

ARCHBISHOP CARTER MEMORIAL LECTURE, 2015

SALUTATIONS

It is an honor for me to be asked to inaugurate this lecture series for many reasons:

First, warm congratulations to Campion College on the occasion of your 55th Anniversary. From weak beginnings when only those who wished to or had to evade the Common Entrance Examination would enrol to your present status as the most acclaimed academic performer among High Schools, has been an Odyssey which has earned this College great admiration, the position of most preferred school of choice then by parents nationwide and quite frequently, sheer “red-eye” from jealous onlookers!.

One of the questions which this lecture must pose and answer is to determine what are the ingredients which have caused your growth from weak to strong and how can these factors be multiplied in our school system.

The privilege offered me is doubled by the opportunity to reflect on the nation’s path towards educational transformation, through the prism of memory of the philosophy and life of Campion’s founding Principal, Most Rev and Hon. Dr. Samuel Emmanuel Carter, SJ, OJ, MSc. D. Litt.

One early morning, shortly after I had completed high school but was too young for University, I took the shortcut through Campion from Sts. Peter & Paul. A winning smile from Father Carter (as he then was) greeted me as I passed. Campion College was having a fitful beginning. “We are expecting you to teach Latin, English and Religion to Second Form next year”. It was a statement not a question. “But I have already committed to teach at St. George’s” I protested/

Next came the furrowed brow above the tightening smile. “How much are they paying you?” “£280 a year”. We could offer you £300”, he bargained. Big money I pondered, for a young guy with girlfriends with expensive tastes, while I had nothing but a fixed-wheel bicycle and not a shilling towards university education.

“But I promised them,” I sighed. Many times after in jest he reminded me that I had turned him down out of loyalty to the Light Blues.

Years after, 21 in fact, it was Archbishop Carter who laid hands on me in ordination to Ministry. One never forgets that!

This was a price of a man!

FAMILY

Born into a large family whose father died early, Mother Carter would ply any honest trade, grow and sell any produce, so as to provide for her family. The basic lessons of life, a socialization towards personal responsibility, cooperation, sacrifice for other, the postponement of personal gratification; joy in simple and meaningful things, were the ingrained legacies of that family. These things did not have to be taught in school. They would only be reinforced there.

The popular culture of the fourth and fifth post-emancipation or indentured generation, recognized education as the only hope to “step up inna life,” For instance, Archbishop would tell us that since there wasn’t enough money for all the family to go to music lessons and language classes, it was the obligation of the one who went, to pass on the lesson to all others.

The problem for Carter’s generation and those before him was not interest in education but access to teaching and learning.

Pause and compare our situation now. There is much more access but often much less interest.

Many of our young people and their parents do not value the opportunity for education as much as they value other things. Does much of the popular culture enhance or diminish teaching and learning? Do the faithful of our Churches witness that the strength gained from Word and Sacrament in worship, should be avidly applied to the Temples of the Holy Spirit in the schools?

Samuel Carter grew up in the 1930’s, an era of depression not dissimilar to our times. Then, perhaps only 40% of Jamaican children had the chance of finishing even elementary school. When Jamaica became independent, 52 years ago, less than 20% of the cohort had the option of a five-year secondary education.

Look how things have changed. Better than many countries much richer than we are, close to 100% of High School age students now have a place in school. The problem of access is well on the way to being solved, even these days at the tertiary level.

But as Carl Campbell argues in his treatment of “Social and Economic Obstacles to the Development of Popular Education in Post-Emancipation Jamaica 1834-1865,” “in any education system it is easier to increase the number of school places than to raise the standard of education.”

Ironically, along the way of educational transformation, we had best look back to see what was done well or poorly, so as to determine the best way forward.

EARLY INFLUENCES

The young Samuel Carter had the benefit of a home where a devoted single parent, strong, disciplined and resolute, inculcated an ethic conducive to learning.

I contend that the weakness of Jamaican family patterns, ravaged by persistent poverty, fractured by urbanization and migration and latterly infected by post-modernization and hedonism, is a serious cramp to student achievement, academic, social and spiritual.

Later on, I will challenge my Church and others as to what must be done to correct this challenge which few wish to talk about.

Because of societal and community deficiencies, some 30% of our early-childhood cohort, are not assessed as ready for primary education. If we are going to get anywhere, this deficit must be eliminated within the next three years, while the proportion of those children with special needs (probably as many as between 20 and 30%) of the group, must be diagnosed and treated as well.

MALE INFLUENCES

The schoolboy Samuel Carter fell under the influence of two strong and impressive men:

The first was the memorable Fr. Charles Eberle, an astute patrician who simply gave his life to serve the people of Jamaica. Sam was his altar boy and he was the mentor and father figure who was absent at home.

How many adults, especially men, do we need now – alumni, members of parent-teachers associations who will stand by the 38% of our children who, according to the recent Survey of Lining Conditions, either do not know their fathers or have no effective relationship with them?

Even from the early-childhood stage, it is a scary reality that our boys are on average lagging about 20% behind the achievement of our girls. That this is not so in our infant and preparatory schools indicates that quality teachers and adequate home support can make all the difference.

Accountability and social and political will- not necessarily much more money- could make the difference here.

COUNTER-CULTURE

What will we do about it?

Truth be told, schools and educators are waging an unequal battle. Can schools really compete with the influence of a prime-time television commercial which encourages us to “Bruck out of Bruckness”, thereby extolling gambling rather than thrift. Or when the media bigs up Gully Flop and his foul-mouthed colleagues but ignores the story of the three Honours graduates at Hampton

High School: all from dirt-poor homes, one raped at 12, another excelling on her way to medical school while her 5 year old child watched in the audience and the third who scored high, despite missing two days a week during the term before exams as she had to carry food across four parishes for her mother in prison.

Tell me too about the lessons taught as our your people views the social pages of the newspapers where high colour, high fashion, social glitz and half-nakedness and pose completely eclipse modesty, the virtues of sobriety and self-respect.

Some of the culture in our schools needs to change too. Sports of all kinds are excellent contributors to personal development and we are trying this year to better enable all schools to improve physical education, competitive sport and performing arts.

Healthy competition is good; winning at all costs is not. Fixing matches, throwing games, bribing or buying aspirant athletes even from primary school to boost your team and making sports the most important element of school life to the detriment of balanced academic progress; these practices are wrong and there are going to be sanctions for school personnel who engage in them.

Campion can be proud that you have never been involved. So what if you have yet to win Manning Cup or Champs in your 65 years. Keep your priorities right and the rest will follow.

St. SIMON'S

The second major influence in Sam Carter's life was the legendary Guyanese teacher, Mr. Hazelwood, Founder and Principal of St. Simon's College, one of the short-lived but effective private schools which catered for the colored and black children of families, who like Mrs. Carter, lacked the pedigree and) the money to qualify for St. George's College.

At St. Simon's, Hazelwood introduced the classics (Do we not recall how he could cut the Latin), literature, book-keeping and penmanship (remember that even, elegant script) to Joyce Robinson, Hugh Lawson Shearer, G. Arthur Brown, Louise Bennett and Samuel Carter among others who would become leaders of the nascent national movement.

Today there are still some 600 private schools. They perform as useful adjuncts to the public school system in all age segments.

Their issues are quality and financial viability. Just as Campion found it necessary to become grant aided in 1976, there is now an awkward trend where many private schools seek public take-over or partnership, or failing that, face closure.

This trend places increased pressure on the taxpayer who already contribute almost 25% of the recurrent budget, some \$80 billion for 2015-2016 to education. The abiding question then is whether this money is well spent, whether we are adding sufficient value to the lives of students and productivity of the nation. I suggest that it is everyone's responsibility to see that this is done.

Another feature of St. Simon's was the encouragement of discussion on national issues, honing the skills of rhetoric and debate.

These foundations would serve Carter well during his subsequent engagement with the early Cooperative and Credit Union movement, his formation with the Jesuits and would guide him in his choice of advanced study and his subsequent practice in social work.

EDUCATION

Father Carter's commitment to education was manifested by his major role in the conception and start-up operation of Campion College as well as his significant stint as rector at St. George's College during its heyday of achievement. As Auxiliary Bishop, he was given responsibility for Catholic Schools and oversaw the difficult transition of the private Cathedral Choir School to the government funded Holy Trinity Senior School. Today, this upgraded Holy Trinity High School is one of fastest improving inner-city secondary institutions.

Similarly his emphasis on quality at DuPont and Sts. Peter Claver Schools, among others, bear witness to his continuing interest.

THE ECUMENIST

Following the example of the visionary McEleney who had exposed him to the new thinking at the final sessions of the 2nd Vatican Council, Bishop Carter recognized that there was no future to the narrow denominational focus in Catholic schools operating as a minority denomination in a largely Protestant country.

His commitment to ecumenism was often put to the test in the many years he served the Caribbean Conference of Churches and the Jamaica Council of Churches. Conservative Catholics who were already uncomfortable with a non-American and non-white prelate, bristled at Carter's easy fraternity with the leaders of other Churches.

Some will remember when the Catholics owned the stretch of land adjacent to the Forum Hotel in Portmore. Archbishop had already twinned with Bishop Swaby to establish Jamaica's first and only ecumenical church, Reconciliation.

Then the US Ambassador Miguel Sotihros, a Greek Orthodox Christian, whose diplomacy emphasized visiting as many churches as possible, told Archbishop

Carter of the desire of the New Testament Church of God to establish a Church in Portmore.

Immediately the Catholic Church's land was made available. I would be surprised if any money ever passed.

What good example, he reasoned, could a Church give, when because of narrow theological positions and considerations of territoriality, the religious landscape looked and sounded as contentious as the political environment. What a contrast to 50 years and less before when his own Jesuit antecedents had opposed the inclusion of non-Catholics at St. George's and when the anti-Catholic chamber of Commerce and Jamaican Imperial Association had fought the Franciscans over the purchase of Constant Spring Hotel and who opposed Governor Richards for introducing the Marist Nuns to run the leprosarium!

Archbishop also led the endeavor to establish a Christian radio and television network and invested his own money to assure its stability.

Archbishop Carter was clear and loyal in his espousal of Church doctrine and magisterial teaching. But in its application, he was unfailingly pastoral, never rigid or unkind. Sam Carter was no 'saps', He lived a discipline and expected it of others. I remember being 'draped' up by him. It was around the time Bill Clinton was in the news about his dalliances with Ms. Lewinsky. I got a stern phone call, "can you come to see me right now." So I went. Stern face and usually friendly eyes glaring. "weren't you in England recently." "Yes, on some legal business", I replied. "Well you can't do this man. You can't have a double life. I'm disappointed with you! You need to make a good confession like Bill Clinton and don't let it happen again!" His look flashed between vexation and sympathy.

What was all this about, I asked. It turned out that there was, still is, a lawyer in London, names Ronald Thwaites. Apparently, he is quite a philanderer whose jilted girlfriend had stalked him to court and pelted him with tomatoes while he was presenting a case. The scandal had been carried in the British tabloid press, picked up by a Jamaican friend then communicated to others as funny coincidence; got lost in translation, became truth that it was really Deacon Ronald Thwaites of Kingston by the fifth or sixth recounting and presented to the Archbishop as proof positive that I should be defrocked forthwith.

You should have seen the relief and laughter when the true story came out. Sounds funny now but there is an abiding and current lesson. Unsubstantiated gossip is a grave sin, diminishing the good name of too many in our church right now.

Generosity of Spirit is the virtue which best characterized this Ignatian Jamaican shepherd. He cared little for material trappings. The story is told of the afternoon Archbishop came back from the Residence to the Chancery wearing a fresh bush jacket and clean black shoes. Later he was way-laid by one "Gatta" Brown, a

lady of dubious sobriety who claimed to be a congregant of Holy Trinity Cathedral in central Kingston. She had many needs including clothes.

Imagine the consternation of Monica Marr and Mrs. Terrelonge when the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Holy Roman Church in Kingston returned to his office in his undershirt and socks while Ms. Brown marched down Hopefield Avenue loudly praising God for her newly-acquired finery! What a “bam bam” as he loved to say, it would have been, had she requested trousers as well!

Why not? For it is written “If a man asks you for your cloak, give him your tunic also”

I think Archbishop Carter and Pope Francis would have got on well. Who can forget his thundering mantra “This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it”. In the worst moments like when Ron Pieters or Jack White were killed or when he was skinned by some of his own people in 1984 for his “no more snap elections” cry at the National Prayer Breakfast, Archbishop Carter maintained optimism grounded in his faith.

The pall of self-doubt, cynicism and gossip which so infect social discourse and rob our children’s innocence is contrary to Archbishop’s faith and personality. After all, recall that the very first verse chanted by the Psalmist reads, “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked.....or sit with **scorners!**”

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Consider this as we turn attention from the stories and lessons of Carter’s life to an account of the state of educational transformation in Jamaica.

If we kill hope in our children’s heads and hearts, if we treat them as if they are dumb and lesser beings; if the conduct of adults, parents, teachers and influence- leaders especially, bespeak a “a no nutten” philosophy, then we are leading them astray – terminally and often fatally.

Carter would have always remembered his Lord’s injunction against such.

For the remainder of this presentation, permit me to address measures taken and proposed to (1) tackle the social deficit which compromises wholesome student outcomes and (2) to assess changes which will equip young Jamaicans better to work and for the nation’s economy to expand.

It is indisputable that the best advantage which any state, any family, any parent can give their young is the opportunity of a good education.

Jamaica falls way short of this despite an annual investment of almost a quarter of the whole recurrent budget, some \$ 80 Billion this year, and to this must be

added a high multiplier to account for all that parents, churches and all other sources of philanthropy contribute.

Collectively, we spend more on education as a percentage of GDP than most other countries in the Americas.

So what is lacking?

First of all, the presumptions about value of learning, receptiveness to order and discipline which would have been more true in Carter's time, are seriously diminishing.

An estimate of minutes lost from instructional time (already inadequate and increasingly compromised) just to bring quiet and an attitude of learning to a classroom can be as much as 30 or 40% - the moreso in crowded or one room school houses.

Homework has become a severely neglected exercise. The estimate is that about 40% of our students rarely complete homework assignments. Going forward I am proposing that schools institute an after-school program of supervised homework at both the primary and secondary levels, required for all pupils whose assignments are chronically incomplete and for those who are underperformers.

Of course, supervisors, other than volunteers, will have to be offered a stipend and I am excited by the possibility that, through an extension of the JAMVAT program, initiated by former P.M. Patterson, tertiary students and unemployed graduates could defray their Student Loans by monitoring homework sessions.

REFORM INITIATIVES

The Ministry is now investing in uniformed groups, particularly in our weaker schools. I am hoping that shortly, one of our own Mr. Reginald Budhan, will join the Ministry's efforts to extend the revival of Scouting, Guiding, the Cadets and Brigades. Every study done indicates the attractiveness, especially to boys, of formal groups and the improved conduct and performance of those so involved.

The target is for 100 new groups each year to augment the hundreds already active.

The necessity is to track all students closely, to avoid prolonged absences and drop-outs and to lead all to some certifiable skill outcomes by the end of 2016.

In addition to the existing Child Find project which identifies and refers for treatment, severely maladjusted children and the newer SWBIS. In collaboration with the Unite for Change initiative, the Ministry of Education has launched an Inter-ministerial Behaviour Modification program, headed by Professor Frederick

Hickling and including Dr. Elizabeth Ward and Mrs. Pauletta Chevannes of the Change From Within Movement to provide instruction for teachers with difficult classes and to offer diagnosis and therapy to schools in need.

PARTNERSHIP

Every one of these ventures will require volunteers and this is an appeal for persons of goodwill to engage.

It is also a challenge thrown out to the Campion community to, as Isaiah the prophet enjoins, “enlarge your tent” by searching out, sharing your ample resources with a school or schools which would benefit from that association, from sharing your brand.

Perhaps, one should pause at this point and debunk this notion about your so-called ELITISM.

An elite is a special group, often embodying elements of excellence. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that, provided that entry to the elite group is not unfair and also that the advantage of the elite is not used solely for narrow or selfish purposes.

In Campion’s case, your student body is becoming more and more drawn from every social class. In succeeding years, I expect it will become even moreso as the quality of primary-school graduates in the soon-coming Primary Exit Examination will continue to improve.

Let it be clear – Jamaica needs every good school place we can get – public or private and given the prevailing social and cultural climate: principals and teachers, the Community of Care which is so evident at Campion and which all other schools must cultivate, will have to accept greater responsibility as primary agents of socialization. Whatever else may be missing, every Jamaican child goes to school sometime.

Accordingly, the work of the National Parenting Support Commission and the National Parent-Teachers Association of Jamaica will be further supported this year.

We have also begun intense efforts to link diaspora residents with their schools, not just for the much-needed gifts but for the sense of worth which the attachment of alumni brings to a school.

Are you getting the backdrop of all this? The chances of larger amounts of public funds for education are very slim for the next decade under whichever government. We simply owe too much money to spend much more on social services. So the improvement, the “magis” as Carter would say, has to come from doing better with what we have, by internal effectiveness and by continuing

hitherto splintered efforts on behalf of our children, our country and indeed ourselves.

Early Childhood.

One such efficiency drawn from better attention to science and a gritty resolve, leads us to the radical reform of the Early Childhood sector.

By the end of the next year, we must have at least one trained teacher available to each Basic School. This is a huge task as this level is largely private and church-dominated with only 3 out of every 10 teachers having requisite training.

In order to get quality, 200 basic schools this year will be merged into Infant Departments in under-used primary schools to match last year's figure for this endeavor. There are some 2,000 underdeployed teachers in the system who need re-training and assignment to the Early Childhood Sector as well as other instances of shortage such as Special Education, Mathematics and Science.

Many early childhood centers are church sponsored. This is good for religious formation and good for general socialization. This is a urgent call to all our churches to deepen their involvement and investment with the very little ones of whom, Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is filled.

At the early childhood level of 2,500 basic schools, the weaker 1200 must be merged into approximately 400 Infant Schools while 1,000 of the remainder, largely Church or community sponsored institutions, can have their quality consolidated or upgraded as needed by a newly-minted grant-aided arrangement with the State.

The plan is to have a trained teacher involved in the TEACHING, not the ADMINISTRATION of each Infant school; to provide locally-originated nutrition and a common curriculum and materials for this all-important age group.

The process is going to mean devoting close to 20% of the education budget each year. To do so will demand efficiencies in other areas.

Over the medium term, this greater emphasis on the Early Childhood sector, will, I am confident, produce the greatest hope of improvement in the higher levels of the system.

Early childhood involvement is the area most conducive and most economical for deeper engagement by the Churches. Archbishop Carter understood this. He dreamed that every Catholic parish or mission should have a Basic school. Apart from the value to the children, he saw it as an opportune time to engage parents and to evangelise.

It is a correct strategy still

For the primary grades, heretical as it might sound, I would be satisfied if all students gained no more than a capacity for and love of reading and speaking in English, a modicum of mathematics and sufficient self-respect as to have manners and cooperative behaviour.

If those were achieved, everything else would follow. If they are not achieved, everything else will fail and the expensive cycle of remediation or disappointment are inevitable.

Presently, upwards of a quarter of our students, especially boys, are well below standard in literacy and some two-thirds by Grade 6, fail to achieve a level of attainment in Mathematics which will render them capable of handling high school work.

This year we are trying to tackle this problem frontally. In the preparatory schools, the gender difference is not pronounced. The problem is in the primary schools, especially but not entirely in the more than 200 which have enrolment of less than 100 students where attendance is sporadic, teacher competence is inadequate and nutrition is uncertain.

Close to half a billion dollars is being spent to afford in-session coaching to those teachers whose schools are underperforming.

The expenditure, estimated at \$20 billion a year, on remedial efforts, - from coaches to CAP, ASTEP and the omni – present extra lessons, always tax-free, cramp the system's capacity to offer better salaries to competent and productive teachers or to move quickly to rationalize school places in the face of demographic shifts. We cannot continue a system of automatic promotion by age rather than by measuring competence at each grade level.

EDUCATE FOR EMPLOYMENT

I turn finally to a very practical assessment of how we must try to transform the process of education to meet employment needs and national development goals.

The truth is that in relation to the 21st Century economy, we have an upside-down educational praxis.

Fundamentally we have an Oxbridge system, heavily geared towards examinations and still biased in favour of academic learning rather than towards skill competence.

We expect the market to accept our graduates without more and often to have to expend time and more money to add specific skills. As a specific example, the level of digital competence required for that subject at CSEC is reportedly not adequate for the needs of the BPO industry on which we are relying for mass employment opportunity.

Again those who come from Canada seeking Jamaican employees, habitually complain that despite the 8 and 10 CSEC passes, the technical skills, the applied competencies required to support their industries, are sorely lacking among our graduates.

Take into account also that of the nearly 40,000 grade 11 cohort last year, just 5000 sat for even one science subject.

So the unpostponable imperative is to apply a search-light to every level of our educational system in view of current and emerging human resource needs.

We must craft a curriculum which is nimble and flexible enough to respond on the one hand to student aptitudes and on the other, to the demands of the market place.

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Another matter is of great concern relative to the Values and Morals we transmit in schools. The Religious Education curriculum has been reduced to a basic course in comparative religion and fewer students are choosing to take it. I do not think that we are recognizing sufficiently that our democratic systems, our Constitution, The Charter of Rights and our canons of civil order and ethics have their foundation in Judeo-Christian principles.

In a world context where these social and legal building blocks are disrespected through indifference and ignorance and are under active siege from opposing creeds, treating Christianity as just one of many religions, is not adequate for the formation of Jamaican consciousness. Will there be support for a greater emphasis for our Christian heritage possibly in conjunction with a more robust history and civics program?

GOING FORWARD

I hope my main point is clear. Systemic transformation of Jamaica's education is underway. But it is progressing far too slowly and runs the risk, if focus is lost, to settle back into its accustomed mediocrity with a few exceptional results in some schools, a few outstanding schools like Champion and perhaps other limited, short-lived reform initiatives.

The crucial choice lies between the stasis of now and the transformation of tomorrow.

Nowhere is this choice more striking than in relation to the secondary schools, the teachers colleges and quality and terms of engagement of the teaching profession.

Close to 200 schools in Jamaica operate a shift system while there are about 50,000 empty spaces in other schools. However well intentioned, the shift system

is a terrible brake on student achievement. Young people need more instructional time, ample extracurricular opportunities and less time on the street.

Better assignment of primary spaces: yes, a measure of zoning will be applied starting this year. In high schools, implementation of the extended day system, so successfully piloted here at Campion will combine with a strategic building program to eliminate the shift system by 2017-2018.

The next two years will also see a significant shift in curriculum towards the infusion of technical and vocational subjects to better equip our graduates for service in the 21st century economy. Do we realize the consequences of the fact that of a Grade cohort of almost 40,000 last year, only 5,000 mostly from schools like Campion, sat any science subject?

All studies regarding the efficiency of our schools point to the crucialness of teacher quality to achieve success. I wish to complement the thousands of teachers who endure difficult social and physical conditions all over Jamaica; who come to school every day; whose personal lives mirror the standards which we want the students to live by, who prepare their lessons, mark homework and offer personal attention to their pupils.

This praise and thanks is unstinting. I want to be the strongest advocate for better salaries for good and productive teachers who add value, in the upcoming salary negotiations.

But with this support comes the necessity for change, indeed to better add value, accountability, excellence and professional fulfillment to the vocation of teaching.

The practice of teachers being tenured at a school, virtually for life and with little accountability, after one year's service in a vacant post, is no longer serviceable. There are now about 2, 400 teachers, fully paid, beyond generous establishment levels when other schools need talent, and so far voluntary deployment has been anemic.

Similarly, the reality that 93% of leave applied for by teachers falls within the meager 190 instructional days each year, costs up to \$ 2,34 billion for substitutes and must be better managed, if only so that this money can be used to offer better pay to good teachers.

Listen please to these figures which underscore the imperative of legislative change towards instructional improvement.

The Ministry of Education has done a tabulation to match teacher competencies to student needs. Here are some examples from our high schools. They are current:

- of 366 teachers of high school biology, 249 are not qualified in that subject but in some other

- of 311 Chemistry teachers, 158 have no requisite training in the subject.
- of 341 Geography teachers, 103 have no requisite training.
- The same is true of 129 of 441 teachers of history.
- The figures are 160 untrained of 227 teachers of Physics.
- and to complete the sample – most troubling of all because it is so crucial: of 1784 teachers of mathematics in high school, 704 are at the top of their pay scale in every subject other than the one they are teaching. They have MSc's in Guidance Counseling, Religious education, Social Studies, Physical Education, Agricultural Science and the like but not in Mathematics!

To correct these mismatches cannot be honestly considered as any assault on the entitlements of teachers. 2015 must be year of deliberate and decisive action to remedy this situation.

Please remember, as Carter would tell us, we are in education not for ourselves but for the good and advancement of our children.

All of the above requires a thorough-going look at our teacher-training institutions. Very progressively, their degrees are now linked for quality purposes to the University of West Indies in a fashion similar to the many Colleges of London, Oxford or Cambridge. This preserves identity but adds quality assurance.

It is the surest and shortest way to institutional accreditation.

Further, the teachers colleges will, this September, have to diversify their offerings, again to respond to the marketplace.

In 2013, 4,763 persons qualified to be certified as teachers, graduated from our colleges, while from an already over-supplied and mismatched teaching profession, 605 retired and perhaps another 250-300 resigned.

It should thus be clear that we are on the cusp of far-reaching changes on the educational landscape. Change, especially of entrenched patterns, is always inconvenient and often abrasive and very often has serious personal and political consequences.

The hope of this presentation is to excite people of goodwill to re-engage in Education, to be impatient with mediocrity and the obsolete reign of special interests.

I sense that, amidst our difficulties, there is abroad the land a renewed enthusiasm for the upliftment of our children, a verve towards greater wholeness, greater productivity.

Isn't that a progressive agenda for us all? Isn't this what Kingdom seeking is all about? Isn't that what Samuel Emmanuel Carter stood for?

Samuel Emmanuel Carter led the Catholic Church in Jamaica during the 1970's and 80's, by any account, the period of most turbulent ideological struggle in our history.

Throughout his tenure, he articulated consistent messages of progressive thought relying on Catholic Social Teaching applied with deep and gentle respect for the Jamaican people who he knew well and loved so much. He was trenchant in advocacy for the poor and marginalized and spoke fearlessly about unemployment, corruption, tribalism and human rights.

His contribution was unique because his principles avoided the pitfalls of the doctrinaire left and equally the selfish and unconcerned prejudice and racism of the Right. His was truly the Third Way, so little tried, keeping alive the sense of hope and the affirmation of their dignity among all our people!

For this alone, his memory deserves a full biography and the emulation of all who share the never dying spark of his faith.