



Jamaica Council of Churches

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CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

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Y.M.C.A.

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“We who show Mercy”

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) mourns the continued loss of life due to crime and violence. In particular, the heinous killing of five homeless persons and the inflicting of serious injury to others have raised serious questions of us as a nation. Attacks on homeless persons are not new. We are reminded of a previous case in July 1999 in which highly placed individuals forcibly removed thirty-nine homeless persons from the Montego Bay area, transported and dumped them near a mud lake in St. Elizabeth. We acknowledge however, that violence against the homeless is a subset of the much larger scourge; that of the disregard for life.

The Council calls on all Jamaicans to hear the words of the gospel according to Luke in its definition of the ‘neighbour’ as “He who showed mercy”(Luke 10:37). The Word of God calls upon us to acknowledge and affirm the dignity of human life which is the result of our creation in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27). We also remind the nation of the words of our National Anthem, which, as a solemn prayer petitions God to:

Teach us true respect for all,
Stir response to duty’s call,
Strengthen us the weak to cherish,...

The Council calls on our nation, inclusive of its political directorate, the church, civil society, young people and school children, to utilize all relevant fora in our country, churches and communities, to re-engage the national conversation which seeks to find credible and sustainable ways to:

- Embed in the soul of the nation the seeds of neighbourliness towards all and unequivocal care and compassion towards the vulnerable, powerless and poor.

- Regain the mind-set which reaffirms respect for and the dignity of both the self and the others.
- Unite and collaborate with all national stakeholders with singularity of purpose and effort to address the social ills which breed crime and violence.

We appeal to the nation to return to practicing care and compassion for which we were known in times past and to firmly resolve that it is in all of our interests to show mercy even as we petition God for mercy and pardon.

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