

**Anglican Togetherness Group (ATG) /Greater Mona Valley (GMV) Panel Discussion**

**Ash Wednesday**

**March 06, 2019**

**St Margaret's Church**

**Liguanea**

**What is the panel discussion about?**

A panel discussion is a specific format used in a meeting, conference or convention. It is a live or virtual discussion about a specific topic amongst a selected group of panelists who share differing perspectives in front of a large audience. The topic for discussion this Wednesday is Restorative Justice: A View from the Perspective of Parenting Training in the Greater Mona Valley (GMV) area.

Through a partnership with the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) the GMV has been made aware that in 2010, data from the police revealed that, 14 per cent of the victims of selected major crimes were 19 years old and under.<sup>1</sup> Approximately three-quarter (73 per cent) of these young victims were girls. Preliminary figures for 2015 from the Office of the Children's Registry (OCR) show an overall increase of 19 per cent over 2014 in all forms of reported child abuse. In 2015, the highest number of reports received by the OCR were for children being neglected followed by reports of children in need of care and protection. Reports of sexual abuse and those exhibiting behavioural problems also featured prominently. Reports of sexual abuse saw a 12

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<sup>1</sup> PIOJ - *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica, 2010.*

per cent increase in 2015 compared to 2014. This was followed by reports of emotional abuse and child labour at 8 per cent and 17 per cent change respectively. There was a 12 per cent increase in the reports on physical abuse. While numbers were relatively small, suspected cases of human trafficking did see a 60% increase in 2015 from 66 reports to 88 reports.

This panel discussion is about restorative justice. It is one way to address the crisis suggested by the data and is an approach to justice in which the response to a crime is through dialogue. This is a meeting between the parties involved, including the victim and the offender, and sometimes with representatives of the wider community present as well. The Church is an institution that has had a history of facilitating this type of dialogue and is best placed to facilitate dialogue between parents/guardians/caregivers and children.

The panel discussion is also about parenting. Parenting or child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the intricacies of raising a child and not exclusively to the biological relationship. Parenting styles that rely heavily on corporal punishment as a means of discouraging undesirable behaviour, and which are heavily imbued in a cultural tradition of not 'sparing the rod and spoiling the child' is a matter of concern. Physical violence is used as an alternative to productive communication with children both in the home and at other levels, including in schools. Sometimes physical and psychological violence is inflicted on children by those entrusted with their care including parents, guardians and teachers. Disciplinary methods in Jamaica remain predominantly physical.

Factors such as social integration and cohesion, respect for life and for individuals have been significantly compromised by immoral values, attitudes, including a reckless disregard for life and property.

Recommendations for addressing these concerns include the following:

- Improve parenting skills
- Practice positive cultural norms and values
- Implement measures to protect children.

### **What is the purpose?**

A panel discussion of this nature is designed to trigger an exchange of viewpoints among panelists and participants through prepared statements or in response to questions from the audience. Discussions take the form of on-the-spot interaction and make room for difficult and divergent viewpoints and possibly competition for speaking time. Discussions may be difficult to manage and are sometimes more challenging to moderate than a regular conference session.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to share perspectives on restorative justice and parenting. Special focus will be on the background to the work being done in restorative justice by the ATG (Keith Miller), parenting by the GMV steering committee (Janet Brown), successes, failures and general lessons from parenting training (Glynis Salmon), perspectives from HACO (Garth Kiddoe) and the VPA (Coleen Wint Bond).

## **How will it work?**

A panel is a team; whether or not panelists agree on all issues, they can and should work together to create an interesting discussion for the audience. Panelists prepare well and participate well. The goal is to inform, educate, and if needed entertain in order to effectively communicate the message of restorative justice through best practices in parenting. A moderator (Garth Minott) directs the team from the beginning of the session to the end. The moderator begins the discussion with a brief overview, statement of purpose and rules of engagement. The moderator introduces each panelist and gives her or him eight to ten minutes to speak. Once all the panelists have spoken the moderator invites questions and comments from the audience and allows panelists to respond. At the end of an hour the moderator will invite each panelist to give a concluding remark and one way she/he is committed to moving forward with the theme of restorative justice and parenting. The moderator will summarize the discussion, give closing remarks and bring the discussion to close with vote of thanks.

## **What is the outcome expected?**

Participants will be encouraged to support the work of the ATG/GMV by signing up to support:

1. The ongoing parenting initiative in partnership with the Mother's Union, Parenting Partners of the Caribbean etc. Special focus will be on a greater focus on family within the GMV
2. The continuation of the Youth initiative i.e. development of a Steel Pan as well as engagement with youth to identify relevant projects for young people in the Valley, especially in partnership with students from UWI and UTech
3. The initiate to establish adequate after-school care for young children attending schools or living in the GMV.

4. The initiative to execute a campaign to have all young children living in the GMV to attend Sunday school or other Church-linked programmes for that age group.
5. The initiative to plan/execute a stakeholder's consultation in 2020 to explore the concept of making the GMV a Centre of Excellence in respect of partnership and education.

Canon Garth Minott

Anglican Togetherness Group