

The JAMAICAN SOCIETY-

OPTIONS FOR
RENEWAL

LUCIEN JONES



GRACE, KENNEDY FOUNDATION LECTURE 1995

Preface

During the past three years, the annual Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lectures have focused on issues of social concern under the topics: 'Morality and Community'; 'The family'; 'Leadership and Citizenship'. All of them have centred on a concern about the breakdown in the Jamaican social structure and fundamental and adverse changes in values and attitudes, which reflect conditions of a society in crisis.

There is clearly a close relationship between the subject of the 1995 Lecture: 'The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal'; and those of the three preceding ones. Indeed, this year's represents some significant advances in the search and suggestions for creating a 'viable society'. Of the seven topics tackled since this series commenced in 1989, this has perhaps been the most challenging and difficult.

In the process of dissecting and analysing the issues involved, the Lecturer, Dr. Lucien Jones, an unusually broad-gauged medical practitioner, begins by outlining the determinant factors of human behaviour. Highly significant about these, is the human capacity to make choices, for example between those which are motivated by self-interest and those involving 'the public good'.

He reviews the impact of the Industrial Revolution globally - in the transition from primary to more sophisticated societies - in the economic, social, political and moral areas. Its consequences were profound, not only materially, but psychologically and spiritually.

Turning to the local and regional scene, in a broad sweep of history, divided into three periods: Emancipation, Universal Adult Suffrage, and Independence, he analyses the conditions in each, on the basis of the same four categories.

Dr. Jones concludes by attempting to predicate an appropriate conspectus, In his vision of guiding principles in the pursuit of renewal and viability of the society, he places considerable emphasis on the transformation of the 'mindset of our people', led by a new approach to education.

Underlying the Lecture are Dr. Jones' strong religious convictions and commitment.

Professor the Hon. Gladstone E. Mills, OJ. CD.

Chairman

Grace, Kennedy Foundation



Dr. Lucien Jones

About the Lecturer

There are persons who believe that the Jamaican society is in a mode of self-destruction. Observers marvel that a people with so much talent and potential for greatness, can't seem to get the ingredients together to create the society we could be.

The Grace, Kennedy Foundation with its unerring sense of the relevance of issues has decreed that the Lecture this year should zero in on the Jamaican society, its history, its present condition and its prospects.

To lead our thoughts on this crucial matter, we have invited Dr. Lucien Jones; a man who from his youth has shown himself an activist for improvement within the society.

He graduated from Jamaica College where he had a distinguished leadership record in sports and school organization and then moved on to the University of the West Indies from which he graduated with degrees in Medical Sciences in 1976.

On completing his internship at the Public Hospitals system in the Corporate Area, he set up practice in May Pen. From there, he has taken a very active interest in the affairs of the Medical Association of Jamaica. He served as President of that Association and remains a member of its Governing Council.

Deeply committed to public and voluntary service, he is Chairman of Clarendon Conscience, a community-based organization which has sponsored public discussion of important issues in Clarendon. Through his initiative some sixteen million Jamaican dollars worth of equipment has been received from Toronto for hospitals in May Pen and Kingston.

Dr. Lucien Jones is an active member of the St. Andrew Parish Church and a member of the Church Committee. He serves as Volunteer Physician at the Church's Clinic in Majesty Gardens in Kingston.

He is a member of the Prime Minister's Committee on Values and Attitudes, a member of the Advisory Board of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation and Director of Hands Across Jamaica for Righteousness.

No stranger to the media, he is a presenter of JBC's 'In My Opinion'. sometime columnist in the Jamaica Herald, and member of the production team of the programme 'Good Samaritan' on LOVE FM.

From his wealth of service and commitment, he shares with us this thoughtful Lecture 'The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal'.

Rev. C. Samuel Reid

Director, Grace, Kennedy Foundation

Chairman, Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecture Committee

Introduction

Since their inception in 1989, the Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lectures have established a reputation of the highest quality as outstanding scholars have been invited to analyse and make recommendations on matters of significant national importance.

To be asked to walk in the footsteps of these distinguished individuals is a signal honour. It is also a challenge to sustain that reputation, at the least, and, if possible, to further the objective of the lectures, which is to stimulate the minds of our people in the pursuit of excellence and a viable society.

Moreover, to be invited to speak on a subject which essentially encompasses all that has transpired before: 'How to create a viable society', an issue which has exercised and eluded some of the finest minds of humanity over centuries, is a daunting task indeed!

This challenge, however, comes at a significant time in the history of our island. It is a time of great ferment in our land, a time of transition and a time which many of us think is a time of crisis. It is a time when there is a clarion call for radical change in our political culture and for constitutional reform: a time when the results of a prolonged period of economic stagnation and a concomitant decline in the living standards of many and growing levels of absolute poverty threaten to destroy the social fabric, while we await the fruits of the new economic dispensation of a market-driven economy. The situation is compounded by alarmingly high rates of murder; and not just murder, but murder with a prologue, and all too often with an epilogue too, as revenge takes place and bloodshed follows bloodshed. All of this is happening during a period of moral confusion and a decline in moral standards, as the issue of right and wrong is subordinated and, all too often, sacrificed as the altar of expediency.

Despite the pessimism and even cynicism, many of us are optimistic about the future of Jamaica. This optimism is not inspired merely by the knowledge that the Chinese translation of the word crisis is 'opportunity', nor by the old adage, perhaps a truism, that 'behind every cloud is a silver lining', but greatly inspired by two observations of profound significance. The first is that the history of our people has been one of tremendous courage, valour, and an indomitable will to survive in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. The second contradicts the received wisdom of our time. It is not the nature of our political system, nor the efficiency of the economic model that determines the viability and, more importantly, the sustainability of our society. The society is defined by the nature and quality of the relationships, which exist between human beings. These relationships are very complex and constantly subject to change. Each individual has to understand himself or herself, relate to others, the environment and ultimately, in my view, to the God who created us all. Men and women have to define the nature of their relationships. So do adults and children, the young and the old, the robust and the infirm, the rich and the poor, and the mighty and the powerless.

These are fundamental lessons that history has taught us. And we can add to them the knowledge that what we learn from history is, in fact, that we do not learn from history. What I intend to do here, then is to attempt to examine the historical context of our development in order to establish a base from which to explore the options for our future survival. It is my view that the importance of these interpersonal relationships must be recognized by all those who shape public opinion.

At this point, I wish to make two things clear. First, that this lecture is going to be an unfinished work. There will be as many issues raised which can be resolved only as further developments unfold and as the options posited are explored in detail. I would not

presume to present a complete blueprint for a viable society. This is a task beyond the powers of any single individual.

Secondly, given the omnibus nature of the subject, the constraints of time and the many and varied possible perspectives, I will focus on the fundamentals. This may well mean that what some may consider to be important details, will have to be sacrificed to a thematic, hopefully logical and integrated, approach to a difficult problem. By using this approach, I will be seeking to avoid the trap into which so many fall who are correctly moved by the urgency and horror of the immediate situation, but who fail to appreciate that simplistic and quick-fix solutions which ignore the historical process are likely to fail at best and, at worst, to aggravate the situation.

Therefore in this lecture, *The Jamaican Society: Options for Renewal*, I will focus specifically on four questions. They are:

1. What determines the nature of any society?
2. What are the essential elements of the history of the formation of the Jamaican society?
3. What are the fundamental changes, which have resulted in the present structure of the Jamaican society?
4. What options is available to make it possible to develop a viable society?

I intend to argue that:

- a. Analysing and planning for any society has to begin and end with a basic understanding of the factors, which influence the behaviour of human beings whose collective actions determine the nature of any society.
- b. The present reality and future prospects of any society are heavily influenced by the history of social developments worldwide. We are now merely a part of

a wider global village, as a result of technological advances.

- c. Viability, and more importantly, sustained viability, requires serious social reconstruction and long-term planning for the twenty-first century and beyond.

And right from the beginning, I will assert that any sustainable society has to be comprised of human beings who feel a sense of belonging to a particular geographical area. They must have a sense of community, of sharing, of striving together for a set of ideals for themselves and for generations to come. They must be people who are actually aware that because of the differences in their God-given talents and because of man's inherent fallibility, a perfect society has not yet been achieved and is unlikely to be established on this earth. But if we are to give ourselves a chance to pursue and achieve excellence in every aspect of life we must focus on certain core ideals and to strive to live above barbarity and even above mediocrity.

These core ideals are the lasting values that have developed from a combination of human logic, experience and divine instruction. They have guided human-kind throughout history and we have periodically ignored them only to suffer the consequences. Among them are the sacredness and dignity of human life; justice tempered by tolerance and mercy; freedom with responsibility and accountability. All of these should be undergirded by love and righteousness, resulting in hope, peace and happiness.

This then is the ideal. The key word is hope, and in order for this hope to flourish, it must be expressed in community as opposed to self-centredness. For it to be sustainable, it must be anchored securely to a moral reference point and placed within an ethical framework. As a result, the main thrust of this lecture is to develop a process which will create a moral underpinning for the

development of a sustainable society and lead to the renewal that is so urgently needed. Finally, as we examine the general issue of how to create a viable society, particularly the Jamaican society, I wish to dedicate this lecture to my earthly father who fathered me by and whilst dedicating his life to serving others and, as is the case with that I do, to my Heaven Father whose Son sacrificed His life for the freedom not just of all Jamaicans but for all the people of the world.

Determinant Factors of Human Behaviour

Any attempt to bring about the transformation and renewal of a human society has to have as its point of departure a basic understanding of the pivot around which everything revolves. A society, essentially, has only two resources by which to sustain itself; one is its human resource and the other is the environment in which the human beings exist. Since human beings are sustained by their environment, it is in our own best interest to try to live in harmony with that sustaining force. So, then, we will begin with an evaluation of the major attributes of human beings. Their understanding of self and of the multiple and complex relationships with other created beings and with the uncreated God Almighty, ultimately affects behavioural patterns and thus determines the nature of society.

Every human being has five fundamental attributes. Two are common to all, even though one is not universally accepted and the other not universally understood. The other three attributes constitute our major differences. Most people find these differences interesting and exciting but for others they present only problems and opportunities for exploitation. All five are closely interrelated and combine to make up the unique personality of each individual.

Similarities

The first of the two common features is what we call *instinct*. All human beings have the ability and propensity to act and react without conscious thought. This ability is primarily but not solely geared to survival. The following are classic examples, which are sufficient for this discussion:

1. Hunger - in response to lack of food.
2. Thirst - in response to lack of water or fluids.

3. Sex - for the continuation of the species.

Two important observations need to be made at this juncture. One is that instinctive behaviour can be subject to some degree of control by the mind. The second is that many of these instinctive reactions are associated with pleasure, some more than others. These two aspects of human behaviour have played a significant role in human history.

The second common attribute is *soul*. The concept of the human soul is not universally accepted and is difficult to prove but only because of the limited dimensions of human senses and ability to reason. As Martin Luther King stated, these constitute the greatest obstructions to faith. The soul is the essence of the Christian relationship with God who, through this medium, touches our conscience thus influencing human behaviour and our will. Socrates, the father of Greek philosophy which has so greatly influenced Western beliefs, proclaimed that all human beings possess a soul in addition to a body, and that our actions ought to accord with the soul which is nourished by moral life. For those who do not accept the presence of a Creator God it may be useful to consider the following quotation: 'Without God anything is possible.' This point is validated by an observation by philosophers from Plato to Sartre who in their search for meaning in the universe concluded that 'a finite point has no meaning unless it has an infinite reference point.'

Differences

Let us now turn to the attributes which make us different from one another. The first is called *intellect*. The ability to reason, to think logically, to solve problems and to commit experiences to memory, and to recall at will is one of the most powerful properties of the human being. It is the intellect or mind, or will, which has

facilitated and given expression to the creative energies of humankind, resulting in exorable change and adaptation.

Our intellect profoundly influences and is affected by all other human qualities. Through it, men and women have what other living beings are denied - freedom of choice and the ability to escape the fetters of the inevitable. It is important to note that intellect is much more developed in some than in others, often due to situations and environment, but sometimes because of their genetic heritage.

Our *physical characteristics* come next in the trio of differentiating attributes. These are gender, pigmentation of skin, facial features and physique, all of which constitute the outward differences between human beings. It is in great part the response of one group of people to those of differing race or gender which has profoundly affected relationships and hence the nature of societies.

The third individual attribute is *personality*. This is the external behavioural manifestation of the inner man or woman. It is subject to control by the intellect, influenced by the environment and genes, and ultimately determined and shaped by acceptance or rejection of divine instruction.

The features of personality are multiple and complex and difficult to categorise. For the most part, however, they determine whether we use our intelligence for good or for evil or with indifference, or all of those at different times. Love, compassion, tolerance, mercy, self-sacrifice, desire for excellence may cohabit with hatred, greed, capacity to murder or rape and plunder, intolerance and indifference.

Themes

Four themes are now emerging from this analysis. They will be used throughout the further examination of human behaviour and its effect on societal formation. The first is that economics is a vital component of societal development. In its basic form, it was manifest in the need for food, water and shelter to satisfy the population's needs. In due course, however, sophistication has changed the equation somewhat to include not just needs but desires of the population.

Secondly, because of the differences in human beings, especially the propensity of the strong and more powerful to take advantage of the weak and less resourceful, some method of government was deemed necessary. Hence, the genesis of politics and politicians.

Thirdly, human beings are social animals, therefore institutions were constructed to facilitate interaction and development, for example, the family, communities, places of worship and teaching.

Fourthly, if the three preceding elements were to work in harmony, some moral framework - which would provide an infinite and incontestable reference point - had to be established within which human beings could pursue their need for order, economic endeavours and societal development.

Hence we arrive at the conclusion that the behaviour of human beings is motivated by four fundamental objectives: economic, political, social and moral. It is these elements which will be used as tools for further analysis.

Summary

We can now see that, because of our biological heritage, all human beings have the capacity to make choices, especially in respect to

our behaviour towards others. For the most part, there is no preordained inevitability and predictability in the way we elect to relate to one another. The nature and speed with which we make these choices are influenced by each individual's experiences and personality, memory, logic, value systems or ethical code.

A comment on two aspects of human behaviour, which have had profound effects on 'How the world turns', is appropriate at this point. Human beings have the capacity to act primarily in their individual or collective self-interest, or to act in the interest of the common good. Whether they do one to the exclusion of the other, or both together, is a function of choice. In addition, human beings have the capacity to control all their baser instincts, including the sexual urge. This makes it possible for us to function at higher, more noble, spiritual level than simply to survive and focus primarily on those pleasures which are associated with our instincts. This too is a function of choice.

Other important points have also been established. Human beings have the capacity to solve problems and hence to make progress in pursuit of an improved quality of life. Inherent in man is the need for recreation, for self-expression in the arts, music, sports, and a feature, which is affected greatly by the individual's personality, environment and genetic make-up. And finally, despite their undoubted creative energies, all human beings seek to understand, reach for and relate in some way to a higher authority, by whatever name, which affects their lives and the environment in which they live.

In my view, it is because of these facilities and attributes that the history of man is dominated by three major challenges. They are:

1. The battle between self-interest, and collective interest of the public good.
2. The inevitability of change;

-
-
3. The struggle to maintain and preserve a moral or ethical framework to prevent man from becoming subservient to his base or instinctive behaviour.

Some Aspects of World History With a Focus on the Industrial Revolution

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the importance and inter-relatedness of all aspects of human behaviour. At the same time, the elements involved in the transition from primary to more sophisticated societies will be noted. This will involve returning to the four objectives already established - the economic, political, social and moral objectives which determine human behaviour.

Economic

In primitive and in early modern societies, the basic needs of people were satisfied by utilization of the land employing human and animal labour for production. These methods satisfied the collective good of tribe or family and early societies for many centuries until about three hundred years ago when they began to be superseded by the Industrial Revolution which introduced machines operated by water or steam power. With them necessarily came the methods of mass production in the factory system. We are now said to be in the third wave, that of supra-industrialization or the technological age, characterized by tremendous advances in the speed of collection and dissemination of information.

Political

The development of systems of government has moved in tandem with increases in individual freedoms, which also, as we will see in a moment, impacted on economic models. As social organizations moved from tribes and clans to empires and the nation state, so were the authoritarian or totalitarian states increasingly followed, for the most part, by a movement towards democratic forms of government. With the advent of representative government came

the growth of institutions to protect the rights of the powerless against the threats of the powerful.

Social

The basic social organizations of man were those of tribe and family. With agriculture came the settled community and, ultimately, towns with centres for worship, trade, justice and learning, the foundations of the cities of today. There was also increasing recognition of and demands for individual freedom and the need for personal development. Growing populations and the differences in personal levels of power and sophistication, institutions to respond to these needs among the mass of the people became increasingly necessary.

Two additional points can be made here in respect of lessons from history about the social behaviour of human beings. First is that man is a herd animal. The historical landscape is shaped by the lasting influence of men and women who had a vision and the ability to motivate others to think or act. They were able to make a vast difference in the lives of their societies, for better or for worse, in science and religion, politics and economics, the arts or sports, virtually in any area of life. Secondly, as is so eloquently stated in Professor Errol Miller's book, *The Jamaican Society and High Schooling*, the phenomenon of class division is an old-age one. Human beings in most societies today are in dynamic movement between the different classes. Success or failure is dependent on the circumstances and value systems of each individual society.

Moral

The importance of religion as the ultimate reference point in societal formation goes back to antiquity. The three great world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All focused on a Supreme Being, God. Only Christianity differed in claiming that

God had become manifest on earth with the birth of His Son Jesus Christ, thus facilitating a personal relationship between God and man. It is this religion which promoted the equality and brotherhood of man, the fundamental concepts which dominated the development of the Western democratic states of which we are part.

The main thesis of this lecture is that relationships determine the nature of society. The observation that all facets of human endeavour are interconnected is best demonstrated here by brief references to some of the features of the Industrial Revolution, which began in Britain in the mid-eighteenth century and was in full flower by the time of Emancipation. This was an event of epochal significance, which had particular implications for, and was affected by, the development of the Jamaican society. Two enduring examples of the products of that revolution can be seen here in Jamaica today: the iron bridge at Spanish Town and the old Naval Hospital at Port Royal.

The Industrial Revolution

Historians, economists and sociologists have long debated the effects of this period of history on our present society. It is not my intention to enter that discussion except to make some observations, which are germane to the topic in hand.

The Industrial Revolution resulted in a quantum leap in productivity when water and steam power were substituted for human and animal energy in the operation of machinery. With this enormous change came the factory system and the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the division of labour. It resulted in Britain becoming the workshop of the world, transforming its exports in textiles, for example, from five million pounds in 1780 to almost forty million pounds in the 1820s.

This economic superiority was enhanced and undergirded by the deliberate decisions taken by its leaders to ensure the success of industrialization by undermining the markets of its colonies and neighbours by the erection of high tariffs on imports and flooding local markets with better quality and cheaper products. This policy had a profound influence on the American War of Independence, the Napoleonic Wars and even World War I. It also devastated the Indian textile economy and severely affected Africa, as Walter Rodney documented in his book, *How Britain Underdeveloped Africa*.

This revolution also had profound effects on the quality of life of individuals both nationally and internationally. It brought early gains and tremendous accumulation of capital to one sector of society at the expense of the other. Thus the entrepreneurs, the investors, the mill owners and their financial backers became rich whilst the working class suffered under awful conditions in the mines and factories and were organized alongside their machines in a time-driven system of labour unlike anything ever known before. It was only the later generations that benefited from the general increase in prosperity that flowed from industrialization. It is of interest to note that from this early stage the capital, which generated the Industrial Revolution, came in large part from the growth of sugar in the colonies - and particularly from Jamaica.

During this period, the accumulation of profit was, for the first time on a large scale, separated from the common good and directed towards the single individual and his own interests. This development brought about a 'laissez faire' or open market economic model in Britain which, according to Paul Kennedy in his book; *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*, meant that national boundaries and ownership accounted for less and less. This mood, he claims, was best exemplified by a comment made by the English economist Jevons, in 1865: 'The plains of North America are our cornfields; Chicago and Odessa our granaries;

Canada and the Baltic our timber forests....' Clearly, the early beginnings of globalization.

In *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, Adam Smith advocated less government interference in trade, arguing that the pursuit of self-interest would ultimately lead to the benefit of the entire society. Since he was essentially a moral philosopher, he believed that this freedom in the market place would be accompanied by responsibility to the society. His book became the 'Economic Bible' for all who advocated similar views. Unfortunately, however, it must be noted, just like the Christian Bible, which had an important effect on human thought at that time, Adam Smith's book has been misused. His expectation of responsibility has been conveniently ignored.

Finally, it is worth noting that the religious changes of the previous centuries brought about by the Reformation and separation from the Roman Catholic Church resulted in the growth of Protestantism. With the Protestant Churches came increased individualism and what is now known as the Protestant work ethic. It was the acceptance of the importance of work, and its rewards, which ultimately gave support to the methods of production and trade inherent in the Industrial Revolution.

The Development of Jamaican Society

As we turn the spotlight on the history of our nation let us be quite clear about the context within which this analysis is taking place and its main objectives.

First, the context. In the early centuries of Jamaica's recorded history, two fundamentally different cultures came to live and to work together in neutral territory for the first time. Both cultures were highly developed but along different lines. The one, the European, which originated in a feudal system, was highly motivated by a desire for freedom and the pervasive culture of self-interest. When the first Europeans arrived in Jamaica they were in pursuit of additional resources to enhance the quality of life in the metropolitan country. The other, the African, a highly developed society based on tribal and kinship systems and undergirded by the extended family, was primarily agrarian and motivated by providing for the common good. And it is of great importance to remember that, contrary to the Eurocentric view of Africa as a land of savages, that continent had a great civilization flourishing on the banks of the Niger while Europe slumbered in the dark ages. Further, while Oxford and Cambridge were in their inchoate stages, the University of Timbuktu welcomed scholars and learned men from all over the world.

In Jamaica's history, the European was the enforcer. The African was the captive, brutally compelled to leave a familiar environment and to submit to an alien culture.

Secondly, the objectives, I do not intend to give a survey of our history, but rather to indicate, in pursuit of the objective of viability, the nature of the relationships which developed as a result of the different ethnic groups, Jewish, Indian, Chinese, Lebanese and Syrians, which together with the Africans and Europeans, specifically the British, came together and formed a

completely new society - the Jamaican society today. Examining how these relationships shaped our historical development socially, politically, economically and morally will be the main object of this exercise. Understanding this historical process will give us an insight into the psyche of our people in 1995, and provide an important tool for the reconstruction of our society. In my view, such understanding is a prerequisite for the viability of this and any society.

Finally, the question has to be asked in view of the benefit of hindsight, given the ethnic violence which has devastated Yugoslavia, various African countries such as Rwanda, Angola, Somalia and until recently South Africa, given the racial conflicts in the United States of America and increasingly in parts of Europe, did we ever have a chance to establish a viable society from the beginning or were we given a golden opportunity to teach the entire human race something special? If so, let us see what went wrong and how we can correct it in order to fulfil the mandate of the National Pledge and the National Motto. If not, let us resign ourselves to the inevitability of the historical process. Bear those thoughts in mind as we proceed along the historical path.

Using a broad sweep of the historical brush, we now look at three watershed events which, with the conditions which led up to them will serve as the backdrop to this analysis. The first is Emancipation, the end of slavery - 1838; the second, Adult Suffrage, the precursor to Independence - 1944; the third, Independence - 1962.

At this point, I wish to emphasize two historical facts. One is that the racial composition of Jamaica from the sixteenth century until today has been dominated by black who, both then and now, have made up over ninety per cent of the population. Secondly, this society has born and steeped in racism. Racism dominated the

economic model, the political system, the social structure and the moral philosophy. The society was based on the assumption of the intellectual and cultural superiority of the European and the intellectual and cultural inferiority of the African. The mindset, in turn, set the stage for the replacement of racial bias with a class bias but with little change in the underlying nature of the relationship. These undeniable facts of history have had, and continue to have, a profound influence on the nature of every kind of relationship, both locally and internationally.

I consider it important to be very open and forthright when discussing these two issues, race and class. One reason is that the following account of our history is predominated, but not exclusively, by the history of black development within the context of the struggle for freedom and equality, firstly against the many manifestations of racism and, later, against class bias. In addition, my considered view is that the sensitivity and honesty with which we, as a society, treat the profound effects of this historical process will, in large part, determine the viability, and more importantly, the sustainability of our society.

Emancipation 1655-1838

Social

Almost two centuries of societal formation led up to this first watershed: Emancipation. The period can be best summarized by a quotation from the author of the classic *History of the West Indies*, Sir Philip Sherlock, who is himself quoting from John Hearne:

It is no exaggeration to speak of British Colonial Rule between 1655 and 1865 as a harsh, cruel tyranny exercised by a small minority of owners and masters over a large, dispossessed majority of Africans. The Jamaican sugar-and-slave plantation was rigid,

base and greedy. Few countries in history have ever been so unanimously dedicated to the mere production of goods at a profit. No servile class has ever had fewer examples of humane or noble principles to which they might aspire. Europe institutionalized violence and put the control of the African in the hands of the slave owner. The laws defined the slave not as a person but as property. The male was downgraded from father to progenitor, and the Afro-Jamaican female from mother to breeder.

Out of this vortex there emerged two major processes which influenced the nature of the society then and as it continues to this day.

One result was the creolization of the society, consequent on the cultural and sexual contact between Europeans and Africans. The result was the creation of a new class of people, the mulattos, with a status which though still subservient to the planter gave them some power over the powerless blacks, causing tensions at best, and hatred and bitterness at worst. In addition, although the process produced an amalgam of two cultures, neither purely African or purely European, it sowed the early seeds for the new culture which would ultimately manifest itself with its own music, language and other forms of expression.

Despite their powerlessness, however, many slaves had a burning desire for freedom in their hearts. They struggled bitterly and unrelentingly to overthrow this unnatural and despotic relationship with their masters. 'Slave' rebellions were more frequent in Jamaica than any other island, although not as successful as that in Haiti at the time of the French Revolution. However, the Maroons who fought two great wars in the fourteen years between 1725 and 1739, finally defeated British soldiers and in the final treaties won formal recognition of their independence. For the first time in the history of the Americas, a metropolitan power was forced to recognize the right of its subjects to independence. It is worth

noting that this took place a full half a century before the American colonies won their independence and long before the success of the blacks in Haiti. The names of the Maroon leaders are still remembered: Quaco, Cudjoe, Tacky and Nanny.

The Coromanti, Gold Coast and Ibo slaves repeatedly rebelled against their slave masters, in spite of the appalling punishments that failure brought upon them. In his *Sociology of Slavery*, Orlando Patterson notes that almost all the uprisings were led by members of the Akan tribe who, in Africa, were known for their warlike skills.

The last and largest uprising, led by Sam 'daddy' Sharpe, broke out in 1831 and involved some twenty thousand slaves. After the rebellion, Sam Sharpe paid the supreme sacrifice with his life and many others were caught and killed. It is interesting to note that this rebellion was also known as the Baptist rebellion as by then William Knibb, the Baptist missionary, had a significant influence on the slaves, following the great Baptist tradition. In fact, though accused of complicity he had tried unsuccessfully to dissuade the slaves from this violent protest.

In the years leading up to Emancipation, the activities of the missionaries, first the Moravians and later the Baptists, who carried the central message of Christianity, the brotherhood of man, exerted a powerful influence on the psyche of the slaves in the storm of oppression and devaluation of their self-worth and self-esteem. The names of two black preachers from America, George Lisle and Moses Baker will long be remembered for their missionary work.

Eventually, with the assistance of the Nonconformist Churches and the liberal movement in the British Parliament, the struggle ended. Another important factor was the final realization that slavery, as Adam Smith had pointed out, was an 'inefficient means of

production'. And so economic reality and political action together with a strong moral force led to the emancipation of the slaves in 1838.

Economic

In the years before Emancipation, sugar was 'king' and the plantation was devoted to its production. There was an enormous accumulation of capital from this slave labour monoculture, most of which was repatriated to Britain. However, slaves were allowed to grow their own provisions on a patch of land, the surplus from which they could sell in the market on Sundays.

Political

The political control of the plantation society was vested in the hands of the Governor, with the planters represented in an Assembly exercising legislative and financial powers. However, all legislation had to be approved by the British Government. The planters were also represented in the Governor's Council and they controlled local government, the lower levels of the judiciary, the local militia - to protect them from the slaves - and the official church, the Church of England, today the disestablished Anglican Church. This aristocratic parliamentary system was based on a very small electorate. It goes without saying that the majority of the people, the slaves, had no representation in the Assembly.

Moral

The dominant morality was informed with the need to justify slavery and keep the 'black man in the station to which God had called him'. At that time, the Church of England, then the official church of Jamaica, fully supported this policy. As we have seen, however, the advent of Nonconformist missionaries to Jamaica did

make a significant difference. After the Moravians and the Baptists came the Methodists and others preaching the true Gospel of equality of all men under God. In spite of great difficulties and strong opposition from most of the planters and the established church, since they recognized the status quo would be eroded by such preaching, the missionaries did establish their churches and were a significant influence in the years after Emancipation.

Universal Adult Suffrage 1838-1944

More than a century was to pass between Emancipation and the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage to Jamaica. The transition from slave to free human being was not easy. It was at times traumatic and there were many periods of great hardship for the majority of the population. At the same time, it is possible to see in these years many indications of how our present day Jamaica would be structured.

Socio-economic

The struggle for freedom continued but with a focus now on 'my own piece of ground'. One of the results of this search by the freed slaves was the establishment of the Free Villages with the significant help of the missionaries, especially William Knibb of the Baptist movement who, some claim, was such a visionary that he had plans to form a political party. As the freed slaves settled on their own land, whether in the Free Villages or outside and independent peasant class began to be established. By the end of the nineteenth century, this peasant class had significantly shifted the island's dependence on sugar to a more diversified economy, so much so that the peasant output rose from accounting for 11 per cent of exports in 1854 to 75 per cent of exports by 1890, the latter figure being larger attributable to the peasant farmers' increased production of bananas.

A more complex society began to develop in other ways, replacing the limited master and slave relationships of the dominant plantation society. Chinese and East Indian indentured labourers, and also free blacks, were brought in to supplement the work force on the remaining sugar estates. Many stayed on to open small businesses and shops, becoming part of the general society. Later came Syrian and Lebanese merchants who settled here and significantly influenced the economy. The middle class started to expand considerably, as did the professional classes at a later date.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the great tradition of migration began, first to Panama to help with the construction of the canal and then to Cuba to work in the sugar industry. This phenomenon was to have important social and economic implications because of the opportunities for employment and the repatriation of funds back home. It also increased the workers' knowledge not only of the world outside Jamaica but also of the more liberal ideas of politics and government to be found there.

However, Jamaica was not isolated from world events. Some of the many Jamaicans who went to fight in World War I returned ready to support self-rule for Jamaica. It is worth noting that the ordinary Jamaicans were more interested in better working conditions and wages whilst the intellectuals, some of whom had experience in Britain and North America and had been exposed to new political thinking returned home with a zeal for the struggle for self government.

The period between the wars was marked by two developments. One was the worldwide effect of the depression in the capitalist system, which followed the First World War. It led to a severe decline in the Jamaican economy and the subsequent hardships for the mass of the people affected the political struggle. The other was greater self-awareness at various levels influencing artistic

expressions in music, art and drama, which drew inspiration from the West Indian people, their dreams and aspirations.

Political

Between Emancipation and Universal Adult Suffrage in Jamaica there lies a little more than a century. Within that century, the people rose up and spoke out twice. Many of them suffered, and many died in the first uprising, but their sacrifice brought about great political change.

The first uprising was the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, led by Paul Bogle, when men made desperate by the harsh conditions of their lives and their lack of any representation took up arms to compel those in power to hear them. At the same time, George William Gordon, a member of the mulatto middle class, had used his seat in the House of Assembly to denounce the conditions. Both Bogle and Gordon paid the supreme sacrifice for demanding justice and freedom. But their sacrifice was not entirely in vain. The old, ineffective Assembly was swept away and replaced by Crown Colony Rule which, although it gave the people even less say than before, was marked by reforms introduced by successive governors. These affected many areas, including education, and impacted on the society at large by laying an administrative foundation for later representative government.

The second uprising came in 1938 at a time of general unrest and in the early days of trade unions. Several sugar workers at Frome died in the riot, which followed the strike. But this was a turning point in Jamaica's political development. Out of this emerged Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante, who would lead Jamaica first into Universal Adult Suffrage and later into full Independence. This indeed marked a turning point in the nature of the relationships between the three classes, workers, middle class

and elite, where the middle class were to form the bulk of the people in government and also act as a buffer between the interests of the working class and the peasants on one side and the elite on the other who still controlled power but had little social contact with or regard for the lower classes.

A black Jamaican leader had also emerged before 1938. Marcus Mosiah Garvey, whose writings, advocacy, organizational skills and vision to free black people worldwide from mental slavery initiated one of the most important movements to liberate black people. Although the enormous effect of his organization on the black communities in North America has received the greatest attention, he and his Universal Negro Improvement Association had an effective influence on Jamaica's drive towards political freedom.

Moral

The profound effect of the Nonconformist missionaries on the society through their now fully established churches was probably most marked at this time. The churches played a major role in the provision of education for the children of the newly emerging society, thus contributing greatly to the formation of values. As a direct result, family within or without marriage was an important social institution. Crime and violence were minimal and, despite the class barriers to upward mobility in the society, peace and relative tranquillity were the order of the day. However, below the surface the ever-present struggle for self-identity and racial pride was simmering and would manifest itself in due course.

Independence (1944-1962)

The brief fourteen-year period between the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage and Jamaican Independence saw many important

changes in the society and consolidated other which had already begun to be apparent.

There was a growing self-awareness among the majority of the population and many were looking forward eagerly for the day when Jamaicans would be responsible for their own destiny.

Social

These years were also marked by relative peace and quiet during which the peasant and working classes concentrated on providing education for their children in an effort to make them 'better off than their parents'. The strengthening of the family unit, which had begun in earlier periods and was now becoming more apparent, contributed greatly to the socialization process. The internal dynamics of this profoundly important institution also led to the consolidation of what has been called a matriarchal society, the origins of which can be traced to, at least the temporary worker migrations which had begun at the end of the previous century. Whatever the causes of this social phenomenon, its implications were to become of great significance in due course.

The influence of the churches on the lives of the people was also very great. They encouraged their congregations, for the most part still very poor, to accept their lot in life, and thus the incidence of crime and violence remained relatively low.

However, it was during this period that the Rastafarian Movement began to attract national attention. It was the most militant political voice advocating black ethnic nationalism and black liberation. The Movement eventually was to have a profound and lasting effect on the development of our culture, especially the music of Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff and others who made Jamaica Reggae music and its message famous throughout the world. At this time

also our sportsmen and women began to be recognized internationally. Among the first were Wint, Laing, Rhoden and McKenley at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki and George Headley in cricket.

The issues of race, class, economic power and social mobility have been fully explored by outstanding scholars, including Carl Stone and Derek Gordon in their contribution to *Garvey: His Work and His Impact*. They record that blacks made some advances up the social ladder and so did the East Indians but by far the most important gains were made by the growing new urban capitalist class dominated by Whites, Lebanese and Jews and, to a lesser extent, by Browns and Chinese. Perhaps this was among the reasons for one of the most significant social developments of this period, the resurgence of migration, but this time with a difference: in these post-war migrations, it often happened that whole families left Jamaica in search of a better life. The trek to Britain, which began in the late forties, reached a climax in 1961 when four out of every hundred Jamaicans left for that country. Suffice it to say that at this period we had still not gone very far in establishing the foundation for our national motto.

Political

Not surprisingly, this period was marked by growing national activity as the nation prepared for the inevitable granting of independence. The two-party system was enshrined in the Constitution. Even before Adult Suffrage, the strong links between politics and organized labour had been established and were now becoming entrenched. The structure of the society meant that, at this time, control of the political culture would be in the hands of the men of the middle class, a development which is still with us.

In addition, the expanded role of the State with limited resources to satisfy the demands of the mass of the people who formed the base for political parties, promoted a syndrome of dependency. The situation was compounded by the emergence of strong, charismatic leadership, which encouraged intense loyalties and led to political clientism, the forerunner of the tribal politics, which were to play such a devastating role in the seventies and eighties. Despite the negatives, however, there can be no doubt that self-government played a significant part in the improvement of living conditions of the mass of the people and allowed for some social mobility.

Economic

Perhaps the most important economic development for Jamaica at this time was the discovery of bauxite and the subsequent establishment of the bauxite industry. This, together with the increase in tourism and the growth of the manufacturing sector, meant that at this time Jamaica had one of the fastest growing economies in the Third World. It is important to note that the model of 'Industrialization by Invitation' followed the pattern of the Puerto Rican 'Operation Bootstrap' which facilitated increasing profits for the investors and the elite but little advantage for the mass of the people.

Moral

The values of the Christian Church continued to be dominant, but the new ideology of Rastafari and the concept of Haile Selassie as a black God began to appeal to the large mass of still marginalized blacks who were rebelling against European symbols and looking to Africa to provide them with the self-confidence and self-worth that they so desperately needed. At the same time, the expanded role of the State in the welfare of the people began to erode the

still-important influence of the church and its ability to instill its values in its members.

Post-Independence (1962-1995)

Jamaica's recent history is filled with many interesting features but the treatment of it here will be brief and dedicated to the further understanding of processes which began in earlier years and have continued to the present day.

Political

Unfortunately, during the last thirty years and more, the activities in this sphere have dominated our lives. It is true that we have seen many positive developments as a result of political and government activity, including the expansion of the infrastructure - housing, roads, telephone, water, electricity - provision of increased educational opportunities and health facilities. Many outstanding individuals made their mark on the society and provided role models for the young and the ambitious. However, the negative effects have resulted in the devastation from which we are yet struggling to recover.

The tribal politics that simmered in the sixties erupted into ideological warfare in the seventies and climaxed in a mini-civil war in 1980. Over eight hundred people died in that year. Where formerly some measure of peace had existed, terror reigned so that many skilled and frightened Jamaicans migrated and families were split by party loyalties. Communities, the media, even the church, were not left unscathed. The war continues, albeit on a lesser scale, and as I write bloodshed follows bloodshed in Western Kingston and Southern St. Andrew.

Gross inefficiency has led to waste. Irresponsible fiscal and monetary management of our economy has resulted in severe erosion of the national currency, an extremely high debt burden and the subjection of our economic management to international lenders whose conditionalities, including structural adjustment - opening up our market to international competition - led to a prolonged period of economic stagnation.

Add to this corruption and a strangulation of the democratic process with power concentrated in Jamaica House and Gordon House, leaving the rest of the country as bystanders except at election time.

Economic

There was some growth in the economy in the 1960s, followed by a degree of stagnation and even decline in the seventies with some sustained recovery in the eighties, which continued somewhat into the early nineties. What is even more alarming is the uneven distribution of wealth, a major problem which has brought into very sharp focus by U.N.D.P. reports that we have the unenviable record of having one of the worst records in the entire world for the gap between rich and poor. This situation, which continues to impact on relationships, is a result of migration, persistent poverty with alienation, cynicism, and loss of hope in the ability of the formal economy to provide the basic needs of life.

Social

Despite being dominated by the political culture and the economic system, societal growth during this period made progress in some important areas. For example, there was some psychological and material gain for the black underclass, beginning with the onset of the black movement in the mid-sixties and continuing with the

ideology of self-reliance and self-pride in the seventies. The result was a significant increase in the self-esteem of some of the mass of our people. Concurrently, there was movement into the jobs and houses of the privileged middle class who, as we have previously observed, fled the country in large numbers in the seventies. It is my view, nevertheless, that the underlying philosophy of the eighties and, if we are not careful, of the nineties will reverse some of these gains.

What is most important, however, is the significant change in the psyche of our people, especially on the level of aggressiveness. This alarming change has resulted in a dramatic increase in physical and verbal abuse in the home, in the wider community, at the workplace, in the print and electronic media, with profound negative effects on relationships at levels. This phenomenon has occasioned a notable increase in crime-related and domestic murders, rapes and child abuse, acid burns, deaths on the highways, all affecting the stability of our society.

Moral

The moral standards of Jamaica in the post-Independence years have been marked by a change in the reference points for wrong and right. Expediency has taken precedence over principle, vulgarity over good taste, promiscuity over fidelity, self-interest over the common good, and we now see the devastating effects of violence, and the pervasive influence of materialism and hedonism. All this has been aided and abetted by a change in the message of music, the cultural penetration from the North and the rise and fall of some of the tele-evangelists who, aided by the apathy of local churchmen, have assisted in undermining the role of the Church and its message as the reference point for the value system of our society. There is little doubt that the pervasiveness of the North American culture of materialism has, through television and

through its proximity and economic power, played a major role in the moral decline and confusion in our society. But is equally true that the continued gross inequalities in economic status, the inability of the Church to influence the status quo, the secular mindset of most of our leaders, have all contributed to the erosion of the Church as the point of reference defining values and attitudes.

Summary

What, then can we learn from the essential elements of the history of the formation of our society that will assist us to understand the fundamental changes we see in the current structure of the society. This is a critical question. The diagnosis defines the options for renewal. The treatment will be predicated on the answers, which will be listed here and briefly discussed.

When we consider the history of the problems of race, class, and the struggle for freedom, physical, economic and political, and for status, we can see that these issues have played a major role in the development of relationships from slavery until this very day. The essential change is that power, class and status have replaced power, race and control. But the lot of the mass of the people, almost one third of whom live below the poverty line, has not changed significantly. After Emancipation they were compelled to find their own employment, create their own culture and eke out an existence on the margins of society. In view of some highly respected historians, this marginalization was the result of a conspiracy between the ruling elite and the middle class, who have always aspired to claim equality with the elite, to manipulate the economic and political process so as to maintain the status quo. Today, there are many who believe that the mass of the ordinary people on the margins of society, forced to live in squalor and misery, who have again create their own employment, often illegal

and associated with violence, and who have created their own set of values and attitudes which are viewed as being anti-social, are victims of the same conspiracy.

When we look at religion, we can see that the noble principles of the Christian faith played a major role in the achievement of Emancipation contributed to the Post-Emancipation struggle for land, education, the development of our culture, and the shaping of the values of the society. These principles provided an infinite reference point. However, this fundamental feature of the socialization process has been, in large part, pushed aside by the advent of charismatic politicians and political tribalism. To these we can add the secular power wielded by the media, the shift in the message of the music and other art forms, and the focus on individual freedom devoid of any responsibility and thus any reference point. The result has been a profound decline in moral standards and confusion lamented by so many but understood by so few.

In the historical landscape, our political culture has been characterized by peaks and valleys. There is no gainsaying the pivotal role the political process has provided, in orchestrating the escape from political bondage to the colonial power, and in furthering a seminal leadership role in the international campaign in support of the liberation struggles in Africa and in promoting the agendas of Third World Countries. We can add to this the role political activity has played in expanding access to education, health care, housing, and the expansion of the infrastructure. This was accomplished by the personal sacrifice of men and women of the highest integrity and probity who have bequeathed to this nation exemplars of the highest quality. That is the zenith, the peak. Unfortunately, there is a corresponding nadir, the deep valley from which came tremendous violence to relationships in our country.

The valley of political tribalism and garrison-style politics allied to the drug trade and armed gangs has triggered a horrifying level of violence, originally in the highly urbanized areas of Kingston and St. Andrew and St. Catherine. But the violence has now spread throughout the length and breadth of the country; violence which has badly tarnished the local and international image of an island of beauty, peace and tranquillity.

Further economic mismanagement and corruption has transferred the shaping of our destiny from Kingston to Washington, D.C., home of the I.M.F. We have had inflicted upon us a prolonged period of structural adjustment which has resulted in a massive discrepancy between the wealth of the privileged and the poverty of the masses, thus aggravating an already bad situation and causing great social tensions.

What has been the role of women during these historical changes? Despite the high profile of our men in societal development, and deservedly so in some cases the quiet, often unheralded, role of our women has been of ever-growing significance. In the struggle for physical, economic and political freedom, it is they who have contributed to the development of our culture, shaping values, building the strength of the family unit and nurturing the young, the future of our country. They have predominated in church congregations, in the teaching profession, and their creativity ensured the survival of the mass of the people throughout their long history of subjugation, and especially in the seventies and eighties. Their dominance and outstanding performance now in secondary and tertiary education, has resulted in tremendous advances into the professions and other areas of national life hitherto dominated by men.

But now we see, in recent years, how this noble role has been eroded by abusive treatment by our men, physically and emotionally, and in the message of the dance hall culture. This

negative development has been aggravated by changing structures of society, consequent on migration patterns, and the need for economic survival. But there has also been a shift in women's understanding of self. Unfortunately, the new attitudes to long-term relationships, the increase in promiscuity and vulgarity, the change in patterns and understanding of parenting all impact negatively on desirable concepts of family and male-female relationships.

The everyday level of violence in our present society has no equivalent in our earlier history. Daily life in Jamaica was relatively peaceful up to the mid-1960s. The rapid rise in the level of violence and crime began in the late sixties and seventies and its continuation into the eighties and nineties is the greatest single threat to the viability of our society. Equally, it is the most complex problem that confronts our nation.

In an article in the Daily Gleaner of March 24, 1992, Carl Stone posited the following interconnecting factors of violence for consideration:

1. The change from a mixture of classes in communities to class exclusive neighbourhoods, resulting in the entrenchment of the differing suburban and ghetto lifestyles.
2. Destruction of the traditional family unit by massive migration.
3. Increased unemployment among males with secondary education.
4. Huge inflows of guns from the U.S.A.
5. Links between street gangs and politics.
6. Increasing inequality between rich and poor.

However, what has not yet been fully analysed is the significant increase in domestic violence, road traffic accidents and white-collar crime. Interestingly enough, the latter causes the loss of millions of dollars but it does not receive the same kind of media attention nor the lobby for change from the private sector that criminal violence attracts.

Finally, in this summing-up, we have to examine the influence of materialism in Jamaica today. The rise of self-interest in our society at the expense of the common interest is the direct result of the emphasis on material values and the gratification of base desires over the noble and the spiritual. This has been one of the most profound changes affecting the nature of relationships in our society in recent times. Its roots lie in the cultural penetration from the North, facilitated by certain sections of our local media, but it finds fertile soil in the tendencies of all human beings.

These, then are the issues that we need to keep in sharp focus as we enter the final and most important stage of this examination. What are the options for the renewal of our society? And here we need a reminder: there may be many more questions than answers since we will be dealing with an extremely complex and dynamic issue - life itself.

Options for Renewal

A time of ferment, a time of transition, a time of crisis. That was the portrait of our society, which I painted at the very outset of this lecture. This society requires fundamental changes in the nature of interpersonal relationships if it is to be viable and sustainable. We must try to establish relationships, which in the midst of inevitable change will be sustained by noble principles, and values, which are not subject to change. Critical relationships such as those between the majority of Jamaicans of African descent, the significant minority of mixed race and the equally important, but fewer, Chinese, Lebanese, Jews, Europeans and Indians; relationships between men and women, children and parents, the young and the old, teachers and students, uptown and downtown, the city of Kingston in the East and the city of Montego Bay in the West, PNP and JLP, those who govern and those who are governed, those who provide labour and those who control capital, the powerful and the powerless, those who are created and the Creator. These are the relationships, which have gone askew. Their reconciliation presents profound but not insurmountable challenges.

At the very beginning of this lecture, I presented a set of prerequisites, core ideals, to be used as reference points if we were going to strive not just for mediocre existence, but for excellence. The rationale, which informed that choice, was not arbitrary, but rooted in a principle and in lessons from history. The basic principle is that although change is inevitable, driven as it is by advances in technology, the perpetual quest for knowledge and adventure, new resources on the one hand, and greed, decadence and pride on the other, what determines whether or not a society successfully adapts to change and remains viable are the values which are unchanging. History teaches us that these values have served humankind well, greatly assisted the predominance of the noble and spiritual qualities of human beings over our basic instincts for survival and gratification of our desires. It is these

core values to which we now return in pursuit of the renewal of our society, the change in the nature of our relationships, and social reconstruction. The process requires a clear vision of what has gone wrong and requires change, and what never was that needs introduction.

The Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life

Two basic issues need to be examined here. First, what has caused the emergence of the many killers who, without any compunction or conscience, ruthlessly and regularly destroy the lives of strangers or friends, young or old, handicapped or able, even women, babes and sucklings? What has caused the increasing phenomenon of passion and rage at home, ending in the death of a mother at the hands of a father or of a child for bedwetting, or even children killing their parents?

Secondly, and of equal importance, has society given the same priority to the loss of life and provided sympathy to the family of the labourer who has been gunned down by criminals, as it gives to the prominent citizen who dies by the same gun? Have we placed the same level of priority on the possibility of death by disease consequent on the accumulation of rubbish or the exposure to human excrement on the lives of the people in Rema as against those living in Cherry Gardens? What about the daily indignity suffered by those who have to use our very poor excuse for a public transportation system, which affects the behaviour of our people so profoundly? These questions bring into sharp focus the essence of the viability of any society: How do we regard ourselves and how do we regard our neighbours?

Justice and Mercy

Many Jamaicans are, with very good reason, convinced that there is one kind of justice in this country for the rich and another for the

poor. Can we, with a clear conscience, claim that there is the same kind of justice for the ghetto youth caught with a spliff of weed or with a few grams of cocaine and for the sons of gentry who commit the same crime? Do we defend one class of people alleged to have committed murder with the same zeal; as others? Why are there only the poor, black, and fatherless on death row?

We need to understand justice in a wider sense than that defined by courts and lawyers and clients. We must understand the central issue of equity. Our past is littered with issues of race, class, gender and inequity. Take for example the quality and distribution of land. George Beckford in his book *Persistent Poverty* notes that 'farms of under five acres in size, constituting the bulk of the land of the peasantry, represent 71% of all farms in the country but together they occupy only 12% of the total farm acreage. On the other hand, plantations are less than 1% of all farms yet these occupy 56% of total farm acreage.' He further notes: 'When account is taken of the differences in quality of the land, the pattern is even more grossly unequal.'

Do we see equity in access to credit, mobility within the workplace, compensation for men and women, access to political power, relationships within the home, in the way we treat those in the rural areas compared to the city dwellers? What about those who have worked all their lives to build this country? How have we treated the pensioners, our parents who are old and infirm? Justice does not demand equal outcome but certainly equal access to opportunity. And without justice there can be no peace. The direct result of the pervasiveness of injustice in the land is our extreme tension and anxiety - certainly not a recipe for viability.

Freedom with Responsibility

One of the great ironies of history is the extent to which this very noble pursuit of human endeavour has been devalued by the lack

of appreciation or complete disregard of the equal and complementary qualities of responsibility and accountability. This lack is the great social problem of capitalism and the economic model of the free market. It is one of the major problems of our political culture. How many of our Ministers or even Prime Ministers have been compelled to resign for gross irresponsibility and negligence? Few would deny that lack of responsibility is the major source of great friction in male-female relationships, where so many of our men have made women pregnant and then abandoned mother and child, not uncommonly after physical and verbal abuse. This issue is relevant to the devastation of our forests by those who make a living by burning coal, to the pollution of our rivers and the Kingston Harbour by effluent from big business and by garbage thrown on the streets and into gullies and to the destruction of our coral reefs by sewage from many of our hotels. This kind of behaviour is a recipe for disharmony, certainly not for viability.

Love and Righteousness

The twin principles of love and righteousness have religious connotations, which will be dealt with in due course. But even in the secular understanding of right living we have faltered badly, what with corruption in high places, and the hypocrisy of many leaders in society whose words and behaviour by day are unrelated to their activities by night. The rise and acceptance of the dance hall and soca cultures, with the emphasis on vulgarity and crassly vulgar behaviour illustrates our failure. The growing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, teen-age pregnancies and abortions, are all tragic manifestations of a changing lifestyle greatly in need of renewal.

And what about love? Is there really any possibility for change in our inner cities if those who live in squalor and deprivation are not truly loved by those of us who live a more comfortable lifestyle

and who have within our power the means to assist them to make life better for themselves? What about the increasing incidence of child abuse? Can any society treat its children, and its future, with such contempt and still be viable? What about our neighbours? How many people living in Barbican and Norbrook even know their neighbours much less love them? One of the most moving sights in the rural areas and poor inner cities is that of women carefully and lovingly combing the hair of their neighbours and friends. As a society, this is probably the greatest loss that we have suffered in recent times: the lack of love for one another.

Hope for the Future

Finally, let us look at the last of our core ideals, the litmus test, which illustrates whether or not the majority of people are filled with hope for the future. There is no empirical data on which to base any authoritative comment on this point, but without doubt, the number of people who regularly demonstrate their desire to migrate permanently to North America tells a story. The extent to which many, especially young, Jamaicans are prepared to get involved in or have been driven to become involved in, illegal, often violent, economic activities, tells its own tale. The cynicism, the anger and the bitterness of the callers on the daily call-in programme cannot be easily dismissed. But neither can the story of many Jamaicans who are still pressing ahead with life, trying to make this country better for themselves and for their children, born and yet unborn, and who have absolutely no intention of living anywhere else.

If that, then, is a fair assessment of a complex issue, the next question that we have to face is: 'What tools are available to effect the desired change, to allow us to live above mediocrity and to build a viable society? Who will provide the hope for a young, frightened, frustrated, unemployed, undereducated youth in Rema, Jungle, Majesty Gardens, or Payne Avenue, with guns,

ammunition and cocaine, alienated from society and convinced, from experience, that he will be dead before he is twenty-five years old? From where will spring the hope for well-educated, materially rich but spiritually poor, young people in Beverly Hills, Russell Heights, or Norbrook who are having the best of times frequenting expensive nightclubs and hotels, but often experiencing the worst of times being bored and frightened, locked up in their grilled houses with security guards, expensive high-tech alarm systems and guns, and stockpiles of ammunition and cocaine.

How will we engineer the shift in the attitude away from violence as the natural reaction and solution to our problems? How can we change in the way our men regard and treat our women, and their acceptance of the role of father? How can we counter the new material culture that encourages love of things and personal pleasure over love for and appreciation of our fellow human beings?

We also need a reawakening to the vital role of women in shaping the minds of the children and hence the future of our country. Who will provide the leadership for a change in the political culture?

We must take comfort in the fact that human beings have within them the capacity to solve problems and to do so creatively. We must remember that human beings have the capacity to make choices. We must recognize within ourselves the deep yearning for freedom from all bondage. And we must remember that there is a tremendous reservoir of good, honest, decent, hard-working, committed Jamaicans who are willing and able, and have already begun the process of rebuilding this society from within, despite the formidable obstacles they face. Finally, and most importantly, nobody can. As Abraham Lincoln observed: 'look up on the majesty of the stars at night and remain unconvinced that there is a God'. We can take comfort, then, in the fact that this world and all

nations were created by an Almighty God and therefore we are never alone with our problems.

Lessons from our History

In addition to this we can turn to our history and find there the qualities, which we desperately need today as we try to remake our society. Among them are:

Sacrifice.

Which of us, if we fully understand the supreme sacrifice that Sam Sharpe, nanny, Paul Bogle and George William Gordon made on our behalf in pursuit of freedom, justice and equality, can remain indifferent to the problems that our generation faces? The question, then, is not is, but how, we should respond to the lives our National Heroes lived and what sacrifices are we now called upon to make for the survival of the next generation?

Endurance

The Maroons fought the British for fourteen years. Emancipation was gained only after two centuries of struggle. Over one hundred years were to elapse before the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage. Political Independence took place over one hundred and twenty years after physical independence. We need to prepare ourselves for a long struggle ahead and draw comfort from the endurance of our people in spite of the pervasive and understandable quick-fix culture.

Creativity

Out of the body of the mass of our people came the diversification of an economy based on sugar to peasant farming. Out of the mass of our people grew the banana industry. Out of the need for

survival came the early higglers, forerunners of those who helped us to survive in the difficult seventies, making possible increased social mobility and economic gains for the otherwise marginalized rural and urban poor. Out of the fusion of the cultures and the influence of the Rastafarian Movement came the world-famous Reggae music with its spiritual inspiration and more worldly opportunities to earn vital foreign exchange. We must have faith in the creativity of our people and provide them with more opportunities for its expression.

Excellence

We have a proud history of Jamaicans who have excelled in sports, music, dance, and poetry. Who can forget that Winston Churchill, at an extreme crisis in World War Two, inspired his people with the works of a Jamaican poet, Claude McKay, when he quoted from the poem 'If we must die, let us not die like hogs....' What effect does the knowledge have on us that many African struggles for freedom were inspired by the philosophy of Marcus Mosiah Garvey and the music of Robert Nesta Marley?

The seminal contribution of the teachers and pastors, the church, in the early development of our nation must motivate us to the tremendous possibilities of leadership with vision, probity, commitment and perseverance. Where there is no vision the people perish.

What then is the vision, the ideology, and the guiding principle, which will inform us in our collective pursuit of renewal and viability? Again, I restate the original thesis that the point of departure for the sustained development of any society must be the nature of our relationships, which are threefold:

1. Each one of us has to understand himself or herself and

thus be able to relate to another person in a principled manner.

2. Each person has to understand the environment, which sustains us, and strive to live in harmony with it.
3. Most importantly, each individual, if honest and not filled with arrogance, should appreciate that we are all children of our Creator and thus we need to develop a relationship with that Higher Power.

So, fully armed with the knowledge of the problems impacting on our core values, inspired by the history of our forebears and possessing a clear insight of where we need to focus our energies and collective wisdom, what are the options available for this great work of renewal?

The Process Must Begin and End in the Minds of Our People

The minds of those who are lacking in self-worth and self-esteem as a result of the historical process, their status in the society and the dehumanizing conditions in which they live must be transformed. Until this happens, they will be captives of doubt, and hopelessness, unable to fulfill their true potential and unleash their creative energies for the benefit of themselves and their country.

The minds of those who are held captive by the philosophy of materialism must be transformed. They see their salvation in the elevation of their status, more money, increasing possessions and power over others, the ability to indulge in whatever their appetites demand. Falling prey to selfishness, they use their talents only for the advancement of self rather than for the good of the country. This group of individuals would do well to heed Plato's comment

that a community that exists only to gratify its appetite is no state at all but only a slightly exalted pigsty.

The minds of those who are held captive by the culture that elevates the importance of foreign imports, ideas and wisdom over the local products must be transformed and so must their preoccupation with securing money abroad, with sending children to school overseas, with foreign goods, culture, experts and financing to solve our problems and satisfy our needs. They are completely unaware that Jamaica has, within itself, the capacity and resources to satisfy most of our needs and to solve our problems. This mindset is a manifestation of the information and travel revolution which makes us part of the wider global village but presents serious challenges to regional viability and renewal.

The minds of those who believe that they have a God-given right to rule, because they have the power of class, gender or money to support them, must be transformed. Intolerant of advice or difference of opinion, they ignore the profound changes taking place in a society, which is unprepared to suffer any longer dictatorial, and authoritarian leadership.

The Process Must Be Led By Education

Education which will encourage the most noble aspirations of human endeavour must be pursued. Education of our population, then, must transcend the pragmatic need to produce a more highly trained, literate and numerate population to meet the demands of the technological age, or to make us into another Singapore. It must seek to do more than provide a vehicle for social mobility and therefore assist in reversing historical trends. It must aim for an even higher target than allowing people to make informed choices. Education must, instead, ultimately seek to produce good men and women who understand themselves and their role in the

community, and therefore are better able to relate to a neighbour, to the environment and to God.

Such a purpose demands fundamental changes in the approach to education. The kind of mental slavery to which we have been subjected is not readily appreciated. Further it has inured to the benefit of powerful interest groups and has been aggravated by the extremely potent forces of the media. The most powerful of these is television and the most far-reaching is the music, which, paradoxically, is the result of the natural quest for freedom. Unhappily, this quest is often unaccompanied by any sense of responsibility. History will surely record the profound irony of a country whose people were, for the most part, born in slavery of one kind and who, after centuries of struggle to escape its effects, have found themselves the victims of slavery of another kind.

The change has to take place at two levels. One is the process and the messages, which are sent out to our people. The other is the sustained mobilization of leaders to be involved in the process at all levels of society. Both must work in tandem because there is a naive view that when people are better informed behavioural improvements will follow automatically. Nothing can be further from the truth. My own experience as a family physician of many years' standing is that people respond best when there is trust, mutual respect, appreciation of authority as opposed to authoritarianism and, most important of all, love and understanding.

In my view, one of the most powerful tools we have at hand to bring about change is the history of our people. A people who, because they are the most part of African descent in a Eurocentric world, need to understand and love themselves first if they are to successfully relate to and love others. A people who can then escape the fetters of parochialism and appreciate the best of the culture of others, the classical music of the Germans, the great

Russian poets, the philosophy of the Greeks, the classics of English literature, as Marcus Garvey did, and so build a truly educated society.

A second, a complementary process which must move in tandem with the teaching of history, is the inculcation of a value system and promotion of attributes which encourage discipline, tolerance, patience, adherence to the rule of just laws and basic common decency, all of which should be acceptable to the entire society.

So let us commence by teaching the true history of the nobility of our African heritage, of kings and queens, of scholars, of achievers, and touch the minds of the youth in the ghetto who has no self-esteem, no hope of achieving better in life, and so cannot resist the temptation to use the gun, to use cocaine, or the manipulation by the drug don or the unscrupulous politician. Step by step, he is led into a life of crime, which ends violently one cold and lonely night. And his mother cries and the nation slowly dies.

Let us teach the history of our heroes who sacrificed their lives for others to the successful uptown youth who has fallen prey to the dominant culture, measuring the value of life by the amount of money that has been accumulated, the possessions that have been acquired, the women who have been used and abused, and who ends up alcoholic, with a broken marriage, dying in a motor car accident one dark night.

Let us teach the history of the role and nobility of our women and the importance that religion played in our development and can today counteract the pervasive influence of sexual promiscuity in the media and in the music. Let us transform the minds of our teenagers with the message that the sexual urge can be controlled until they are sufficiently mature. The minds of many of our women must be transformed so that they become aware that sexual union with a man ought to be engaged in with more than a base

desire for pleasure but for companionship and a long-lasting relationship. Equally, the minds of our men must be transformed so that they realize that having sex with as many women as possible is not the sole criterion for manhood and esteem among their peers. Nor can abandoning the many children they have fathered lead to a viable society.

Let us teach the history of the strong families, especially in the rural areas, which have helped to build this country through hard work, a love for the land, and a singular quest for education. They changed the work ethic, and demonstrated the desire for excellence, the care for our environment, the beneficial relationships between adult and child, the young and the old, the rural and the urban dweller.

Let us teach the history of the benevolence of many of our entrepreneurs who provided great assistance to their employees and families and thus transformed the relationships between rich and poor, employer and employee, the powerless and the powerful.

And let us teach the history of the tremendous achievements of Jamaicans in the international scene, not just politicians, sportsmen and women or musicians but intellectuals, civil servants, performing artists, poets, and exporters with internationally acclaimed products and therefore transform our minds by fostering a sense of national pride and belief in self. We do not need to wait for approbation from the world beyond our shores.

Admittedly, these are very difficult challenges for a modern, complex society. But the message is clear. Unless we find a way to change the mindset of our people, we are not going to achieve the truly integrated society that viability demands and the national motto declares. Unless we achieve that goal, we will never release the creative energies of a people free from mental slavery pregnant with an unimaginable host of possibilities.

The second issue is how can this be done and who will lead the way? It is long past the time for us to understand fully that education, in its widest sense, cannot be the preserve of the education system alone. Admittedly, within this paradigm, fundamental changes will be required at the teachers' colleges and at the University of the West Indies where for far too long teaching of the humanities has been absent. For this change to be successful, all players in the society whose daily work impacts on people's lives will have to be involved. No longer will doctors practice medicine without due recognition of their powerful potential to affect the mindset of their patients. Equally, musicians must be aware of the enormous influence they can have on people's minds, and especially the minds of the young; nurses and the social workers who see great numbers of people regularly must realize how much they can affect the minds of those people. We must also include the businessmen and the trade union leaders who together can make a significant difference on the large numbers of employed. The programme directors and editors of the media houses, the conscious radio talk-show hosts and others who enjoy tremendous power over the public must accept their equally great responsibility to supplement the efforts of the traditional custodians of values - the parents, teachers and pastors. Many will no doubt ask: Who has the moral authority, the expertise and the time to carry out this task? And also: To what end, if other fundamentals in the society remain unchanged? These questions lead us to the next issue.

The Process must be Manifest in a Different Kind of Management of Our Politics and Economy

The first possibility is a new political order. Again, the most noble ideals must be kept in sight. Not just the judicious use of power; not just the provision of scarce benefits; not just the proper

management of the economy and the provision of social services, but rather the protection of the weak from the strong, and the practice of the art of the possible. Those should be the ideals of good government.

We need politics managed by people of the highest probity and humility, with the best technical skills, who can lead by example and change the relationship between those who govern and those are governed. The first order of priority is the charting of a developmental path that will create a level playing field, allowing those who have been living on the margins of society ever since Emancipation access to employment, credit, land and training. So they will be able to improve their standard of living and thus relieve many of the social tensions consequent on the present great divide between rich and poor.

Next, the critical issue of real democracy should address not just the morally bankrupt and uneconomically untenable political culture but also the decentralization of political power away from the corridors of Jamaica House and Gordon House to the central towns and villages of the parishes. We also need to develop a culture, which accepts differences in ideology, transitions, and defeats without recourse to violence. Citizens associations in various parishes, properly constituted and with a clear mandate, should be required to meet regularly with an elected governor of a parish or with elected representatives and plan for the development of the parish along the lines already well defined in the Stone Commission Report. What this country needs to do now is to encourage and mobilize our people living in North America, Europe and other West Indian Islands who have, perhaps, a stronger sense of commitment to parish - my own piece of ground - than to country, to take part in the economic and social resuscitation of each parish consequent on the devolution of power.

True democracy in the twenty-first century is going to require greater participation in government by the now very powerful and well-organized non-government organizations. True and efficient democracy calls for, in my view, a radical change in the political system where anybody can be elected President and who can then select the best available talent which, in partnership with local talent, can lead this country into prosperity.

The protection of the weak from the strong calls for an equal focus on the social imperatives of health care, education, transport and social services rather than the misguided notion of taking care of business in the economic sphere and then playing catch up later on.

The fundamental change, which must take place if we are to achieve viability, begins and ends with the age-old question of self-interest as against collective interest. This problem is deeply rooted in our historical development. One manifestation is the fact that the economic growth, which took place in the fifties and sixties, did not significantly affect the lives of the mass of the people. Self-interest prevailed and a few of the powerful elite grew very rich whilst the poor remained marginalized. The same situation is part of present-day reality, and contributes greatly to social tensions. Progress in this relationship must manifest itself in a move to correct this inequitable situation.

What is the fundamental problem and how can it be solved? It is the view of one of our leading economists, Dennis Morrison, that we have deviated from the basic equation between savings, investment and production which is essential for the creation of wealth. We have done so by consuming above our ability to produce by living off savings of others. This view that finds tangible expression in the fact that the ratio of imports (just over two billion dollars) to gross domestic product (just over three billion dollars) is in the region of sixty per cent. He further argues that in order to break this cycle we need to increase our savings

from present levels of production. The savings could then be used to increase levels of investment leading to increased production, exports, jobs and an improvement in the standard of living for the entire society.

But this approach would call for a fundamental change in the mindset of those who now control resources in this country in pursuit of collective interest rather than the entrepreneur motivated by mere self-interest and freedom to do what he wishes to do with 'my own money'. It is important for him to understand that the social conditions and economic status of his neighbour are as important as his own, simply because 'No man is an island, no man lives alone.'

A very germane consideration in this discussion of fundamental change in the approach to economic activity within the context of a new paradigm for relationships is that of the social responsibility of those who have accumulated large profits. The history of the business class in the U.S.A. is replete with examples such as Rockefeller, Carnage and many others, who used their enormous wealth to create foundations for improved education, research, hospitals, museums, libraries and art galleries. Can those who are privileged to be exposed to the vision of a Carlton Alexander lead the way with an expanded mandate for similar foundations suitable for our society? We need new vision of involvement in providing more opportunities for education, a new vision for and a challenge to retain profits in Jamaica for re-investment in production rather than in shuffling paper around, or for consumption. Can we really any longer afford the mentality of a rich young man who builds a house for thirty-one million dollars? We need a new ethic and culture in the way of doing business, one that will lead to justice and equity and sense of hope.

In this aspect of our lives, we can hardly ignore the trends in the international market place and the consequences for small states

such as ours. There is a current notion abroad romanticizing about the possibility of major players in the international equities market entering and boosting our own stock market. We would do well to learn from the Mexican example that the international trade in money is big business, unaccountable to anyone and irresponsible, except in its inexorable quest for ever-greater profit.

Finally, the Process Can Only Be Sustained by an Understanding of the Importance of Religion in National and Personal Development.

The history of humankind, as we have seen, has always focused on religion as human beings sought to find answers to the fundamental questions of who created us and what life is all about. This search continues even today among leaders and the ordinary citizens. Within the context of this discussion, perhaps the most salient point to make at this juncture is that from Plato, used earlier in the discussion: 'A finite point has no meaning unless it has an infinite reference point.' Religion provides this infinite reference point in our society as it direct us to the dominant religion which has played such an important role in our history and in the development of personal relationships, the Christian Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal God to whom we pray every time we sing the National Anthem or recite the National Pledge.

This is the national and personal choice that we all have to make. What, in fact, is our infinite reference point that will bring about the sustained change in the nature of our relationships? In politics and economics, will we depend on the wisdom of our founding fathers, Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante? Or will we choose the internationally acclaimed Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Hobbes, Plato or Socrates? In our search for social equality and pride, are the words of Bob Marley and Marcus Garvey to

provide us with the ultimate reference point? Is our moral foundation going to rest on the wise words of the moral philosophers or our local outstanding churchmen and women? Are any of these blessed with everlasting life, supernatural wisdom, the power to create life, and so that they can constitute an infinite reference point?

The answer stares us clearly in the face. For the sanctity and dignity of life, the importance of justice, the concepts of freedom, love and righteousness to have an ultimate meaning, we must be true to our National Anthem and place our trust and hope in the Eternal God and his Son Jesus Christ who, like many of our heroes, sacrificed his life for us but who, unlike any other creature on earth, was resurrected and now lives to intercede on behalf of those who trust him and obey his commands. Then, and only then, will we begin to understand ourselves, love our neighbours and, under God, make this country truly 'Out of many, one people', and one then can 'advance the welfare of the whole human race'. In short, a country, which, under God, will be a shining example to the world of a viable and sustainable society.

Bibliography

Beckford, G. - *Persistent Poverty*. Oxford University Press, 1972

Beckford, G. and M. Witter - *Small Garden Bitter Weed*. ISER, 1980

Harmon, M. J. - *Political Thought from Plato to the Present*. McGraw Hill, 1962

Kennedy, P. - *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*. Vintage Books, 1993.

Lewis, R. and P. Bryan (eds.) - *Garvey: His Life and Impact*. ISER, 1988

Miller, E. - *The Jamaican Society and High Schooling*. ISER, 1990

Panton, D. - *Jamaica's Michael Manley: The Great Transformation*. Kingston Publishers, 1993.

Patterson, O. - Freedom Vol. I. *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*. I.B. Tauris Co., 1991

Sherlock, P.M. - *The West Indian Nation. A New History*. Macmillan, Jamaica, 1973.

Stone, C. - *The Carl Stone Columns: The Last Year's Work. January 1002 - February 1993*. Sangster's Book Stores Ltd., 1994

Class, State and Democracy. Blackett, 1985

Class, race and Political Behaviour in Urban Jamaica. ISER, 1973. Scott, 1984.

Swindoll, C. - *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity: A Commitment to Excellence*. Insight for Living, 1987

The Report of the Stone Committee appointed to advise the Bustamante Institute, 1991.