



## THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

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### **VINCENTIANS PREPARE FOR MAY 21- SPIRITUAL BAPTIST LIBERATION DAY (NATIONAL HOLIDAY)**

As the nation prepares to commemorate May 21 as Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day, the Department of Culture launched a week of activities in honour of the historic occasion.

Speaking at the launch on Tuesday, Director of Culture, Maxine Browne, said the government remains steadfast in its quest for cultural inclusion, national unity and celebrating and preserving elements of Vincentian heritage.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism Dr. Tamira Browne, , emphasised the historical significance of this moment given that it is a landmark recognition of a community that has long been a cornerstone of our spiritual and cultural identity.

St Vincent and the Grenadines is the second country in the Caribbean to declare a National Holiday for the Spiritual Baptist Faith.

The historic Bill was passed in Parliament on August 27, 2024. The Parliament was unanimous on the passage of the Bill with support from both sides of the House of Assembly.

The colonial government on October 1, 1912 outlawed the Spiritual Baptist religion through the Shakerism Prohibition Ordinance. This made it illegal for members to practice their faith and they suffered years of persecution.

The law was repealed on March 22, 1965 by the E. T Joshua-led Legislative Council which passed Ordinance Number 7 of 1965 to remove the 1912 legal ban.

However, May 21, 1951 has always been observed by members of the Spiritual Baptist Faith as their Liberation Day, following the victory of a court case where they were represented by Former Premier Hon. Robert Milton Cato.

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