



Jamaica Council of Churches

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October 19, 2021

The JCC condemns killings and defends true Christianity.

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) is outraged at the loss of life and injury connected with the recently reported religious tragedy in Montego Bay, St. James. The Council offers comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones and associates and prays for the recovery of those who have suffered injuries.

The Council commends the security forces for their alert and expeditious intervention which appears to have averted further harm or loss of life, especially noting with relief reports that children were rescued and are now safe. We offer our encouragement and support as they fully investigate this tragic series of events.

This dreadful incident understandably turns the spotlight on the place and practice of religion and faith in the life of a nation and its people. The value of religion and religious belief systems, as parts of the human experience, are well known and have been extensively studied and documented. More particularly, the expressions of faith within the Christian tradition have been the bedrock on which our nation has been built. Our National Heroes, for example, Rt. Excellent Paul Bogle, Rt. Excellent George William Gordon and Rt. Excellent Samuel Sharpe and several of our National Symbols are all testaments to this tradition.

We affirm that genuine expressions of faith are life-affirming and life-sustaining and supportive of the rule of law. True Christian faith unequivocally upholds the sanctity of life, based on the biblical understanding that all human beings are made in the "image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26). We further uphold the understanding that there is diversity in the Christian experience and hold as valid those expressions which adhere to the true teachings of the scriptures (1 Thess. 5:19-21; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; Tit. 1:9).

However, we denounce and condemn all forms of religious practices which exploit and endanger persons and expose them to harm or distress, as this is wholly inimical to the gospel of love whose Progenitor and Exemplar is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

The Council calls on all Jamaicans to exercise critical discernment in all spheres of life, especially in spiritual and religious endeavours. We further enjoin all Christians to continue to demonstrate the value of faith in God in their daily lives as they bear witness to God's goodness, grace and transforming power.

Rev. Newton Dixon

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