industry leaders loudly boast that things will never be the same, so it is time we conform to the new normal which is being imposed upon us. As I see it, the new normal is – that the only thing that matters is Money.

This scripture which was not known to many is now revealed. **“A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry but money answereth all things.” Ecclesiastes 10:19.** It is the truth that will always set us free. This knowledge was hidden from the masses and those who were privileged to get this information have used it to exploit others. The wealth gap has been substantially widened in the past two decades. Knowledge has increased; with the introduction of technology, economic development has been on steroids and industrial advancement has moved ahead with unparalleled speed. The advancements at all levels that have been made in recent years have been phenomenal. Artificial Intelligence is changing the industrial landscape and with every passing day, we feel the impact of cutting-edge technologies as they change the way business is done. Imagine what the economic landscape could have been without COVID 19?

Those who plan to get ahead must commit to doing things differently, always focused on the fact that there will be no return to the way things used to be. Moving forward, it will be Business Unusual especially with those business persons who have entered the Reset stage that is already contributing to this new system.

The question that industry leaders are currently asking themselves is – why are so many people not returning to their usual jobs? The real answer is that they are looking for something outside of the normal. Up until COVID 19, too many employers failed to give their workers real opportunities to develop themselves. When work from home was introduced by many firms, employees’ eyes were opened and for the first time, many saw that life could be different and both sides can coexist. COVID 19 brought about an awareness that workers can get a better deal. Now the US government has joined the debate and seeking out opportunities to make life more palatable for their citizens. There will be assistance for child care and other social benefits to ease the physical and financial burden on parents, especially for single parents.

We must not shy away from the many reasons why employees are not returning to work in the expected numbers. Many have found better ways that fuel their passion and create new opportunities for establishing home-based businesses. Another reason is spending quality time with family. Sober minded families are enjoying this period very much. Things they never did are being done. Many are experiencing life in a manner, they never thought possible. There is a higher meaning to life.

It is interesting to note, the value placed on employees where companies are willing to offer Incentives upfront to new employees. Imagine receiving CASH for accepting a job? That is definitely not the norm but it is a sign of the times – Business Unusual.

Executives and other employees are now able to exercise options by moving to cities that they only read about and are even able to request to work remotely from overseas. How quickly life has changed, affording many persons to live life on their own terms. The people will win in the end. We await with baited breath for an end of the twists and turns in the governance of the United States of America as Democrats and Republicans settle down to serving their citizens and by extension the citizens of the world. Next year, there will be many water shed moments for the United States of America. The far reaching, transformative plans envisaged under President Biden's administration when unfold will bring joy to the world. It is a great time to be alive. Do everything to get more out of life. You deserve it. I can't wait.

It is reassuring to note that efforts to bring COVID 19 under control are showing signs of progress. Let us not hasten to step out and begin to celebrate but rather employ restraint and watch and pray that all will be well. Keep the Faith, Stay Safe, we will rise again.

Edward Harris

THE DEMOCRATS NEED AN URGENT STRATEGY RESET!

November 4, 2021

“When you make a choice, you change the future.”—Deepak Chopra

Anyone following the political developments in the USA, after the events of January 6, 2021, would have thought that it is the Republicans that will need a Reset to hit the road again. Instead what we saw after the COVID 19 Relief Bill that assisted poor families and helped small businesses, the honeymoon was over for President Biden.

In recent months, Senators, Joe Manchin, D-W. Va and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz emerged, and ever since the Democrats are caught in a battle among themselves and it appears that nothing is being done in the Senate. What is being demonstrated is division among Democrats without the Republicans having to lift a finger. It is sad to see after America was salvaged from the disruptiveness of President Donald Trump; the party that came to the rescue of the nation, no longer has the will to move forward, with obstacle after obstacle placed in the way of progress. When President Biden set off on his overseas trip to meet Pope Francis in Rome and attend the COP26 conference in Scotland, where in the latter instance, he was left empty handed with nothing tangible to present to other world leaders on the important subject of climate change.

As President Biden’s Air Force One was taxiing down the runway having returned from his overseas trip, the Breaking News was that the Virginia Governor’s race was safely in the hands of the Republicans with a Glenn Youngkin’s win over former democratic Governor Terry McAuliffe, and the New Jersey race was too close to call. Finally, on Wednesday night, after a long struggle, the New Jersey race was declared in favour of incumbent Democratic Governor, Phil Murphy which brought some form of relief to President Biden. This is not going well for President Biden. He saw none of the fall out coming as he predicted a win for former Governor Mc Auliffe of Virginia prior to his departure for home, and everyone expected a walkover in New Jersey.

The people did not send the Democrats to Washington to stall their platform promises. I feel for President Biden but he came to the job with great and honourable intentions which are not relevant in these times. The rules as they relate to politics in today’s world are totally different from what President Biden wants to achieve. There can be no negotiation across the aisle when it is the stated position of the GOP to ensure nothing is achieved by Democrats leading up to the midterm in 2022. The Filibuster must be removed now. I feel that Representative Jim Clyburn needs to once again confront President Biden with some straight talk – **that it is time for urgent and decisive action.**

It is interesting to note that while the Democrats are trying to legislate at the Federal level, the Republicans are rushing ahead and legislating at the State Level as they have done with Voting and Abortion Bills which are preparing most major red states for a Republican win in 2024 under their terms. President Biden must do more in involving himself in the affairs of the House and Senate and change his strategy for dealing with the Republicans, and treat them in the same way they treated his Democratic predecessors, especially President Barack Obama where Senator

Mitch Mc Connell openly stated his non co-operation with the first Obama administration which went on to serve two terms.

It is time for open warfare as Democrats prepare for the 2022 midterm. If nothing changes in their approach to dealing with issues that are put on the table by Republicans, the Biden's presidency will be ruined. What urgent bills are there to be tabled and passed? It should be a commitment from all Democrats to get them passed by the end of the first quarter of 2022. On whose side are Senators Manchin and Sinema? I suspect that they are heading to be Independents in the future. There are many lessons to be learnt from both sides of the aisle as it relates to the new style of politics adopted by Democrats and Republicans alike. Trumpism seems to be alive and well.

The 5 – 11 age group are all set to receive the Pfizer vaccine as the general feeling is that the USA is about to turn the corner on the COVID 19 pandemic. This is great news if people will apply restraint by not rushing to expose themselves and allow for a gradual return to normalcy.

Our Prime Minister, Hon. Philip J. Pierre's presentation at the COP26 Conference in Scotland was well received and his commitment to "Putting People First" echoed across the world.

It is necessary for us to continue to adhere to the COVID 19 protocols and stay away from crowds so that the gains that we are continuing to make will be sustained.

Stay Safe. Remember that it is the will of Yahweh that above all things that we should be in health.

Edward Harris

TUMULTUOUS TIMES ARE AHEAD!

November 18, 2021

“In tumultuous times, it’s important to have a very mature leader.” Gordon Gee.

Who would have imagined that the world would have been in such confusion as it is today? Many leaders have lost their sense of reasoning. There is a Barbadian Calypsonian who declared “This can’t Happen Here”. A lot of things have happened in the land of the Flying Fish and other places around the world since then. As I salute each new day, I ask my Creator to give me the patience to accept the myriad of challenges that will come my way, and the strength to persevere.

In the past week, the COP 26 Summit came to an end with lots of lofty declarations which will depend heavily on available funding which is scarce in these times. Noticeably, the leaders of two superpowers – Russia and China were absent. The latter being a major polluter. They were represented by senior officials of their administrations. President Biden, although he did not get the push needed from Congress with the passing of his Infrastructure Bill, was still able to emerge as the leader who is ready to advance the cause of Clean Energy. Since then, the Infrastructure Bill was signed and we can look forward to America’s role in the future of Clean Energy. They will all be back in a year’s time to assess gains made based on final declarations at the summit.

Continuing to look at the turmoil around the world, we see that the leaders of The People’s Republic of China are acting up and sizing up The People’s Republic of China on Taiwan to enforce their claim that there is but one China, and Taiwan is a part of China. Cuba is having problems, their people want to break loose, and finally, Cuban Americans are joining in the protest from their safe haven in Florida. Russia is building up troops at the Russia-Ukraine border. NATO has already sounded a warning for Russia to desist, while the USA has noted the situation to be of grave concern. Venezuela has gone a bit quiet on Guyana but the lingering claim to three-quarters of Guyana remains very active on the minds of President Nicolas Maduro and his supporters. Guyana is adamant that they will not yield a blade of grass.

While there are all types of postures by leaders outside of the USA, America is having its own problems. Former President, Donald J. Trump continues to hold out his claim that he is the legitimate president of the United States of America. The drumbeat is getting louder as his support base remains intact. The Democrats are not asserting themselves and telling their truth in an effective manner. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) needs to be more aggressive in its Campaign Strategy if Democrats are to stave off an outright defeat in the midterm elections of 2022. President Trump is in an unenviable position that guarantees him to be the Republican presidential candidate for 2024. However, the Democrats have some time to get their act together for both races, with the former being a little more difficult. I don’t believe the citizens of the USA will go for another term of a Trump administration in three years but the House and Senate races of 2022 are well within their grasp.

On the economic front, America has opened its doors to all vaccinated citizens of the world who are qualified to enter the United States of America. The same situation is also at play where US citizens who are vaccinated can travel to overseas destinations freely. This is great news for the Global Tourism Industry. The Caribbean is in for an extraordinary Winter Season. Cruise ships are coming back and the frequency can only increase if tourists keep within the established protocols and restrain themselves from behaving in a manner that will cause a surge in cases of COVID 19 going forward.

The Government of Saint Lucia marked 100 days in office as it continues to navigate a course for setting the country on a strong social and economic footing. The general mood of citizens seems to be one of patience as further plans for the future of the nation continue to emerge.

Barbados will be in the news in the coming days as the nation gets ready to adopt a Republican Status. Dame Sandra Mason, 72, has been Governor-General of Barbados since 2018 and is now set to be sworn in on November 30, as the President of the Republic on the occasion of the country's 55th anniversary of independence from Britain. May their future be bright!

Finally, as we welcome a reduction in COVID 19 cases and deaths, let us not hasten to celebrate but rather to be thankful for the mercies that have been bestowed upon us by our Creator. Blessings!

Edward Harris

LET US PAUSE AND GIVE THANKS TO YAHWEH!

November 25, 2021

“Be fast, have no regrets... If you need to be right before you move, you will never win.” Mike Ryan, Epidemiologist at WHO.

Everyone is excited about the good news that in St. Lucia, simply beautiful, and blessed, our COVID 19 cases and deaths are on the decline. My humble suggestion is that we temper our joy and give thanks to Yahweh for the progress we are making in bringing COVID 19 under control. While we are continuing to see progress in our citizens’ responses in relation to taking vaccines and observing the protocols, we must not drop our guards as our achievements in dealing with the virus is not universal. Surges in COVID 19 cases in Europe have resulted in complete lockdown in some countries while there are concerns about recent surges in the USA.

There is even talk about a 5th wave which is quite possible as we witness the expressions of freedom by citizens in the United States of America and elsewhere. We should apply restraint in our actions, always being conscious of the fact that the COVID 19 Pandemic is still very much with us. No one knows for sure when this situation will end and what future direction this deadly virus will take. What is the possibility of new variants emerging? There is no need to be fearful but rather we need to exercise caution and follow the science. Persons who have taken the initial required doses six months or more ago are now eligible for a booster shot. This booster shot is highly recommended at this time due to the mass movement of persons during the holidays.

I visited Castries on Thursday of this week and was heartened at the fact that two cruise ships were in port and tourists were on the streets. We are looking forward to welcoming the ARC, and things are slowly but surely getting back to normal. Next year, if the virus is contained, we can look forward to the Jazz & Arts Festival, Carnival, and other festivals. These events will definitely signal that COVID 19 is behind us and we can get back to living our normal lives.

We must get into the habit of giving thanks. Let us pause and continue to give Yahweh thanks for bringing us thus far. As we look forward to the holiday season, it is so refreshing to hear Christmas songs on the airwaves and watch movies with Santa Claus on our television. The season is really being welcomed. I feel like singing Silver Bells because soon it will be Christmas Day. The festive season is one of the loveliest times of the year when families and friends get together in a spirit of caring and sharing in an atmosphere of peace and love.

This holiday season will not be like pre-COVID 19 years, inflation and shortages are already showing their ugly heads, but our people are resolved to ensure that nothing stops the Jolly Good Time that we enjoy during the Festive Season. Celebrate, we will!

Let us get ready for a wonderful and peaceful festive season. In the meantime, stay safe. Remember, whatever happens, it will be the will of Yahweh concerning us. Blessings!

Edward Harris

DON'T WAIT FOR THE PANDEMIC TO END, LET'S GET ON WITH OUR LIVES!

December 2, 2021

“Anyone can give up; it is the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone would expect you to fall apart, now that is true strength.” — Chris Bradford

I begin my column on a positive note this week, and as a result, I will leave behind those things which have caused us to be fearful and retarded our progress up to this point.

Congratulations are in order for the citizens of Barbados for taking the bold step of becoming a Republic on the 55th anniversary of their independence. Barbados has come of age and will assume the responsibility for managing their own affairs without any outside interference, which is what I consider to be true independence. Saint Lucia was represented by Prime Minister, Honourable Philip J. Pierre at the inauguration. The question is – which country will be next? If former Prime Minister, Dr. The Honourable Kenny D. Anthony, currently Member of Parliament for Vieux Fort – South has his way, Saint Lucia will be next. The initial work has already been done in preparing a draft constitution; all that is needed is the political will to execute the plan to establish Saint Lucia as a Republic. This is the decade for action; many decisions that were put on the back burner will be executed in this decade. Many things that have not been spoken of but have been a long time coming – the moment is here. Some may even be unpleasant but the time has come for them to be brought to the fore.

As I indicated, I want to stay on a positive course this week, even though it is difficult due to the fact that nothing is constant but I will do my best. Change is really the only constant.

The Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture hosted its 137th Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 30th November, 2021. In keeping with COVID 19 protocols, it was held virtually. I was very pleased to be a part of the audience and spent time listening to the main speakers whose presentations had all the ingredients that would trigger the enthusiasm of all present, and those who will listen to or read the presentations subsequently, which I hope will be widely circulated in the media and by all other means that will place the presentations in the hands of those who need guidance to meet the demands of these challenging times. Mr. Francis Lewis of ResConsulting spoke on the topic – Reset, Rethink, Reboot which was well presented and he used visuals effectively. Our Prime Minister, Honourable Philip J. Pierre presented the featured address and stressed the need for the Government and the Private Sector to work together in creating a better Saint Lucia. He gave an overview of matters relating to the economy and the health sector, and what the Government plans to do to bring about the necessary changes. He lamented the state of the youth and cited the unemployment situation which is receiving urgent attention. I suggest that the two presentations be read in Cabinet to get all members on the same page in recognising that the Government and Private Sector which is the engine of growth must work together.

Last week when I sat down to write this column, I was seeing all the signs that the pandemic was receding. However, by the time the weekend newspaper got to the stands, it was a different tune as the OMICRON variant introduced itself to the world from its source country South Africa. The reaction was swift as countries began to place travel bans on travellers from a few African

countries. It is evident that COVID 19 will be with us for some time in the future, and as a result, we must have a plan to move on with our lives in a state of consciousness that we can coexist with COVID 19 if we heed the advice of the medical professionals, get vaccinated and adhere to the protocols. We have come thus far and there is a road ahead for all who will be guided by science and obey the health laws of their country.

Finally, the month of December is here and for those of us who are fortunate to be alive, let us give thanks for the opportunity and dedicate this Festive Season to be one of peace, joy and happiness. In the meantime, stay safe. Remember, whatever happens, it will be the will of Yahweh concerning us. Blessings!

Edward Harris

LONG & HEALTHY LIFE IS A BLESSING!

December 9, 2021

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” Peter Drucker

My grandfather used to say long life is a blessing, and if someone is blessed to live a long life, he/she will experience many things that he/she would have never thought possible in their lifetime. He died at 91 and his memory is alive in my thoughts. As I live in the twilight of my years, I am blessed to have had the benefit of his wise counsel. He told me many stories which equipped me for life. Today’s generation has not enjoyed the storytelling moments like those of us who were born in the good old days, (post world war 2) when the young listened attentively to the old and in many instances, the lessons learned from the many stories were etched in our minds.

As I prepare to mark another birth anniversary, thanking my Creator for a long and healthy life, I happen to be living in a world where I could have never imagined that mankind would have been experiencing a life so filled with anxieties and uncertainties. The beauty of our faces is now covered as we traverse the streets and even in enclosed areas, wherein in many instances we can hardly identify the other person. In spite of all that is happening, it is still a wonderful world where plans for the future are being drawn up in every sphere of our human existence.

We are no longer excited to meet millionaires; they are now ordinary people, billionaires maybe, but the emphasis when it comes to wealth in today’s world has moved to trillionaires. All this emphasis on wealth began with the advancement of technology and new opportunities in the Stock and Currency markets, the latter fueled by Bitcoin in the second decade of the 21st century. The race is on in areas of creativity and innovation. In the meantime what are we in the Caribbean doing to be players in the Investment space? Are we trying to find out and learn more about the latest platform known as Metaverse? Some fantastic outcomes are expected from this latest platform. Barbados is already positioning itself to be the leader in the Caribbean in applying the offerings of this new platform as a space to promote its global Foreign Affairs strategy. In spite of the uncertain world political environment, lots of exciting things are happening. The movers and shakers in the investment space are not holding back, they are bullish like never before. Return on investment has never been better. These are all developments that have taken the world by surprise as they are released into the market.

The end of yet another challenging year draws nigh and many of us are very optimistic about the future as we get a handle on COVID 19 pandemic. What lessons have we learned during the period of the surge of the Coronavirus and its variants? 1. That you can be Resilient even during times of a pandemic by applying discipline. 2. That high yield Investment opportunities are always available, just find them or create them. 3. That investments shouldn’t be made based on emotions. Research the opportunity before investing. 4. That by staying positive, and focused, it is possible to succeed in the most difficult times. 5. That it is important to network and be active in your Business/Professional Association. 6. That mentorship is important and the necessity to subscribe to motivational programmes is vital.

This is no time to give up. Your best life could be just ahead of us. It can only get better if the trend related to the pandemic holds. In the meantime, continue to adhere to the protocols and get vaccinated. The next time we meet through this column, I hope to proudly state that I received my BOOSTER. Join me and do what is right to save your life and that of others.

Our Creator has promised to protect us as long as we live in his will. Stay safe and be blessed.

Edward Harris

THIS IS A TIME FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, & FUN!!

December 16, 2021

“Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.” — Norman Vincent Peale.

Happy Holidays! It is Christmas time in the city! Do you hear what I hear! I am in a mood for giving Thanks. To everything, there is a time and a season. Let us celebrate in the spirit of giving thanks for all things concerning us because we are confident that it is the will of Yahweh.

COVID 19 and its variants are somewhat under control in Saint Lucia. However, beyond our shores, it is not the same. There are much fewer cases and significantly fewer deaths. We are in a good place but we must never forget how vulnerable we are. I am not aware of any call to Prayers. I feel that it is time for a National Day of Thanksgiving and Prayers.

On December 14, I celebrated a major milestone in my life’s journey. I am grateful to everyone who sent me birthday wishes. It was very rewarding to note that so many people were happy to know that I am still alive and very much in the game of life. It was a wonderful experience. I look forward to your continued support in my many efforts. Thank You!

In spite of the vicissitudes of life during the past year, we in Saint Lucia have a lot to be thankful for. It is important to be realistic in our expectations as the world is not what it used to be. Governments’ resources everywhere in the world are under pressure with competing demands placed upon them, especially in the areas of health care and education. It is necessary for our people to exercise patience while seeking to help themselves.

Turning to social and economic issues, we have to do more with less and seek out creative ways to deal with the unemployment situation, especially among the youth. One of the important contributors to fighting crime must be putting idle hands to work and giving our young people a sense of purpose and financial independence. No one can be satisfied with the level of crime in our society today. What can we do, that is not being done to wipe out criminal activities from our midst. As we celebrate the Festive Season, let us take the opportunity to establish PEACE and GOODWILL among our citizens of all ages. Let us look beyond family and friends and extend a helping hand to the less fortunate among us. Let us show them that we care and ensure that we share our blessings with the less fortunate. This is a time for sharing and caring.

This year’s Christmas will be like no other in times past. Gone too soon was the preferred hymn as many of us said farewell to loved ones, friends, and colleagues whom we felt left us too soon. COVID 19 has almost reached out to everyone with the pain of loss. Let us take comfort in celebrating their lives. To those of us who are alive, let us give thanks and seek to get closer to our Creator like never before. This is a time when we must dress up for Yahweh; let us step out in our best apparel for Christmas and New Year’s Eve church services. There must be opportunities for large congregations to host services at the various stadiums and playing fields so that proper social distancing could be maintained. Let our people sing lustily in Songs of Thanksgiving!

To my dear readers, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health even as your souls prosper. I further wish that you will have a holiday that will afford you Joy and Happiness as you enjoy being among your Family and Friends in an atmosphere of Fun.

Seek out every opportunity to maintain the COVID 19 Protocols. Our Creator has promised to protect us as long as we live in his will. Stay safe and be blessed. I wish you a Merry Christmas.

Edward Harris

A RANDOM LOOK AT SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS IN 2021 AT HOME & ABROAD!

December 22, 2021

“Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.” Winston Churchill.

I am always excited about this time of year, even when, like this year, there are things to take away that special feeling. Oh, how I love the Festive Season. It is truly a time for getting together with family and friends. I feel special when someone at the other end of the phone wishes me Happy Holidays and extend their wishes to my family. It really gives expression to the old saying “Peace on earth and goodwill towards men”.

As we look forward to 2022, it would be remiss of me not to recall the highs and lows of 2021 where there were definitely much more of the latter. Here are some noted happenings so far this year.

1. **COVID 19 pandemic** continued throughout the year with every indication that the Delta variant will give way to OMICRON, the variant that will take us into 2022. It doesn't look good. Just when everyone was getting ready to have a wonderful holiday season, the OMICRON variant is very much on the horizon and will definitely limit the activities that we are accustomed to at this time. In New York, the restaurants are affected, Broadway shows have been cancelled and the DOW dropped substantially on December 20, 2021. Mayor Bill de Blasio is trying hard to keep schools open, even though online learning seems a likely option in 2022. However, while all of this is going on, airline flights are fully booked and it is expected that this holiday season will break all previous records. Citizens all over the world are determined to enjoy a normal Christmas with family and friends (regardless of the stubbornness of the pandemic), and return to the way it used to be pre-COVID 19.
2. **Work from home** expanded in the early months of 2021 with some companies returning to the office during the latter months of the year. We are very likely to see a return to working from home and remotely in a more expanded manner should OMICRON continue to surge.
3. **3. Teleconferencing continues to be effectively utilised** and even expanded, with ZOOM as a leading provider, which yielded significant gains for its shareholders. Business travel suffered as a result of executives limiting their national and overseas trips. Persons were able to view and participate in funeral services and other religious ceremonies from the comfort of their homes.
4. **Investment Opportunities have never produced greater results**, whether it is in Real Estate, Stocks, Bonds, Forex, Mutual Funds, Crypto Currencies, etc. They have all performed well for those who participated, regardless of the risks.
5. **In the latter half of 2021, St. Lucians went to the polls.** The election campaign of 2021 was very subdued due to COVID 19 with the emphasis placed on voting rather than

the usual campaigning and rallies. The elections were held on Monday, 26th July, 2021 and resulted in a change of government which saw the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) winning and gaining a strong majority in the house of parliament. The results were as follows: Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) 13 seats, United Workers Party (UWP) 2 seats with 2 independent victories. The Independent Candidates are now prominent ministers in the current administration. Putting People First as promoted by the SLP was a winning slogan.

6. **Fare paying passengers are now going to the edge of space** and the pioneers, Musk, Bezos and Branson are looking towards a bright future in space.
7. The rushed US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the build-up of troops on Russian and Chinese borders.
8. **Cruise ships returned to Port Castries**, Hewanorra International Airport is busy. Virgin Atlantic is back and our large hotels are doing fine. Tourism is back!
9. **Serious crimes and homicides continue** to plague our society at an alarming rate and pose a challenge for law enforcement officials to craft a programme that will help to alleviate this scourge.
10. **The relationship with The People's Republic of China on Taiwan** and Saint Lucia continues to prosper and it is noteworthy that they were the first contributor to the Youth Economy programme being initiated by the new government.
11. **CARICOM appointed Dr. Carla Barnett as its new Secretary-General.**
12. **Barbados became a Republic** and assumed responsibility for its own affairs.
13. **The Government of Guyana** continues with reforms and infrastructural works and is seeking to expand opportunities for all Guyanese.
14. **Metaverse is the latest buzz. Facebook is now Meta** and we can all be on the lookout for the surprises that are in the making for this platform.
15. **In the US Senate, one Democratic Senator** Joseph Manchin is frustrating the wishes of 49 of his colleagues in executing President Joe Biden's Build Back Better agenda.
16. **As we come to the close of 2021**, Saint Lucia COVID 19 cases are down, deaths are substantially reduced. However, we must be forever vigilant, adhere to the protocols, and encourage our families and friends to get vaccinated. If you took 2 shots, take the third. Stay in tune with the science.

The above are some of the developments that attracted my attention in 2021.

A Merry Christmas to all. Keep the true purpose in mind as we celebrate the birth of Yahshua. Stay safe.

Edward Harris

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