Caribbean Encounters
Fostering Real Conversations in the Caribbean and Beyond

presents
St. Vincent and the Grenadines

“Gem of the Antilles”

and

“Land of the Blessed”
Description

- St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an archipelago comprised of 32 islands located in the Windward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean.
- St. Vincent is the largest and most populated island. Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, Mustique, Union Island and many smaller cays make up the Grenadines.
- St. Vincent is 18 miles long and 11 miles wide with an area of 133 sq. miles.
- The Grenadines extend for 45 miles to the southwest and cover an area of only 17 square miles.
• **St. Vincent is bordered by Grenada, 75 miles to the south; St. Lucia, 24 miles to the north; and Barbados, 150 miles to the east.**

• **SVG is located in the Atlantic Standard Time Zone, 1 hour ahead of the Eastern Standard Time Zone.**
The Flag

• The green diamonds are shaped in a V for St. Vincent, and reflect the plural nature of the many islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

• The blue represents the sky and sea. The gold is for warmth, the bright spirit of the people and the golden sands of the Grenadines. The green represents the lush vegetation of St. Vincent's agriculture and the enduring vitality of the people.
Topography of St. Vincent

- St. Vincent is a volcanic island of steep ridges, valleys, and waterfalls. The north is dominated by the active La Soufriere volcano (4,040 ft.).
Climate

- SVG enjoys a steady tropical temperature all year long ranging from 18° - 32°C (64°–89° F).
- NE trade winds blow from January to June.
- The rainy season is from May to November with up to 160 inches of rain falling yearly in the mountainous interior.
The People
• Population 109,200 (declining due to migration)
• Language English, French Patois
• Ethnicity/Race: Black 66%, Mixed 19%, East Indian 6%, Carib Amerindian 2%, Other 7%
• Religions: Anglican 42%, Methodist 21%, Roman Catholic 12%, other 25% (Hindu, Baha’i, Pentecostal)
• Life expectancy 72.9 (76.2 US) UNDP
• Infant mortality 23 per 1,000 live births (6.3 US) UNDP
• 83.1 adult literacy rate (99% US) UNDP
The Economy
• GDI per capita $3,650 US (In the US the GDI per capita is $41,400 US) World Bank 2005
• Minimum wage for industrial workers is $7.49/day.
• Unemployment 22% (US State Dept. estimates are 25-40%)
• 26% live below national poverty line
• “One of the most disaster-affected nations in the world. (IMF)” 10 major disasters have hit the country since 1970.
And yet...

• The Grenadines has been described as “the best sailing ground anywhere in the world.” Donald Trump recently partnered with Raffles to develop Canouan into a major multifaceted vacation destination and Mick Jagger, Raquel Welch and Princess Margaret have called Mustique “home.”
The History ofSVG

- St. Vincent was originally inhabited by the Ciboney (5000 B.C.), Arawak, and lastly, the Carib Indians who migrated from Venezuela in the 14th century A.D.
- When a Dutch slave ship sunk off the shores of St. Vincent in 1635 the escaped Africans settled on the island. The slaves and Caribs intermarried and formed a new people called the Garifuna, or Black Caribs. The Yellow Caribs settled in the West and the Black Caribs in the East after tensions developed between them.
The Caribs fiercely resisted colonization from the Europeans for two centuries, but the Yellow Caribs allowed the French to establish settlements in the early 1700’s.

The Paris Treaty of 1763 ceded St. Vincent to the British and the French and the British competed for control of the island for the next twenty years.

In 1779, with Carib assistance, the French forcibly seized the island, but in 1782, the Treaty of Versailles gave possession of St. Vincent back to the British. The French continued to encourage the Black Caribs to oppose British settlement, but when the Caribs were defeated in 1797, to prevent further resistance, the British banished 5,000 Caribs to the rocky island of Balliceaux (seen in the picture above).
• A few Caribs escaped and scattered to the far north of St. Vincent where their descendants can still be found today.

• Those who survived banishment were transported to Honduras in February 1797.

• During the 19th century a plantation economy, based on slave labor, flourished and St. Vincent produced sugar, cotton, coffee and cocoa.
• Volcanic eruptions and economic depression produced cycles of instability as St. Vincent progressed to becoming a self-governing state in 1969.

• Ten years later, on October 27, 1979, St. Vincent became an independent state in the British Commonwealth, the last of the Windward Islands to gain independence.
The Future of SVG

• In January 2006 the banana quota system that guaranteed Caribbean bananas a sure market in Britain is to be swept aside. “If this new banana regime goes ahead, we [could] be reduced to poverty overnight,” explains Louis Straker, St Vincent’s deputy prime minister.
Further Problems

• The Caribbean is second only to Sub-Saharan Africa in the ratio of persons infected with HIV/AIDS. St. Vincent accounts for 50% of the new reported cases in the OECS.

• Hotel occupancy in SVG dropped to a 15 year low after 9/11 and the Caribbean’s market share of international tourist arrivals has declined in recent years.
On the Positive Side…

• The GDP in SVG is on the rise and 3,500 new jobs have been created since 2001, according to Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves.

• Vincentians are a proud people who resisted colonialism longer than any other island in the Caribbean and endured genocide and slavery to emerge as “a truly noble civilization.” (Louis Straker)

• According to the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development there are several reasons for hope in the region: the recognition that changes have to be made, a stable political situation, the absence of immense social foment, a history of economic growth, and the fact that there are strong traditional links and synergies between the Caribbean and developed countries.
The Purpose of Caribbean Encounters is:

• To foster real conversations between people of different cultures, within individuals, and with God.

• To provide for material, educational, and/or spiritual needs, as allowed, to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other Caribbean nations.

• To educate and sensitize young people and adults in the US and the Caribbean to the changing needs of people in less economically developed countries (LEDCs) and more economically developed countries (MEDCs) in this global economy.
July 16-23, 2006 Mission Trip

- On this trip we will help with the Kingstown Evangelical Church Vacation Bible School. 150-200 children are expected to attend. In 2005 the Church was unable to hold the School because there were not enough adults to help.

- In the evenings we will lead volleyball games in Rose Place, an area of outreach for the Church. Rose Place is located near the Church and has an average monthly household income for a family of 5 of $459.61 US.
- We have been asked to supply and set-up a Church library at KEC.
- A former Peace Corps Volunteer has also requested that we help supply a community library in the town of Fancy, located in the north.
- Considering the typical wages of a laborer, the cost of a single paperback book can be an entire day’s wages.
- Fancy is a primitive village at the end of the eastern shore road and is the location of a Carib community.
How you can help

- Join us in St. Vincent! Contact Susan for information on costs and logistics. sdittman@adelphia.net or 540-463-3488.
- Donate Christian or secular books. Books will be shipped from VA in mid-April or individuals can ship directly to the Church in SVG.
- Donate money to Caribbean Encounters, Inc. We have filed to be a non-profit corporation in Virginia and will be applying for federal tax-exempt status. Send checks to Caribbean Encounters, 507 Borden Rd. Lexington, VA 24450
- Help with the Spring Volleyball Tournament to be held in Lexington on April 29/30 by playing, sponsoring a court, or working