

## **ARCHBISHOP SAMUEL CARTER DISTINGUISHED LECTURE 2019**

### **JAMAICAN EDUCATION: SUCCESSFUL PATTERNS OF THE PAST, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Your Grace Archbishop Emeritus Donald Reece and members of the clergy, Mr. Anton Thompson chairman of the Board of Campion College and members of the Board, Mrs. Grace Baston principal, and members of staff, Professor Trevor Munroe past presenter of this lecture, Drs. Wilson and former and present members of the Faculty of Humanities and Education of the University of the West Indies, Dr. the Hon Lloyd Barnett, Head-boy and students of Campion College, and distinguished ladies, gentlemen all, it is a signal honour to be asked to deliver the Archbishop Samuel Carter Distinguished Lecture.

When Archbishop Emeritus Reece invited me to deliver this lecture, I had no option. Archbishop Reece is one of the most generous, gracious, and gentle human beings you will ever meet. Saying no to him comes close to committing sin. Then again, I knew Archbishop Samuel Carter, interacted with him on many occasions, and benefitted from his wisdom and guidance. As the first Jamaican Roman Catholic Bishop of Kingston and first principal of Campion College, Archbishop Carter holds a hallowed place in our history. How could I not speak to his memory and in his honour? Therefore, while knowing that some things that I will say are bound to get me into trouble, a thing I try to avoid, so let it be.

Let me immediately declare that my intention is to provoke, not to incite. Thought and thinking, not impulsive action that could be destructive, hopefully will be the result. Thinking and words are the seedbed of constructive action. In the beginning was the word. It is articulation of thoughtful thinking that creates order that replaces chaos and confusion with constructive actions.

I am fully aware that I follow in the footsteps of illustrious presenters: Rev Ronald Thwaites, former Minister of Education: “Whither Education?”; Professor Trevor Munroe: “Character Formation in the 21st Century”; Rev Peter Espeut: “Campion at the Crossroads: Jesuit Education without Jesuits”; and my esteemed pastor Rev Dr. the Hon. Burchell Taylor: “Does Character Still Matter?”. Because Professor Munroe and Rev Taylor addressed the issue of character, I will only say ditto. Being Baptist, it is unwise to enter any discourse on Jesuit education without Jesuits. The topic is “Jamaican Education: Successful Patterns of the Past, Strategic Directions for the Future”. In a sense it will be related to “Whither Education?”, but I am a teacher, not the polymath that Rev Thwaites is, spanning law, religion, politics, business, and journalism, hence my focus will be narrower.

### **JAMAICAN SOCIETY: THE CONTEXT OF JAMAICAN EDUCATION**

Learning is universal, but formal education is contextual. Formal education is intimately related to the society in which it is structured and in which it functions. It is therefore imperative to take account of Jamaican society in any discussion of Jamaican education. Such account must take into consideration foundational features, successful patterns, and unique paradigms that have shaped the society to any point. This is crucial to any exercise which contemplates directions for the future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each one of us Jamaicans has our own understanding of Jamaica and our own

logic by which we navigate its social contours. My understanding and logic have come, not from living a planned life but in answering unrelated calls to serve in circumstances of challenges to change; crises of one sort or another; and difficult objectives that need to be achieved. These have exposed me to realities of Jamaican society of which I was unaware; forced me to a wider understanding of Jamaican society; and to locate myself in the society in order to appreciate perspectives other than my own. Allow me to share, not necessarily agree with, a collection of my key understandings.

1. Modern Jamaica was not founded on any noble vision of society. Merchants, English and Jewish, and British soldiers in search of fortune, conquered Jamaica in 1655. Getting rich quick and then leaving was their primary objective. Jamaica first became a colony of exploitation for Britain and the British. Noble and idealist notions of society are later adoptions since this beginning in aspirations for immediate material advancement.
2. Every group that comprises the Jamaican society has a story to tell of coming from humble beginnings: a struggle and fight against odds. Accordingly, no group is particularly sympathetic of any other group. Narratives compete.
3. The merchants and soldiers who first came were not from the first tier of English society. The same is true of every ethnicity that came or were brought to Jamaica from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Assertiveness is a shared Jamaican trait.
4. From the outset Jamaicans have had to confound and debunk negative stereotypes held by the elites of the continents from which we came. This includes the aristocracy of Britain. Edward Ward, writing in London in 1698 about the true character of British in Jamaica, used the following choice phrases to describe his fellow British who came to Jamaica: dunghill of the universe; refuse of the whole creation; receptacle of vagabonds; emblem of chaos; shapeless pile of rubbish; sanctuary of bankrupts; and close-stool of the purges from our prisons.
5. In every century since 1655 Jamaica has risen to global prominence and importance in some area that defies its size. Jamaica has always punched above its weight. For example, within 30 years of Jamaica's conquest, Port Royal had become the bullion capital of the Western Hemisphere and has had a money economy since then. Fifty years after Ward's denouncement of British Jamaicans, Jamaica began to rise to become the most prized and prosperous British colony in the British Empire and was home to some of the richest men in the world. Australian historian Barry Higman noted that Jamaicans led the world in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the management of large enterprises by creating planting attorneys, some of whom were neither planters nor attorneys.
6. Jamaica has been built by people who decided that Jamaica was home. Whether born here or elsewhere, or of what genealogy, for myriad reasons they chose Jamaica as their domicile. Irrespective of place of birth, Jamaica has been built by those who have chosen to live and die here. Being Jamaican is a choice as much as a place of birth.
7. The people who first chose Jamaica, and settled the colony, were English and Jewish merchants from London who decided to stay; English planters from Barbados and Nevis who brought to Jamaica the wealth they had made in those colonies; Scottish yeomen farmers seeking more land; Irish indentured servants mainly from Barbados and the Leeward Islands bonded to their masters; and enslaved Africans brought from the Leeward

islands, mainly Nevis. Often we Jamaicans claim that Nevisians, Anguillans and Antiguans talk like us, but it is we who speak like them.

8. Debt financing has become the bane of Jamaica's advancement. The first Jamaicans financed the settlement of Jamaica from their own enterprise, legal and illegal. The settlement of Jamaica was not financed by any joint stock company as in New England or Virginia; or by any lord proprietor offering venture capital, as in some Southern colonies in the USA; or by the Crown as in some other colonies; but by residents of Jamaica who brought their wealth here; by theft of Spanish gold; and by trading, mainly of enslaved people. Early Jamaicans owed little to anybody from outside. However, debt to the Imperial Government over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, became a stumbling block.
9. Jamaican audacity had its genesis in the lack of financial obligation to outsiders. The Jamaican Assembly defied paying the Crown for the governor and fortifications in exchange for ratification of laws passed in the Assembly for over 70 years. They refused external direction from the Crown. The planter-controlled assembly only relented having failed to subdue Maroon resistance. Huge moral questions surround their reasons for defiance, but nascent nationalism is inherent in their anti-imperial defiance.
10. Diversity, division, disagreement, and discord are aboriginal to Jamaican society. The upside are relationships between groups and individuals that are vertical, horizontal, diagonal, tangential, semi-circular, and circular. Diversity, division, disagreement, and discord stem from varied groups having real stakes in the society, which they guarded tenaciously. These groups have included British officials, planters, merchants, Maroons, small settlers, owners of provision grounds, sellers in the local market system, ex-soldiers of the West India Regiment, middle classes, and persons of conscience of the privileged elite. Over time, coalitions between groups and individuals formed and fractured with regularity. This has been the constant antidote to insurrection leading to violent overthrow of any government.
11. Governance by patronage has been the downfall of ruling elites in colonial Jamaica. Governing classes since 1661 can be labeled the white oligarchy 1661—1830; the multiracial oligarchy 1831—1865; oligarchy of British officials 1866—1953. All have been defeated by practices, repercussions, and unintended consequences of looking after their own to the great neglect and alienation of the rest of the society.
12. Generalizing exceptions is a common tendency, especially in advocacy; fact-finding, evidence, and data are obligatory prior to any consideration of issues and taking action.

## **A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY OF JAMAICAN EDUCATION**

A crude and quick way to describe Jamaican education in relation to Jamaican society is to do so according to the eras of governance of Jamaica. I am currently about 70 per cent through writing a book titled: "The Electoral System and Governance: Jamaica on the Frontiers, 1661 to 2016". Connecting the education system to each era of governance in Jamaica is an offshoot of this effort.

Jamaica was an oligarchy throughout its colonial period. Essentially an oligarchy exists where a small group in the society exercises power over the rest of society, largely by force, even where

elections are practiced and there is adherence to law. It is a personalized system of governance in which oligarchs exercise hegemonic power by simultaneously holding multiple positions in central government, local government, the military, the judiciary, the legal establishment, the police force, business, and social organisations. Absent is any notion of conflict of interest. Patronage is normative behavior.

Except for 18 years, 1866 to 1884, Jamaica has had general elections according to law, consistently, since December 1663. Put bluntly, Jamaica practiced elections without democracy for 280 years. Jamaican education mirrored the oligarchy. This is the framework in which to understand the history of Jamaican education.

### **Education in the Era of the White Oligarchy: 1661 to 1830**

Education was not part of the thinking of men who came to make it rich quick and leave. Education was an afterthought of those who stayed or could not leave. The approach to education was Anglican. Education was the primary responsibility of families. The vestry of the parish church had the responsibility for poor relief, including education for children of families unable to educate their children, mainly sons. Education in Jamaica is first mentioned in the setting-up of the vestry system of local government for the fifteen parishes into which Jamaica was divided in 1677. The vestry in each parish was to provide education for poor white boys of the parish. Vestries did not all take up their mandated responsibilities immediately. Evidence of a few schools appears in the 1680s. Hence, Jamaica has a history of schooling that spans about 330 odd years. Some vestries and few individual entrepreneurs pioneered education.

The general absence of schooling disturbed the conscience of a few men of means. John Wolmer was the first to give tangible expression to this disturbance. He posthumously provided a trust dedicated to educating children. He was followed by others: Thomas Manning, Martin Rusea, Peter Beckford, Francis Smith, and Titchfield. These trusts are ones that survived theft, mismanagement, and frustration of the wishes of the wills of benefactors.

When the Wolmer's Trust was set up in 1729 it had 36 members compared to ten boys who first comprised the school in 1730. The reason for the size of the board was that the trust was substantial, and no one was trusted. Hence the board consisted of representatives of the governor, the assembly, the vestry of Kingston, the Anglican church, and prominent citizens. The Wolmer's Trust was inclusive. However, each representative was appointed to watch the others in order to build trust in the Trust. This is basically the formula of the Electoral Advisory Committee/Electoral Commission of Jamaica (EAC/ECJ). This could well be the key formula to the effectiveness and survival of institutions in Jamaica.

Most members of the oligarchy, those who had families, employed tutors to teach their children after which they sent some of them to boarding school in England. Some white children, and brown and black boys of free parents went to fee-paying elementary schools run by individual entrepreneurs, male and female, mainly Jews. A few poor white boys attended free schools funded by trusts and vestries. In the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a few Baptist, Methodist and Moravian churches operated schools in towns for children of free people.

A few of the parents who sent their boys to fee-paying private elementary schools, and could afford it, sent these sons to boarding schools in England and Scotland, then to universities in England or Scotland. Kamau Brathwaite reported that for the fifty years from 1770 to 1820, 227 sons of Jamaicans went to Oxford and Cambridge. Private elementary schooling in Jamaica has long had a history of being up to par with similar education in metropolitan countries.

In a nutshell, during the era of the white oligarchy there was no system of education, only ad hoc private, charity, vestry, and church schools which offered elementary education. The scandal of this neglect is laid bare by comparison to the education system that had been established in the North American colonies up to 1776.

### **Education in the Era of the Multi-racial Oligarchy: 1831 to 1865**

Threatened by the prospect of the abolition of enslavement, and responding to strong advocacy and agitation by free brown and black men and by Jews for their civil rights, in 1830 and 1831 respectively, the white oligarchy loosened its hegemonic power by granting men of those groups the right to vote and to be candidates in general and vestry elections, based on the same requirements that had obtained for whites. Jamaica was among the first countries in the world to remove race as a criterion for voting. Voting would continue to be by class, without regard to race. Over the period 1831 to 1865 the oligarchy changed from being white to being multi-racial. However, governance remained basically the same: predicated on the political economy of the plantation, notwithstanding the abolition of slavery in 1838.

Essentially, the same can be said of schooling provided through private schools, charity schools and vestry schools. These schools continued to operate as before, but they too became multiracial as the newly enfranchised groups sought and obtained access to schools attended previously by whites. The point that must not be missed is that charity schools created for poor white boys, changed class as they became multi-racial. Browns, blacks and Jews who gained access to these schools were not poor, they were at least lower middle class.

The momentous event of this era was the abolition of enslavement signaled in 1834 by Apprenticeship and consummated in 1838 by Emancipation. Personal freedom became the right of every Jamaican. Education for personal freedom and schooling for the newly freed were established in the first decade after Emancipation by three partners: The Imperial Government, the Lady Mico Charity in England and Christian denominations, led by their missionaries. The partnership created a fee-paying system of public schooling which consisted of elementary school, teachers' college, and theological college.

The Imperial Government only provided funding. Christian denominations and the Lady Mico Charity accepted the responsibility to own, build, and manage schools and colleges. Funds from the British Parliament under the Negro Education Grant, which operated from 1836 to 1846, were only allocated to the Lady Mico Charity and to those Protestant denominations that would accept it. They became the first owners, managers, and operators of the public-school system in Jamaica.

This first partnership in public schooling fractured in 1846 when the Negro Education Grant was completely phased out. The Imperial Government proved fickle, as all external partners have since

then. It bailed out of the partnership and left Protestant denominations and the Lady Mico Charity holding the bag of public education.

The Lady Mico Charity continued but its resources could only support two teachers' colleges: one in St Johns, Antigua, and the other in Kingston, Jamaica. It was the Protestant denomination that continued public education in Jamaica. They financed it through donations from missionary societies in Britain, cash and in-kind contributions from local churches, and fees paid by parents. Churches owned the schools. Most church buildings doubled as schools during the week. The Roman Catholic denomination was small and was excluded from the public system.

Public education therefore developed as denominational, as each denomination operated schools, established a college to train teachers for schools, and a theological college to train clergy for their churches. Mico became the Christian but non-denominational college training teachers. The articulation between elements came from the fact that some of the most able elementary school students on leaving school were employed as pupil-teachers, who later gained entry to teachers' college, and even later, based on their teacher training credential, qualified for admission to be trained as clergy. Public denominational education expanded the minute black middle class of free blacks that had formed during slavery.

The denominational public schools not only catered to children of the newly freed, but expanded access to elementary education to the poor segment that carried the status of free people during enslavement. It did so particularly to children of poorer members of this segment, particularly in rural areas. This free people segment included whites, browns, blacks, and Jews. It is accurate to say that the denominational public elementary schooling was multiracial, but mainly black. Racially, private schools, charity schools, vestry schools, and private church schools were multiracial, but mainly white and brown. The defining difference between the two sets of schools was class. Race and colour made visible the frequency distribution of class in the society. The church was a provider on both sides.

The Roman Catholic Church entered the education system in 1851 with the establishment of St Georges College and Immaculate High Schools in 1856. However, these were private schools and were at the secondary level. As such the Roman Catholic Church has legitimate claim as the pioneer of secondary education in Jamaica.

When the Imperial Government withdrew from the public partnership, it invited the Assembly to take its place in financing the public-school system that had been created. The Assembly and the vestries had been missing in action in the creation of public schools in the first decade after emancipation. Substantively, the Assembly declined the invitation. Not to appear impolite, the Assembly established the Board of Education with token funding. The Board of Education had no resources to establish schools or maintain schools. The Board of Education therefore had an arms-length relationship with the schools owned and operated by denominations. This is the context in which 'public school' first acquired its Jamaican meaning. Public schools meant schools open to students without regard for colour, class, creed, location, or any other ascription.

The lack of provision for public funds by the Assembly for public schools and public education became one of the great grievances against the multi-racial oligarchy. It was one of the main

grievances leading to the Morant Bay Riot in 1865; the others being lack of justice from the courts, especially on disputes related to land and wages; inadequate provisions for health resulting in epidemics; biased policing; and manipulation of the electoral system. Many public elementary school teachers were among the protestors; several were executed.

### **Education in the Era of Oligarchy of British Officials: 1866 to 1953**

The era of the oligarchy of British officials came about because the multiracial assembly voluntarily gave us representative government in Jamaica in 1865 after 202 years. There had been great fear that after the abolition of slavery the previously enslaved would have sought revenge for the brutal structural and physical violence that they had suffered. That reprisal never came. The transition from slavery to freedom was peaceful. The previously enslaved celebrated. They pursued the promised opportunities of freedom. It was the oligarchy that continued the violence. The Morant Bay riot fueled the fear that the expected revenge was afoot.

Out of panic, and fear for the lives and livelihood, the multiracial oligarchy and assembly invited the Crown to take over full responsibility of governance in exchange for protection. A rare occurrence in the history of representative governance, globally.

The calculation was that Crown Colony Government would be their ally. That calculation proved incorrect in the period 1866 to 1898 as early Crown Colony governors and officials addressed almost all the grievances against the multiracial oligarchy. That calculation proved correct in the period 1899 to 1938. What was not anticipated or intended was that Crown Colony Government would suffer the same fate as oligarchy.

However, British officials became an oligarchy and sealed their fate. Generally, they imported their own at the expense of Jamaican talent. After 1884 representatives were elected to the Legislative Council but constituted a permanent opposition without any possibility of governing. The major development was that the elected representative of the Legislative Council changed colour, becoming mainly black by the general election of 1930.

For different reasons, the diverse and divided Jamaican society became united against the British officials, who conceded their failure after the riots of 1938. World War II postponed the transition from the British officials to representatives elected based on adult suffrage as of 1943.

As previously noted, the era of the oligarchy of British officials fell into two periods. From 1866 to 1897 Crown Colony governors championed and addressed the causes that led to the Morant Bay riot. Education being a major grievance received special attention. The following took place:

- The government became a partner in the denomination system of public education by providing substantial grants for the expansion and improvement of public elementary schools and teachers' colleges. The funds provided came from savings resulting from the disestablishment of the Anglican Church as the State Church in 1870.
- The Board of Education was upgraded and mandated to establish a system of classification of schools, to set standards for student achievement, to conduct annual inspection of schools, and paid teachers by results of student performance in relation to the standards.

- The Jamaica Schools Commission was established and mandated to establish a system of public secondary education by upgrading Charity Schools owned by trusts to high schools, link high schools to examinations of Cambridge University, and offer an annual scholarship to a university, Oxford or Cambridge. High schools were grammar schools. High schools were single sex as were teachers' colleges.
- The management of teachers' colleges and high schools was by boards of directors.
- The denominational system of public education failed for three principal reasons: its success in expanding elementary education; the success of teachers in meeting the standards set by payment by results thereby increasing costs; and rivalry between denominations to gain converts by operating many small schools in small villages, instead of engaging in ecumenical cooperation. Collectively denominations urged government to take over the public education system that they had created with great success.
- In 1892 the government assumed financial responsibility for public education by introducing free elementary education. The denominations would follow government policy for education, while the clergy of denominations would continue the day-to day management of schools, including the hiring and firing of teachers and the discipline of students.

Essentially after 1866 the oligarchy of British officials created an apartheid class system of public education. In upgrading charity schools to high schools, with their own preparatory schools, a new and parallel segment of education was created which consisted of private preparatory schools, directly articulated with public grammar schools offering Cambridge University examinations and university scholarships. The other segment was the denomination system of public education created in 1836, which in 1892 through free elementary schooling, was transformed into the government system of public education, with denominational management. The elements remained the same: elementary schools, pupil-teachers and teachers' colleges. There was a hard line between these two segments. For example, the Code of Regulations mandating free elementary education provided only four scholarships from public elementary schools to public high schools.

There can be no question that the oligarchy of British officials, having become a partner in the denominational system in 1867, had facilitated great expansion and improvements to the denomination system of education before taking full control in 1892. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jamaica ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the world in the delivery of elementary education to its population and ranked first among the West Indian colonies. Jamaica was recognized as one of the civilized countries of the world and invited to the World Congress in 1893, where our Superintendent of Education was elected a vice president in the Department of Elementary Education. Thomas Capper, Superintendent of Education, carried out an assessment of the state and achievement of public elementary education in Jamaica in 1900 and concluded the colony did not lag too far behind Britain.

The advances made in public education, in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, explain the fact that literate Jamaican labour was recruited in the building of railroads in Central America, and in the building of the Panama Canal. Evidence of this remains in communities on the Pacific coasts of Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama having Jamaican heritage.

Indeed, Crown Colony government had addressed and delivered on all the grievances that fueled the Morant Bay riot. The progress in public education after Morant Bay was not confined to education. Crown Colony government had modernized the colony in land reform, health care, policing, the judiciary, infrastructure, banking, transportation, and telecommunications. Hope had been restored but sugar prices tanked in competition with European beet.

The economic recession starting in 1897 was a turning point in the society and in public education. The Crown switched sides. The oligarchy of British officials regressed to serve the interests of planter/merchant class. Oligarchic succession resumed. In the period 1898 to 1938 the following took place in Jamaican education:

- a) Annual expenditure on the public-school system was capped at 10 per cent.
- b) Many small public elementary schools were closed resulting in decline in enrolment between 1900 and 1920.
- c) Agriculture for boys and domestic science for girls were made compulsory subjects in public elementary schools.
- d) The Government Farm School was established in 1910 to train young men in the art and science of agriculture.
- e) Colleges training male teachers, except Mico, were closed in 1900 as government support for teacher training shifted to training female teachers: one college for male teachers and three colleges for female teachers up to 1954.
- f) Payment by results was replaced with salary scales based on qualification and experience. Male and female public elementary school teachers were paid the same salary.
- g) Admitting church-run high schools into the public system of secondary education in 1920
- h) Promoting girls' high schools such that in 1943 there were seven boys' and 15 girls' high schools.
- i) Male teachers in public high school were paid more than female teachers.
- j) Establishing practical skills training centres to train young men in agriculture and artisan trades.
- k) Teacher education and public high schooling were male biased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both had become female biased.

By the 1930s resistance to oligarchy was evident. This time it took the form of resistance to British rule of Jamaica and the birth of the nationalist movement. The leaders of this nationalist movement were men from both segments of the public-school system. That is, on the one hand from men who had achieved success through the public high school system, some of who had won Jamaica scholarships, and on the other hand from head teachers of elementary schools represented by the Jamaica Union of Teachers and supported by the staff of Mico College. The nationalist movement had among its leaders white, brown, black, and Jewish Jamaicans. In other words, the main resistance to the oligarchy of British officials came from the successful of the public education system. This mirrored the leadership of the protest and resistance that led to the surrender of the multiracial oligarchy in 1865. As was the case with Morant Bay, it was riots that signaled the end of the oligarchy of British officials. These occurred in 1938. The Imperial Government has always responded to Jamaican riots with constructive change, but first through the appointment and

recommendations of a Royal Commission. Universal adult suffrage and responsible government were granted to Jamaica in 1943 and a period of transition followed which lasted a decade.

### **Education in the Era of Transition from Oligarchy to Democracy: 1953 to the Present**

In 1953 ministerial government was inaugurated in Jamaica marking the transfer of power from the oligarchy of British officials to the elected representatives of the people, at least in domestic areas, inclusive of education. The full transfer came with political independence in 1962. However, with the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1953, general elections in 1955, and policies and plans emanating from electoral mandates having their beginnings in implementation in 1957, the transfer actually began prior to 1962. The 65 years since the creation of the Ministry of Education can be conveniently divided into two periods: Nationalism and Development, 1953 to 1977; and Development constrained by Debt, 1978 to the present. Looking at the entire era, with one minor differentiation between the two periods, the following have happened in education:

- The Ministry of Education has become the largest ministry of government with the largest budget outside of the Ministry of Finance. It is comprised of 33 units staffed by over 1000 highly educated civil servants. Twenty-eight of these units are organized into five divisions: (a) Planning and Development, (b) Educational Services, (c) Projects and Technical Services, (e) Human Resource Management and Administration, and (f) Financial Management. The other five units report directly to the Permanent Secretary: (a) Legal, (b) Executive Services, (c) Communications, (d) Management Information Systems, and (e) Internal Audit. In addition to the 33 units and five divisions there are 15 statutory bodies or agencies that fall under the umbrella of the ministry. Some of these entities operate under different acts of parliament than the Education Act and have their own funding.
- Government has become the largest provider of primary, secondary, special needs education, and tertiary education. Only at the early childhood level do private entrepreneurs and churches out-strip government in the provision of education. However, as the school age population has continued to decline and there is advocacy for better qualified teachers, government is creating more infant divisions in public primary schools.
- As government provision for public education has increased, Christian denominations have retreated from public education, especially at the primary level. The presence of Christian denominations is most visible at the public secondary schools that they founded, in the private preparatory school system, and as owners and operators of basic schools at the childhood level. The retreat of the church from public education has contributed to the decline of moral education and affirmation of common values and desired virtues in the society.
- Nationalism became the glue, but as nationalism has been challenged by globalization and consumerism, pluralism, fostered by nationalism, has descended into loosely organized anarchy as evident in several areas of national life, including driving on the roads.

- The apartheid two-segment class system of education has been integrated into a single system of education with four tiers in which the ministry defines the legal framework of each tier, formulates policies, provides recurrent financing, sets enrolment capacity for institutions, establishes teacher-pupil ratios, determines salary scales for all staff, inspects schools, evaluates performance through common examinations, appoints school boards, and settles disputes through appellant processes. The greatest challenge of integration has been that of bridging class divisions which have roots in the formation of the society.
- A school-based system of management has been established in which all public institutions are managed on a day-to-day basis by boards comprised of a combination of owners' representatives, principals, past students, parent-teachers, community representatives, and government representatives, with powers to hire and fire teachers, admit and discipline students, manage premises, and operate bank accounts.
- Universal education has been achieved at the early childhood, primary, and early secondary levels. Eighty per cent enrolment at the upper secondary level has resulted in a literacy rate of over 90 per cent of the 15 to 24 years age cohort, which is the most literate age cohort in the population, the over 60 years cohort being the least. Females remain in school longer and are more literate than males.
- The best and most sought-after secondary schools are public secondary schools particularly those funded by Trust and churches. Graduates of prized public secondary schools achieve academic standards that are competitive regionally and internationally. Females have higher rates of enrolment in secondary schools offering greater opportunities of upward social mobility while males have higher rates of enrolment in schools offering less opportunities of such mobility.
- Governments, first the PNP and later the JLP, have stumbled over the policy of free secondary education that is not matched by subvention to cover its cost, but which preclude public secondary schools from charging fees to make up the shortfall.
- Continuing education opportunities for out of school youths and adults are provided by the HEART Trust/National Training Agency, the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning, and the National Youth Service and Apprenticeship Board, each established separately but which have been recently merged to form the Jamaica Human Capital Development Agency.
- The teaching profession at all levels has been Jamaicanized as indigenous capacity has been created for all levels of the school system. Indeed, from being a net importer of teachers in 1953, Jamaica has become a net exporter of teachers regionally and internationally.
- Jamaica lags behind most of the Caribbean and most of the so-called developing world enrolment at the tertiary level. A pin-head of tertiary education sits atop a wide body of early childhood, primary, and secondary education.
- In the decade 1953 to 1963 local revenue provided for capital development. Starting in 1965 Government began to borrow and receive more and more loans and grants from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies. After 1978 capital development in education was funded almost entirely by external agencies, and annual recurrent expenses were constrained by IMF agreements. As a result, education and its development have been

increasingly subjected, directly and indirectly, to the priorities and policies of external agencies.

- The education gap between the richest and the poorest quintiles of the population has closed considerably as secondary enrolment has increased, while the income gap between the two quintiles has widened. This widening gap is a measure of the extent to which educational achievement is being delinked from upward social mobility. Many young people are leaving their parents' social origins, taking a different and better educational route, and ending up at the same occupational destination as their parents.
- The Jamaican education system has produced far more talent than the Jamaican economy can absorb. Hence, Jamaican education has continued to be linked to the international labour markets, its credentials have been negotiable in the international labour market, and its graduates are able to access higher education institutions outside the region. Accordingly, significant numbers of Jamaica's educated sons and daughters have migrated, and their remittances have been a major source of support to families living here and to the economy.

There can be no question that in the era of transition from oligarchy to democracy Jamaica has made the greatest progress in terms of provision of education to its people and has achieved the highest overall educational standards in its history. The youngest school leavers are, as a whole, the best educated of the population. Hopefully, young people are not believing assertions to the contrary. Such negative assessments are common and are oft repeated in the media. They place emphasis on what is lacking and not on what has been achieved compared to past generations.

While what has been achieved in education over the last 65 years is impressive, comparatively speaking Jamaica has slipped regionally and internationally. The UN Development Index of 2018 followed the recent pattern of ranking countries classified in four groups: Very High, High, Medium and Low Human Development. The 2018 Index ranked 189 countries. Jamaica ranked 97<sup>th</sup> and was placed in the High Human Development group. The Bahamas and Barbados ranked 54 and 58, respectively, and were placed in the Very High Human Development Group. Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and St Lucia all ranked before Jamaica in the High Human Development group. Of the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, Jamaica ranked eighth. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jamaica and Barbados ranked first and second in the region in the provision of education to their populations and were only outranked by nine countries of Western Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These crude metrics suggest that the region has slipped, and Jamaica more than most in the region.

Interestingly, faced with the same global economic circumstances and with similar vulnerabilities, the eight Commonwealth Caribbean countries ranked ahead of Jamaica did not follow the policy of curtailing expenditure of education while attempting to fix their economies. On the contrary, they invested in education as one means of fixing their economies. Accordingly, these eight countries have all achieved universal secondary education, allocated a higher proportion of their budget to education, spent more per capita per student at both the primary and secondary levels, maintained lower student-teacher ratios, and, in most cases, paid their teachers better.

The overall slippage of the Commonwealth Caribbean comparatively cannot be overlooked because it points to a shared challenge. In ameliorating social upheavals in its West Indian colonies in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, British officials invariably imported some of the most recent educational reforms in England. Again, in the era of adult suffrage and responsible government in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Commonwealth Caribbean policy makers have often imported ideas, policies, and programmes from Britain. Indeed, the greatest criticism of the colonial legacy of Britain in the Commonwealth Caribbean is that it was insufficient, more should have been done, and more local and regional content should have been included in curricula. It is very true that much of what Britain did in the Caribbean it did to itself, especially with its lower classes. In making the inherited legacy bigger, more efficient, and effective, the result has been to magnify and expedite its structural weaknesses and unintended consequences. The fact is that comparatively speaking Britain and British education have declined over the last 50 years.

The Commonwealth Caribbean has embraced the national development paradigm over the last 40 years. In cynical terms, this implicitly assumes that the aspiration of former colonies is to become like their former colonizers by borrowing their money, adopting their methods, being advised by their experts, and continuing to cleave to and imitate their culture. In naive terms, development assumes that former colonies can become like their colonial overlords without their power. Realism requires a critical look at the colonial past and the post-independence period, with the objective of deciding what is worthwhile taking into the future, what needs to be changed, and what should be discarded.

## **SUCCESSFUL PATTERNS OF THE PAST**

Even this brief synopsis of the history of Jamaican education allows us to confirm successful patterns and features of the past. Most of these are codified in law because they have come about by determined and sustained actions, including periodic strong opposition. Their longevity, consistency, and survival despite challenge, and success against opposition, suggest that they be carried forward into the future, however education is configured. There are at least five such patterns:

1. **Pioneering energy of private entrepreneurship in education, outside of state control.** There has always been demand for schooling not provided by the state. There have always been entrepreneurs who have been willing able to attempt to meet such demand. While most of these efforts are short-lived, leaving behind a cemetery of abandoned efforts, demand has been constant, although being very different. Private education has filled gaps; pioneered new types; catered to social, religious and ideological diversity; complemented or supplemented public education; offered reclamation and second chances; accommodated the excluded; and sheltered lost causes. Private entrepreneurs in education have been of all classes, colours, and creeds. Their greatest common constraints have been cash and successors.
2. **Public education defined as open non-discriminatory access of students to institutions that receive state support.** In other words, public is not defined in terms of ownership,

but the obligation of owners who receive public financial support from the state to be opened to students without regard to colour, class, creed, residence, or any other ascription.

3. **Partnership as the principle for financing public education.** That is, public education offered by the combined resources of government subvention, fees, cash and kind contributions from individual and corporate philanthropy, entrepreneurial activities by teachers and supporters, and by fund raising activities. In the history of Jamaican education, no single source has proved sufficient to provide high quality education. The partnership principle is protected by statute which prevents one partner from appropriating the contributions of others. Retaining and respecting this protection is key and critical to the continued practice of partnership and fostering voluntarism in public education.
4. **Participatory governance of schools and colleges** is premised on the assertion that public education is a collective responsibility shared by government, principals and teachers, parents, communities, and students. Participatory government requires a system of mutual accountability in which obligations of stakeholders and actors are clearly articulated, systematically measured, and periodically assessed and reviewed. School and college-based management by boards is a practical and pragmatic means of executing participatory governance. It has been practiced in Jamaica for close to 140 years in high schools and colleges, and 65 years at the primary level. As with all systems of participatory governance, school and college-based management by boards has its challenges with respect to legal framework, appointment of members, operations, supervision, and conflict resolution. At the same time, it is a robust, inclusive, responsive, and effective mode of managing a school system.
5. **Prize placed on good-quality education coupled with disdain for poor-quality education by parents, teachers and the public at large.** Good quality education is education that positively enhances the life chances of the students who receive it because it endows them with confidence, equips them with competence, and is competitive internationally.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The year 2019 can be written as 364 years after the capture of Jamaica by the British; 358 years after civil governance began to be practiced; 356 years of holding elections; 330 years since schools have existed; 290 years after the founding of the first charity school; 188 years after race was removed as a criterion for voting; 183 years since the establishment of public elementary education; 181 years after the abolition of slavery; 154 years after the Morant Bay riot which marked the point at which the promise of citizenship became part of the mission of the state; 120 years since the creating of public secondary education; 76 years since adult suffrage when all who reach the age of majority have the right to participate in the governance of the country; 65 years since the introduction of ministerial government and the Ministry of Education, marking the beginning of the transition from oligarchy to democracy; and 57 years since political independence. From any perspective, Jamaica is a young country with its destiny before it.

The education system is fully formed. The infrastructure is in place at all levels. Early childhood, primary, special education, and secondary education follow established norms and standards, with

universal secondary education being the only shortfall. Standards at each level have long measured up to regional and international comparisons, with poor performance being the result of localized conditions that can be corrected by the application of appropriate technical remedies. Curricula are culturally appropriate, are delivered by Jamaican teachers trained by local capacity, and schools are managed by qualified principals who account to boards comprised of stakeholders under the policy direction of a well-staffed Ministry of Education. Tertiary education constitutes the education system's most inherent problem because its size and scope are not congruent with the broad base of primary and secondary education on which it is the pinnacle, and its knowledge generation capacity is limited and inadequate compared to the needs of the society. Jamaican education has been an asset and is a principal factor in the large diaspora of Jamaicans.

Yet, it would be myopic to think that the strategic directions of Jamaican education guiding its future are confined to creating the capacity to provide all young people up to age 19 years with secondary schooling, expanding of tertiary education, and enhancing its knowledge-generating capacity. Providing more and better education have been the strategic directions of the post-independence era and nationalist agenda. These have been accomplished in large measure. Nationalism has worn thin in the age of globalization. The critical question is, are these sufficient to guide Jamaican education the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The strategic direction of Jamaican education must encompass the strategic imperatives of Jamaican society. It must be focused on the existential challenges of the Jamaican society and Jamaican people. There are at least six strategic directions that need to be followed:

1. Complete the transition from oligarchy to democracy.
2. Reverse policies guiding the financing of education, especially those followed for the past 40 years, which have contributed to the stagnation of Jamaican education.
3. Reconceptualize public schooling to include the prime-age working age cohort, 20 to 49 years.
4. Make the transition to the milieu being spawned by the ICT revolution.
5. Transition to "green" with regard to climate change as it affects island nations of the Caribbean, a region prone to hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanoes.
6. Affirm the moral and spiritual moorings of the society and mobilize widespread acceptance and adherence.

Having identified these six directions, it is necessary to briefly but succinctly justify their strategic importance, urgency, and synergy. None of these six directions is unique or peculiar to Jamaica. At the same time, it is ill-advised to simply imitate what approaches have been adopted elsewhere. Neither should we re-invent the wheel. Surely there are elements to be adopted from elsewhere. The overriding criterion must be fitness for purpose in the Jamaican context and considering its history. The goal here is not to prescribe strategies but to describe their broad contours and to urge dialogue.

### **Consolidating the Transition from Oligarchy to Democracy**

Democracy has a fundamental and an inherent weakness. Elected representatives who comprise parliaments exercise the sovereign power that belongs to the people but can usurp that power by

constitutional and legal means to perpetuate themselves in office. The implication of this weakness is that democracy is always vulnerable to being hijacked by those exercising the sovereign power of the people. Democracy cannot be sustained solely by adherence to constitution and law because holders of power can change constitutions and laws and can appoint judges loyal to them. Recent occurrences in several of the oldest and most mature democracies in the world highlight this weakness. In addition to constitution and law, democracy is sustained by conventions and norms; compromise in the interest of the common good; a free press; politicians committed to its principles; and an electorate that is knowledgeable of its weaknesses, conventions, norms, and other underpinnings, and are vigilant in their protection.

Considering these underpinnings of democracy, Jamaica has made a positive start in its transition from oligarchy to democracy. For the first 26 years of self-rule the country continued the inherited tradition of winner-takes-all politics. This brought the country to the brink of civil war. However, at the height of the worst political violence in the history of the country, and the deepest partisan divide in 1979, the leaders of the two major political parties privately, collectively, and without external prompting, decided to change course. Prime Minister Michael Manley supported by Mr. Keble Munn and Mr. P. J Patterson on the one hand, and Leader of the Opposition Mr. Edward Seaga, supported by Mr. Hugh Shearer and Mr. Bruce Golding, spearheaded the initiative to take the electoral machinery outside the control of the party in government. The result was the creation of Electoral Advisory Committee (EAC) in 1979, superseded by the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) in 2006. Prime Minister Patterson and Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition Seaga oversaw the metamorphosis to the Electoral Commission in 2006. The essence of the EAC/ECJ is that nominees of the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition are equally represented, but members of civil society, jointly agreed on by both, hold the Chairmanship which has the decisive vote in decision-making.

Since the formation of the EAC in 1979 four conventions have been followed. First, prime ministers and leaders of the opposition have agreed on the selected members. Second, unanimous recommendations of the EAC/ECJ to Parliament are enacted into law without change. Third, all recommendations of the number of constituencies into which Jamaica is divided, and their boundaries, are recommended from the EAC/ECJ to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Boundaries and are accepted and passed into law by the Parliament. Fourth, within the EAC/ECJ disputed matters are referred to the selected members whose decisions are accepted as final and binding. None of these conventions can be encoded in the Jamaican constitution and none can be enforced by law. These conventions have been observed as a result of voluntary decisions of succeeding prime ministers, parties in government and nominated members of the electoral body, often making compromises in pursuit of the common good of the society.

As a result, Jamaica has become a stable democracy over the last 30 years. Gerrymandering of constituency boundaries has been eliminated. General and local elections have been accepted as free and fair. The electoral machinery of the EAC/ECJ is judged to be competent and impartial, as evidenced by being invited to conduct leadership elections for the leaders of both major and many other organizations in the country. Governments have changed routinely and peacefully. The transfer of power is ritualized in public ceremony celebrated with pomp and open to all. The last

general election held in February 2016, with Hon. Dorothy Pine-McLarty as chairman of the ECJ, and conducted by Director of Elections Orrette Fisher, saw the government change hands by a margin of one seat, and without losing candidates protesting their loss. Jamaicans everywhere exuded pride, especially later that year when countries that coined the phrase ‘banana republic’ were loud in claims of gerrymandering and rigging elections.

However, there is no cause for being sanguine. The generation of politicians that conceived of, and the professionals that implemented, the transformation of the electoral system have retired, although most are alive. Intimate knowledge of the conventions is limited largely to them. Continued observance requires knowledge and the commitment of succeeding generations of politicians, professionals, and the wider population.

Jamaican education must take up the strategic direction of consolidating the transition from oligarchy to democracy. This is due to the inherent weakness in democracy; the fact that the transition is still and will always be a work in progress, there is limited knowledge of conventions that underpin the progress made so far. Jamaicans has always had a free press and must continue to protect its freedom despite current trends. The danger of regression to oligarchy is ever present. Continuation of the politics of patronage could lead to a JLP/PNP oligarchy through benign collusion in looking after their own, as was the case with British officials.

### **Reversing the Policies on Financing Education Followed for the Past 40 years**

Over the last 40 years Jamaica changed the governing political party five times. Successive governments have followed the priority of fixing the economy while essentially paying lip service to the fact that education is a key factor in the economic viability of any country. The last government, in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), took drastic measures to address fiscal problems. It lost the general election of February 2016. The present government has continued the fiscal measures with the overall result being that the debt to GDP ratio has declined from 147 per cent, is estimated to fall below 100 per cent at the end of this fiscal year and projected to reach the healthy ratio of 60 per cent in the medium term.

Governments of the PNP and the JLP have continued a wrong-headed policy direction with respect to education and have been roundly condemned for so doing. Both must be commended for creating the circumstances for its reversal. Both political parties must now agree and engage in correcting the consequences of that policy direction and cooperate to chart a new strategic direction. The point is that the time is opportune for the change in strategic direction in the financing of education.

To avoid abstraction, allow me to cite five concrete examples of corrections that must be made, the combined effect of which will lead to a new strategic direction in the financing of and investing in education.

1. Foreseeing the crippling effect of declining resources to finance education in the latter years of the 1980s, the Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA) took the responsibility for recommending the introduction of the Education Tax of three per cent of the gross income of taxpayers as a means of bridging shortfalls in the education capital and recurrent budget.

The intention was that government would fix its annual obligation to education as an index. The revenue from the education tax would be in addition to the indexed provision. Government implemented the tax. JTA took flack from the public. Taxpayers murmured but mounted no protest, because of its purpose. In passing the legislation for the Education Tax government made no provision for an index. The Education Tax revenue would go into the black hole of the Consolidated Fund. Successive governments have continued this practice. Analysis has shown no real increase in constant dollars for education. Apologists have argued that without the Education Tax the decline in funding education would have been steeper. The indisputable facts are that governments have broken faith with the JTA, exploited the support of Jamaican taxpayers for education, and used the proceeds of the tax for debt repayment, which has been the government's priority and largest expenditure.

2. In 1997, upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, Parliament passed legislation transforming the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) into the University of Technology (UTECH), which is the only technology university in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and like CAST its predecessor, serves the entire region although it is owned by the Government of Jamaica. The Ministry of Education authorized UTECH to employ staff commensurate with expansion and upgraded status. However, the Ministry of Finance has maintained the establishment as obtained with CAST. The justification has been that mistakes were made in the application. This has split the staff into two categories with implications for conditions of service and pension, which has been the basis of conflict within the University and with the Ministry for close to 20 years. Moreover, account has been taken of demand for places and the entrepreneurial activities of the institution, thus affecting the quantum of government subvention. The published figures for the end of Fiscal Year 2017 for financing of UTECH shows that student fees account for 64 per cent of the economic cost, government subvention 28 per cent, and other revenue 8 per cent. Students of UTECH pay the highest fees of tertiary students in Jamaica. Their proportion is almost inversely related to private and social rates of return for tertiary education in Jamaica, which the private rate of return is between 30 to 40 per cent, and the social rate of return is 60 to 70 per cent. Moreover, UTECH has the highest rate of enrolment of males, 41 per cent, of all tertiary institutions and Science, Technology, Environment ,and Mathematics (STEM) is now the highest priority of the Ministry of Education and government. STEM flows easily from the lips of Ministers and officials. Considering the above, an obvious inference would be that UTECH is without a champion of its causes. However, during its first decade as a University the President, the Minister of Education, and the Cabinet Secretary were brothers of a close-knit family. Each held a PhD. For most of the second decade, the Most Hon Edward Seaga, former Prime Minister, has been its Chancellor. Debt repayment seems the only possible explanation.
3. Over the last 30 years the Ministry of Education has become adept in surveying bank accounts of public institutions and of short-paying legitimate re-imburements due to institutions deemed to have a surplus. In more recent times, Ministry officials have been articulating the doctrine that all funds in possession of public institutions are public funds belonging to the government. This is not only contrary to the history of public institutions but is in violation of laws that differentiate between government subvention and other funds

of institutions, and of opinions sought by the Ministry and obtained from the Chambers of the Attorney General. In a seminar at the beginning of 2018, principals of public secondary schools were told that because they are paid directly or indirectly from the Consolidated Fund, they are personally liable if all private funds in the possession of institutions are not treated as appropriations-in-aid. However, boards hold bank accounts, not principals. Boards are accountable, not principals, and they have authority to hold private funds. Available intelligence suggests that these illegal and misguided pronouncements are part of the scramble of Ministry officials under stress to find ways to assist in meeting six-monthly fiscal targets of the IMF programme with the government. The fact that no public institution or principal has complied with the missives of the Ministry implies that they are versed in their rights and obligations. The damage has been to the credibility of the Ministry and the officials making these pronouncements. What is being ignored by the Ministry is that if these pronouncements are taken at face value and acted upon, they would undermine the philanthropy, entrepreneurial activities, and voluntarism that support public education in the country based upon identity with and loyalty to individual schools. Safeguarding the fidelity of private funds contributed to or earned by individual schools is paramount importance to the long-term, bearing in mind the history of partnership in public schooling in Jamaica. Secondary schools that were founded a hundred or more years ago enjoy considerable support from networks of past students, communities, corporate entities, and parents. Given the large number of schools that have been founded over the last 50 years it seems prudent to assist these new schools to foster similar alliances and networks. Short-term and myopic measures to meeting fiscal measures endanger the long term. Education requires more than cash. It involves relationships at multiple levels and across generations.

4. Over the last 40 years governments have all but surrendered the direction of public education to the policies and agendas of external donor agencies. In the mid-1980s Jamaica reached the point of 100 per cent trained teachers at the primary level. One agency advised the government to cut the teacher training capacity by closing one of its colleges and making the premises available to implement a loan providing to in-service teacher development. The government closed a college that it owned, which was the largest college training primary teachers, and made it available. Five years later there was shortage in the output of primary teachers and deficit in the primary teacher training capacity. Further, there was little to show for the temporary in-service project. It took 15 years to again reach the point achieved in 1985, as well as the obligation to the repayment of the loan that had caused the set back. At the beginning of the 1990s the World Bank was of the view that introducing computers in school was not recommended for countries like Jamaica. It was the Jamaica Computer Society, HEART/NTA, private companies, parent teachers' associations, past student associations, and philanthropists that took up the challenge. The policy of the succeeding governments has been to follow donor agency wisdom of placing priority on primary and secondary education, yet it is tertiary education that currently offers competitive advantage in the global economy. One of the reasons that Jamaica has been able to chart its own course with respect to its electoral system is that the state pays the full cost of all general and local elections. External assistance is restricted to observing and

monitoring elections, professional development of staff, and expertise related to planned innovations. A similar practice needs to be followed with respect to financing education.

5. Local government was expelled from public education in 1867 because of its disrespect for quality education. At the same time, local government is the only other source of legal authority and taxation that can be applied to public education. Further, over the past 65 years, the Ministry of Education has struggled and vacillated in coping with the constraints of centralization, the limitations of decongestion through regional offices with their varying needs and delivering needed services in different parts of the country, especially considering the topography of the country. Giving parish and municipal councils roles and responsibilities for schools and colleges within their jurisdiction, and the school-based management system, has the potential to enhance the entire public education system. This is particularly so if such engagement entails delivery of maintenance services, security, transportation of students, and consideration of varying economic and social needs in different parishes and municipalities. The costs of these differ according to locality and are mostly likely to be accepted and paid by taxpayers in those localities.

In essence, these five critical elements of a new strategic direction for the financing of Jamaican education are: an agreed and fixed proportion of the annual capital and recurrent budget to be allocated to education with the revenue of the Education Tax being additional to this fixed proportion; an agreed formula for the financing of tertiary education which takes account of the social and private rates of return that derive from such education; a new and agreed framework for financing primary and secondary education which explicitly acknowledges and safeguards cash and kind contributions, entrepreneurial activities, fund raising and philanthropy; and restricting borrowing from external agencies to terms and conditions that are consistent with the goals and objectives set by governments consistent with electoral mandates; and re-engaging local government in public education.

Emancipation from mindsets of the past, the formation of character, navigating our way through globalization, and choosing and constructing our destiny cannot be directed by external dependence. Jamaicans must bear the cost of our education, if the country is to avoid mendicancy.

### **Reconceptualizing Public Education to include the Prime-Age Working Age Cohort**

Prescribed ages of entry and exit into and out of public schooling has varied from its initial limits of 5–14 years. Currently limits are 4–19 years for early childhood, primary, and secondary schooling, with the goal of providing for all students within these age limits. The upper limit of age 19 years and limiting the goal of universal education to that age is no longer prudent and appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The following reasons counsel reconceptualizing and reconfiguring of public education beyond 19 and up to 49 years.

- The demographic shift taking place is such that the prime age working population 20–49 is now larger than the school age population 4–19 years. Because of their time of coming to school age, the state of the school system at that time, and the mandatory age limits of schooling, a significant proportion of the prime age working population has known crippling deficits in basic education that need to be remedied considering the knowledge

and information society that is emerging globally. This is not only with respect to mastery of foundational content, skills, and competencies, but also in relation to mindsets. The imperative to address these deficits is highlighted by the fact that Jamaica's economic competitiveness is highly dependent on the prime-age working age cohort. The educational standards and general quality of the working population are of high importance to Jamaica as a small country with an open economy and limited natural resources, and which is of marginal importance in the global political economy. Recently, Prime Minister Holness was a guest of the Secretary General at the G-20 Summit, but the Commonwealth Caribbean is not represented in that club.

- The upgrading of the prime-age working population is not a one-off exercise given the rapid increase in the pace of change taking place in society resulting in new understandings, competences, and attitudes requiring continuing education and training. The approach that it is the young that should be educated with the future in mind, and that school leavers will incrementally add new insights and innovations to the working population, is no longer valid. A permanent flexible core public re-education capacity is needed.
- Jamaica has in place the infrastructural elements of a permanent flexible core public continuing education capacity. This is as a result of the combination of the continuing decline of the secondary school age population, the large number of government secondary schools that have been built over the last 50 years, their geographical coverage of the country, and the merger of HEART/NTA, the Jamaica Foundation for Life Long Learning, the National Youth Service, and the Apprenticeship Board, to form the Jamaica Human Capital Development Agency. Even though these entities are under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, they operate, in the main, as silos with different command and control mandates, different sources of funding, unnecessary duplications, deficits in conceptual clarity, limited synergy, territorial conflicts, and operational inefficiencies. The transformation into a flexible public core capacity is feasible. The infrastructural elements are in place. The challenge is to make the elements work together in order to transform potential into actual. This will take time but must be undertaken with consistent and prudent speed.
- The state must take responsibility, not only because it is the major owner of the assets, but also because of its obligation for the education of its citizens. At the same time a new relationship must be forged with the private sector and citizens who are beyond school age. The upgrading of the education of employees must include fair agreements and reasonable arrangements with employers and employees with respect to costs and benefits. Likewise, there needs to be some requirement of unemployed citizens of working age to avail themselves of educational opportunities available to enhance their employability.

The policy direction of providing universal public education up to age 49 years is necessary and achievable. It is the next frontier in the evolution of the Jamaican system of public education.

### **Making the Transition to the new Milieu of the ICT Revolution/Second Machine Age**

It is redundant to say that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the second machine age, and their applications to and implications for education, must be a strategic direction

for Jamaican education. The country has already ventured down this path. There is a National ICT Strategy, a Ministry of Education ICT policy since 2011, and e-Learning, which has been established as the statutory body to implement ICT policy drawing upon its prescribed source of funding. The focus has been on computer literacy, providing devices, improving student achievement, enhancing management, and increasing connectivity. Note has been taken of the digital divide which is increasing polarization between and within countries. Broadband, access to the internet, increasing connectivity of schools and colleges, and the training of school administrators, teachers, teacher educators, and technicians are all being actively pursued.

The point of departure here is wider than being technical. In technical terms ICT/second machine age involves the combination and integration of digital technology, microchip, fiber optics, satellites, IP addresses, networks, WiFi, hotspots, GPS, AI, smart devices, portals, databases, storage devices, platforms, voice recognition, social media... and the list goes on. Their combination and integration continue to spawn a technological revolution that is ubiquitous, pervasive, and surpasses all previous technological revolutions in the history of human civilization. Their impact is change in almost every aspect of society: communication, travel, entertainment, work, learning, schooling, libraries, spying, medicine, security, homes etc.

It is critical to understand that what is emerging is a new milieu permeating practically all areas of life and living. As with all milieus it is physical, social, cultural, intuitive, and behavioural. It would take deliberate, sustained collective resistance to escape. That is the kind of sustained collective resistance across generations that allowed communities of hunter-gatherers to remain unassimilated into the other technological revolutions: the agricultural revolution, the revolution in agricultural productivity, and the first and second industrial revolutions. Islands, large deserts, and extensive forests harbour such resistance, avoidance and escape. However, this option for Jamaica is already foreclosed.

The option for Jamaica is to learn to live in this new milieu. That is, to become proficient in its mechanics; discover its parameters; make choices; move seamlessly; understand its limitations; embrace opportunities; exercise freedom; sustain personality; develop solidarities; protect privacy; express soul; be moral, avoid evil; and preserve spirit. The principal question is: how are people of all segments of Jamaica society, young and old, rich and poor, to be prepared to live in this new milieu?

A few observations are crucial. This new milieu is different but is neither heaven nor utopia. Like all other technological revolutions, the hype and expectations will exceed reality. The amount of human folly is constant across milieus. Marginal individuals and groups can gain greater access to opportunities because of major disruptions to the status quo. In the new milieu actions and transactions are much faster; algorithms watch every click; algorithms create profiles because each user not only makes input but is an input; almost everything is remembered and stored; memories are easily retrieved. Living therefore is much more public. Identities can be stolen. Information and misinformation, knowledge and alternative facts are in abundant supply while truth, attention, and wisdom are in short supply. Not surprisingly, given Jamaica's history, one group of 21<sup>st</sup> century pirates is among the early adapters. They live in Jamaica while stealing abroad, the United States being the new Spain, without foreseeing unintended consequences.

The strategic direction in making the transition to the new technological milieu resides in public educational institutions—primary, secondary and tertiary—being the incubators of the new milieu. Given their accessibility to all segments of the society in all geographical areas of the country, the entire population can be exposed and initiated into the new milieu. They can become engaged, critically and constructively, in what is entailed in living in the new milieu, with the present milieu and the extent of their transition to the new as the guiding contrast.

### **Transition to Green**

Given Jamaica's location in a zone of the world prone to annual occurrences of hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and volcanic activity, it is virtually mandatory for climate change to be a strategic direction of Jamaican education. It must be immediately acknowledged that this is a strategic direction that the Government of Jamaica has already specified. Jamaica is a signatory to all the international treaties on climate change. It has established the Climate Change Division in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, which is the lead agency for the transition to green. This ministry is responsible for the recent government ban on plastic bags, straws, and polystyrene. For at least the last ten years government, including the Ministry of Education, NGOs, and international partners have sponsored youth conferences, public education programmes, clean-up projects, and competitions in being green. Talk has been matched with actions. It is fair to say that this policy direction is well advanced and gives every indication of continuing.

### **Affirming the Moral and Spiritual Mooring of the Society and Mobilizing Acceptance and Adherence**

There is a growing consensus that attention should focus on the moral and spiritual foundations of the country. There is daily alarm about the murder rate, mounting concern about corruption in business and government, dismay about the practice of extortion commonly practiced by gangs, disgust concerning the free-for-all on the roads, consistent demand for justice, especially from disadvantaged communities, and growing anxiety that the post-truth and alternative facts contagion may already have reached our shores. They all counsel strategic action in education.

Such counsel takes account of the fact that the values and attitudes campaign initiated by former Prime Minister Patterson did not take off. Politicians generally have earned discredit not only because of the constant charges of corruption and incompetence that they level at each other, but also because of political party cleansing that has created communities labeled garrisons which trap the urban poor with dependence. The church, which is the natural leader of moral and spiritual movements, has been hamstrung by scandals caused by moral failings of a few clergy, almost blind partisan loyalty by others which mimic political tribalism, and still others who have seemingly succumbed to the temptation of ostentatious living at the expense of their congregations.

Nationalism has been the greatest glue binding Jamaicans. Emancipation was not as inclusive because the planting and merchant elite did not embrace the personal freedom of the previously enslaved. But 57 years after political independence the fervour of nationalism has waned. While the society has advanced in material terms, many perceive their own situation to have stagnated. To them, many of the promises of political independence have been deferred. Moreover, globalization has allowed powerful countries to transgress the national borders of weaker

countries, while the former have imposed visas that lock people of the latter out of their national borders. Further, the gloss of global consumption, displayed daily on cable television, is tarnished by the lack of means to purchase. In the circumstances some have doubted the benefits of national sovereignty.

The murder rate has been the most unnerving phenomenon in the society. Successive governments have failed in the measures implemented to address it. In 1962 Jamaica had one of the lowest murder rates in the world, 3.9 per 100,000. The rate continued to be low for the next decade. The numbers of murders increased modestly between the mid-1970s to mid-1990s. Since then the rate has climbed. In 2009 the country had the highest murder rate in the world of 63 per 100,000. While the rate has declined from this peak, the rate has oscillated above 50 murders per 100,000. Murder has claimed 12,332 lives over the last decade.

Acting Commissioner of Police Novelette Williams, in 2017, disaggregated the 1350 murders for 2016 in the following categories: 65 per cent gang related; 28.4 per cent non-gang related, inclusive of 4.5 per cent being domestic, 0.07 per cent mob violence, and the remainder not being determined. In reflecting on these statistics what struck me forcibly is that most individuals murdered and those committing the murders were known to each other, whether they were in gangs or not in gangs. The same is true of murders of returning residents. Relatives or persons with whom returning residents were involved committed those murders. In the main, murders are not random. Very few murders are committed with disguise. At the same time, very few tourists are killed. Indeed, Jamaica is one of the safest tourist destinations in the world. In a nutshell, strangers are not being murdered. There is a strong element of personal vengeance in murders.

The roots of murder appear to be breakdown among individuals, especially among hopeless youths, individuals in business relations through contract killings, and individuals in home and other intimate relations. Policing or military strategies will only be effective insofar as they relate to these roots. This is not to dismiss or diminish organized crime, drug dealing, and robberies as factors, or the act of terror arising from killing innocent relatives, including children. What is evident is failures in living together are settled with finality. Excluded is opportunity for forgiveness, restitution, or redemption.

What is embedded in these statistics is duality. Anger, intransigence, and 'ignorance' exploding into vengeance after a breakdown in the relationship with those nearest, is to be contrasted with welcome, openness, helpfulness, and hospitality toward strangers. This is not restricted to tourists but extends to each other. Recently I was almost run off the road by a young man driving a route taxi at great speed. I was on the verge of road rage as I followed behind him. He slowed down instead of beating the red light, went to the left, and signaled me to come beside him as he stopped at the traffic light. With real concern on his face, he signaled that my back door was not closed properly. My tip of the tongue road rage gave way to an expression of gratitude. Similar anecdotes abound. We are a conflicted people. The challenge is to inspire adherence to the right and the good.

The growing concerns and anxieties about the moral and spiritual foundations of the society present a great and glorious opportunity to affirm such foundations, mobilize acceptance, and seek adherence to what is affirmed. Public education is the most appropriate fulcrum because it allows

almost the entire society to be engaged. The umbrella group of churches is the body to volunteer to be the lead partner taking up the task because of its ecumenical composition, as well as an act of repentance for having retreated from the public education arena over the last 57 years. The task, to be agreed with the Ministry of Education and the opposition, is as follows:

1. Set up a task force comprised of persons of unquestioned integrity and proven credibility, representative of the society, to collect and document innovations implemented by schools, colleges, communities, businesses, unions, hotels etc which have successfully enhanced ethical practices, moral conduct, and morale in their settings.
2. The task force to identify exemplary practices, their underlying values, and the virtues that contributed to their effectiveness, to document these in a draft, and to widely disseminate the most effective innovations.
3. To organize widespread consultations in communities, business, schools, colleges, unions, political parties, churches etc. to critique the draft and provide feedback concerning feasibility in their contexts with respect to changing life and living.
4. To collate the results of the consultations so that the task force can produce a final document.
5. For the umbrella group of churches to seek the commitment of all denominations to commission and actively support their members who teach in the public-school system to live out the agreed values, and to exemplify the virtues among themselves and with their students, not in a sanctimonious manner but in patient, caring, and joyous attention to duty.

## **SYNERGY OF THE STRATEGIC SIX DIRECTIONS**

We are all aware that the value of a strategic approach is that it avoids wish lists by concentrating on actions that will result in the greatest bang for the buck. Such an approach also sorts out priorities, since everything cannot be done, and at the same time. None of the six strategic directions start from scratch. Rather, each continues and builds on what has been already started, moves them further along in their set direction, and brings them together so that their synergic impact will be compounded and amplified to produce a greater whole.

## **CONCLUSION**

Allow me to come full circle and conclude where I began. Archbishop Samuel Carter broke new ground in Jamaican education and society because he saw those things differently, opened new vistas, and left a legacy of which we are all beneficiaries. His love and commitment to Christ inspired him to reach beyond denominational barriers, break down social divisions, and cross political divides. Hopefully, this lecture in his memory and in his honour will do likewise. To God be the Glory now and forever more.

Errol Miller

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