



THE BAPTIST EDUCATOR

A publication by the Education Committee of the Jamaica Baptist Union
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VOLUME 3

GREETINGS!

Elaine Allen EdD Chair JBU Education Committee



As stakeholders in Education, we anticipated that given the experiences of 2020, when the Coronavirus was discovered in Jamaica, the year 2022 would present with fewer challenges; instead, these intensified with the discovery of the Delta variant; which contributed to the high rate of infection and hospitalisation of individuals, resulting in a shortage of hospital beds and an oxygen crisis.

As the year progressed, restrictions such as periodic lockdowns, and curfews, were imposed to cauterise this highly transmissible disease. These affected businesses and other entities, resulting in loss of earnings, mental instability, and a cessation of established norms. The words of the song "We have come this far by faith leaning on the Lord... He never fails us yet" resonated with most persons. To be alive and able to 'navigate the waters' of the COVID 19 pandemic is a testament to God's unfailing love. One area that this pandemic has negatively impacted is the education of our children, as all stakeholders struggled to devise ways to deliver the curricula using online learning platforms and the blended approach strategy.

CHALLENGES

As the new school term approached and the return to in-person classes seemed inevitable, teachers and students began preparing for this new phase with great trepidation. Many of the previous year's challenges resurfaced. Access to learning platforms, the disinterest of students and parents, internet connectivity, insufficient devices, data availability to drive these devices, and the tardiness of some teachers, are among the multiplicity of challenges which plagued the system. The perturbing admission of the Minister of Education that 120,000 students did not access classes- online or in-person has exacerbated the difficulties. A recent study survey captured the response of some parents who felt their children would never be able to fully recover from the adverse effect of the pandemic. This has direct implication for the uptake of jobs in the future.

Despite concerns about the learning loss, the PEP examinations proceeded as planned, with slight adjustment in format. At the Secondary level, much dialogue was generated around the scheduling of examination. As a result, some students, given the choice, opted to accept the offer of deferral without penalty.

INTERVENTION

It must be noted, however, that effort has been made to put interventions in place to address deficiencies in student learning; one such was the Ministry of Education's "Recover Smarter Program", through which teachers were able to engage students in an intense programme aimed at cauterising learning loss. This government initiative failed to adequately address the problem.

In Banner: Mount Hermon Primary – Students at Play!

The future of our nation is not secure if its children are uneducated. In light of this fact, members of the Jamaica Baptist Union's Education Committee spearheaded a virtual tutorial programme between May–June 2021 to aid the preparation of students for National and International examinations.

Greetings cont'd on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- Activities in Baptist Schools
- Baptist High Achievers
- Baptist Awareness Week
- Youth Conference and Rally
- Strategies to Maximize Learning
- Skibo Primary's Perspective on COVID 19
- The Unstoppable Monster
- Virtual Tutorial
- Our Legacy

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ACTIVITIES IN BAPTIST SCHOOLS

Despite the many challenges, our schools are working assiduously to engage almost all students. Ingenious ways have been employed to inspire students to unleash the great potential within them. Teachers have long sought to inspire students as they, perchance like the Sapphire International School were convinced that inspiration is truly the "elixir of life". The mix modality strategy being practiced by schools has intensified the need to inspire students; some of whom are challenged in accessing online classes due to, lack of computer devices, insufficient data and internet connectivity.

Included in this edition of the Baptist Educator is a pinhole view of schools and students engaged in learning activities in spite of the pandemic.

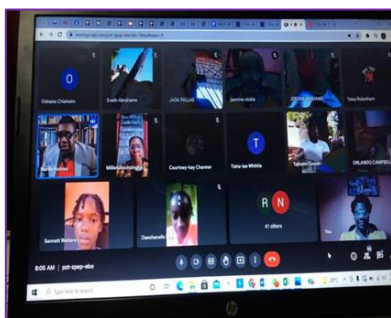
KITSON TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

This depicts photographs of school activities, one of which is a "Child Find" initiative, aimed at bringing non-attending students in its environs into the physical and virtual learning spaces.

Child find



Other activities



Greetings cont'd from page 1

GOOD NEWS



For the past two years much, light has been shed on the valuable work being done in our schools through the publication of our newsletter -the "Baptist Educator. We depend on your input to continue the exposure. We have included in this edition stories about the exploits of students, their dreams and aspirations, and how they managed to excel despite personal challenges. We invite you to take a look at the variety of photographs depicting activities in some of our schools. As you comply, don't forget to read about the virtual tutorial held in 2021!! This edition also exposes you to creative and fun-filled pathways to mastering tasks. We also want to celebrate your successes and help you find, follow and employ new strategies in fulfilling your academic goal. Please send us pictorial evidence of your activity. Tell us about major and or impactful events in the life of your school. Please, explore the pages of this and subsequent newsletters and as you do, we ask that you adopt the many tricks and tips contained within, for successful engagement throughout your school life.

Follow this link <https://youtu.be/EeZoQoyPn6I> and enjoy the very electrifying song "Fix My Eyes on You."

ADVICE

We are still in the throes of the COVID 19 pandemic, so make every effort to (a) wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol, (b) wear a close-fitting mask, which covers your nose and mouth, (c) maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from the nearest person, (d) avoid crowded places, and (e) stay home if you feel unwell.

Now, **GO AHEAD!! READ!! HAVE FUN!! EDUCATE YOURSELF!! WAIT ON GOD'S TIMING!** "For it is God which works in you in order to fulfil His good purpose" Philippians 2: 13.

SPRINGVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Springvale Primary School is elated that a "Cluster" Guidance Counsellor has been added to its establishment by the Ministry of education and Information effective this academic year. Students are better able to access this service since they are now attending in-person class.



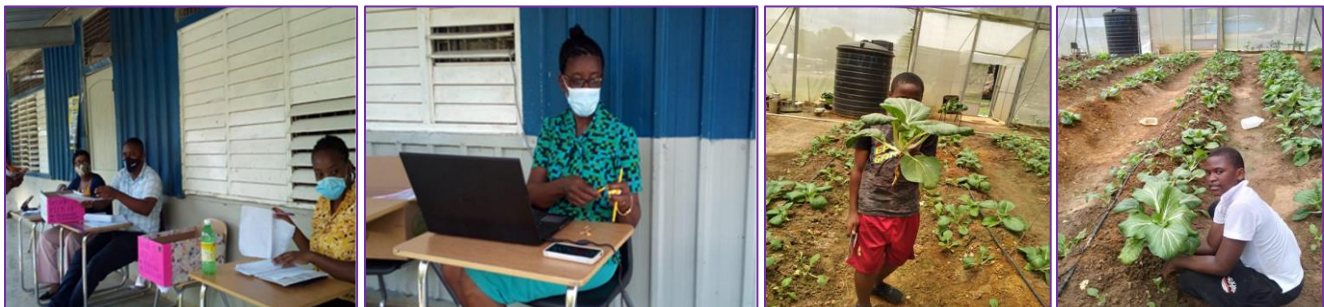
SLIGOVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Sligoville Primary School shared activities such as Carol service and in-person school leaving exercise with the community. A tree-planting ceremony was also conducted.



LUCKY VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Lucky Valley School designated Fridays for the collection and marking of scripts as well as for the distribution of assignments for the ensuing week. They also constructed a greenhouse, planted vegetables and obtained a good yield.



POINT HILL LEASED PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Point Hill Leased School employed creative ways such as a Mathematics Symposium to help students in one of the Grade 2 classes to learn mathematical concepts.



MOUNT HERMON PRIMARY AND INFANT SCHOOL

At the Mt. Hermon Primary and Infant, students adhere to the school's code of conduct for lunchtime activities. The school is working diligently to bridge the learning gap caused by the cessation of learning activities due to the pandemic.



BAPTIST HIGH ACHIEVERS!

"Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment." *Oprah Winfrey, media mogul.*

This statement seems to reflect the collective opinion of these our achievers. Their learning like that of all students in Jamaica was disrupted by the presence of the COVID 19 pandemic; however, they adapted to the new learning modality, worked hard and applied themselves to the learning tasks. Their dedication resulted in the successes we celebrate in this newsletter. Let's now look at the road to success taken by Jordon, Anthony, Ashanti and Asani

JORDON WILLIAMS

My name is Jordon Williams, born in the cool parish of Manchester, Mandeville. However, I grew up in St. Catherine with my parents and grandparents. I attend the Phillippo Baptist Church and at the age of 12, I made the decision to give my life to the Lord. I participate in programs for the youths which include singing in the children's choir, attend Sunday school where I participate in the Sunday school quiz competition and examinations. I received a number of awards for taking part in the various Sunday school events. I love to be in the company of adults because of the lessons I have learnt from listening to their experiences.



My early experience of schooling started at the Eltham Early childhood Development Centre and then the Angels Primary where at the end of my schooling I was awarded a place at Calabar High School. I am currently a Grade 13 student where I am now doing 4 cape subjects namely: Physics, Caribbean Studies, Pure Math and Digital Media. In the co-curricular activities, I served as Vice President of the Student Council 2020-2021, and I am now **Head Boy 2021-2022**. I am the 2nd Vice President of Key Club, a service club that promotes caring as a way of life. I am the Vice President of the Tourism Action Club which is used to sensitize Jamaicans on the value of tourism to Jamaica and teach us that we all play a role in making Jamaica the premier Caribbean Tourist Destination. I am a member of the Young Innovators Club which teaches students how to manage their money, I am also a member of the school's sporting program where I am also exposed to the playing of Rugby and Basketball. In my leisure time, I enjoy surfing the Internet, backyard gardening, cooking and engaging in discussions with my friends on topical issues. In the future, I would like to be an Electrical Engineer.

My favourite quote is 'A winner is a dreamer who never gives up'- Nelson Mandela. Whatever your dreams are once you believe in God, he will pave the way for them to come through.

ASHANTI ARMSTRONG



Head Girl at Spring Vale Primary School near Bog Walk in St. Catherine, Ashanti Armstrong, has been awarded a place at The Queens School – her first choice of secondary educational institution.

She earned her heart's desire despite facing several odds, including the death of her father, Almanzo Armstrong, a construction worker who fell from a high building and died in Manchester in 2019.

Ashanti is heading to Queens with a placement score of 116.1 in the Primary Exit Profile (PEP).

Although her performance in Language Arts was less than desired, the aspiring accountant earned the highest level of success (highly proficient) in Mathematics.

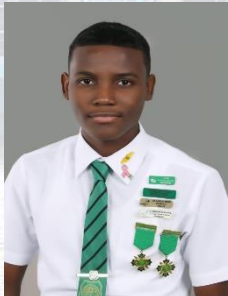
"I am proud of myself," Ashanti declared.

Her feeling is shared by relatives, including her mother Janice Welch as well as her guardian and maternal grandmother Audrey Henry.

Her mother told **The Beacon**: "I am overjoyed seeing Ashanti's grades and her performance in PEP... Being a single mom for her in the past two years has been rough. Losing her dad in March of 2019 did not stop my child from putting out her best in her school through my difficult times being a single parent for three."

Ashanti has not only been a standout in academics at Spring Vale Primary, as according to her Principal, Mrs. Samantha Braham, "Ashanti was the Head Girl even in the virtual space. She was very disciplined and dedicated, and she applied herself well to any task given. She could not move past a problem until it was solved, and she has the full understanding even if it meant [using up] her break periods. She, along with the entire Grade Six cohort at Spring Vale Primary, has done well and has made us extremely proud."

In the meantime, her Grade Six teacher, Jeffery Pindling, described Ashanti as a quiet, talented, steady performer who is always focused on the task at hand. She loves a good joke and has a healthy laughter but rarely shows emotion. She has an investigative mind and relishes the opportunity to discover new knowledge," In summary, Pindling said. "Ashanti is a gem of a student who is destined for greatness despite the odds. I look forward to seeing her succeed."

ANTHONY PARKER

I am Anthony Parker – **Deputy Head Boy**- Calabar High School 2021-2022. I was diagnosed with Acute lymphatic leukaemia on April 26, 2018, which caused me to miss three terms of schooling. I returned to school in January 2019 in time to begin my CSEC preparation. This phase of treatment lasted for three years during which time I successfully completed eight (8) CSEC subjects and progressed to Sixth Form. There were times when I was not feeling well enough to attend school, but God was and is still in control. I completed treatment on September 28, 2021, and now only visit the doctor for a checkup.

ASANI PALMER

Asani Palmer is a 12-year-old student of the Mount Hermon Primary and Infant School in the parish of St. Catherine. She hails from the Riversdale district in the parish. She received high scores in the 2021 sitting of the Primary Exit Profile Examination (PEP) The Interview which follows gives a glimpse of her pathway to success.

Interviewer: How are you going to maintain excellence in high school?

Interviewer: What goal did you set yourself for the PEP exam, and how difficult was it to achieve?

Interviewee: To be placed at my “dream school- Ardenne High. It was difficult- so it did not come easily, as, like many students across the island of Jamaica, I experienced internet connectivity issues which affected my staying in online classes consistently. The internet challenges made me feel quite nervous as I prepared for the examinations, as I missed out on important content

Interviewer: Why were you nervous?

Interviewee: Sometimes I was unable to hear the teacher when she was teaching, and the fact that the phone I used to access classes was sometimes not ideal for the purpose.

Interviewer: How did you overcome the challenges?

Interviewee: I think positive and do activities to help me relax, such as reading and listening to music.

Interviewer: Are you excited about your success?

Interviewee: I am quite excited that I am placed at Ardenne High School. I attribute my success to hard work, perseverance, and the motivation received from my mother and teachers who encouraged me to work hard and do my best.

Interviewee: I promised myself that I will participate in school activities, study and work hard. My intention is to become an Accountant. I want to make my mother and grandmother proud. I will achieve this goal.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

BAPTIST AWARENESS WEEK (BAW)

For the past two years, this nation has been challenged by the COVID 19 pandemic which has impacted our lives negatively. Notwithstanding, schools have been able to participate in Baptist Awareness Week, though in limited ways. Each year's activity began with a sermon aired on the “Christ for Today” programme on RJR at 6.00 am on the relevant Sunday.

The week has been celebrated under the following themes between 2019 and 2021.

1. “Affirming Human Dignity: Respect for Life and Living” (2019)
2. “Reaffirming Identity: I Am Courageous & Strong- Our Baptist Heritage” (2020) Theme song, “You are my strength” Theme verse (Phil 4:19)
3. “Reaffirming Identity: Persevering to succeed... Rekindling our Baptist Heritage” (2021). Theme song “FIX MY EYES ON YOU”

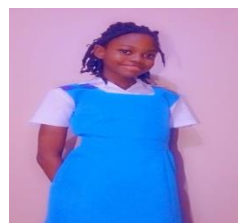
Theme Verse: Let Your Eyes Look Straight Ahead. Fix Your Gaze Directly Before You. (Proverbs 4:25 - NIV Bible)

You are invited to visit:

<http://drive.google.com/folderview?id=1nSKs082VLsBYjioV1sksTwOimUcTU2D> to listen to some students' views on the impact of the pandemic on school life, and also use this link <https://youtu.be/EeZoQoyPn6I> to share in one of the theme songs “Fix My Eyes on You”

YOUTH RALLY & CONFERENCE

The Virtual Youth Conference and Rally held on November 25, 2021, attracted participants across the Island. Among the many participants, was Makaylia Lindo, a student at the William Knibb Memorial High school in Trelawny, whose prayer marked the opening of the conference. She also gave a testimony of how God has been working through her life.



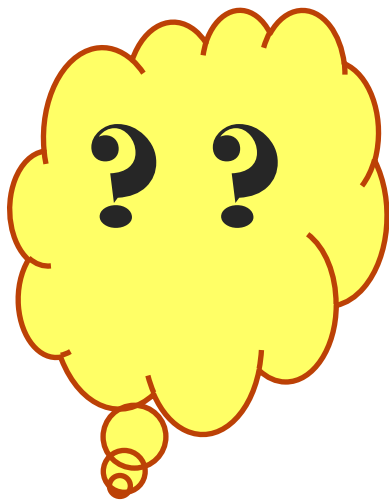
STOP, THINK, LEARN!

16 Hidden Bible Books

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a fluke). It kept people looking so hard for the facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the name of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now. There really are sixteen names of Bible books in this story.

Can you find all 16? HAVE FUN!

(See next issue for answer)



MATH TRICKS	
1 MULTIPLYING FASTER IN MIND	
When multiplying by 5 , REMEMBER that 5 is 10 divided by 2	$48 \times 5 = (48 \times 10) / 2$ e.g.
Instead of multiplying a number by 9 , MULTIPLY it by 10 and then SUBTRACT the initial number	$9 \times 8 = (10 \times 8) - 8$ e.g.
2 CALCULATING PERCENTAGES QUICKLY	
MEMORIZE four key percentages: 5% , 10% , 25% , and 50%	What is 15% of 430? e.g.
	15% = 5% + 10%
	10% of 430 is 43, and 5% is half that, i.e. 21.5
	$15\% = 43 + 21.5 = 64.5$
MOVE the decimal of the percent two spaces to the left and MULTIPLY	What is 270% of 30? e.g.
	$270 \Rightarrow 2.7$



When a flashlight grows dim or quits working, you don't throw it away, you change the batteries. When a person messes up and finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside? Of course not, you help them change their batteries! Some need AA.. attention and affection; Some need AAA.. attention, affection and acceptance; some need C.. compassion; some need D.. direction. And if they still don't seem to shine... simply sit with them quietly and share your light.

VICTORY TODAY

How Can You "SM_LE" Without "I" ?
 How Can You Be "F_NE" Without "I" ?
 How Can You "W_SH" Without "I" ?
 How Can You Be "N_CE" Without "I" ?
 How Can You Be a "FR_END" Without "I" ?
 So "I" Am Very Important!

But How Can I Achieve "S_CCESS" Without "U" ?
 How Can I "LA_GH" Without "U" ?
 How Can I Take A "C_P" of Tea Without "U" ?
 How Can I Enjoy The "S_NSHINE" Without "U" ?
 How Can I Have "F_N" Without "U" ?
 And That Makes "U" More Important Than "I" !

Therefore humans (U & I) = WE need one another in life to be happy.

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- Psalm 118 is the middle chapter of the entire Bible?
- Psalm 117, before Psalm 118 is the shortest chapter in the Bible?
- Psalm 119, after Psalm 118 is the longest chapter in the Bible?
- The Bible has 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after Psalm 118?
- If you add up all the chapters except Psalm 118, you get a total of 1188 chapters.
- 1188 or Psalm 118 verse 8 is the middle verse of the entire Bible?
- Should the central verse not have an important message? "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man." Psalm 118:8.

—copied

Strategies to maximize learning



Go to school!!! Learn you lesson!!!, is the general advice given to some school age children by their parents, especially in rural areas. This advice should not be frowned upon, because parents desire the best for their children and see this admonition as encouragement; however, research has shown that there are more effective techniques that can be adapted. Nonetheless, they concede that adequate sleep is paramount. It is the opinion of researcher Scott Cairney, at York University, that "When you are awake you learn new things, but when you are asleep you refine them, making it easier to retrieve them and apply them correctly when you need them most". Consuming an appropriately balanced diet, and strategic selection of methodology are also important components in how we learn.

Methodology

There are many methods which have proven to be effective in building student capability, among which are acronyms. Here students can create acronyms based on what they wish to achieve in a particular lesson eg. Listen Assimilate Share (LAS). Acronyms such as SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review), and PQ4R (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect Recite, Review) made popular by Cairney, are examples of frequently utilized acronyms. These and others in this category help students identify, absorb, and retain important detailed information, in textbooks and other reading materials. The ability to retain detailed information will prove to be an asset at

the sitting of internal, national or international examinations.

Tricks and Tips

In addition to the mentioned strategies, the following tricks can be employed before and during lessons to maximize the teaching episode- online or in-person. Note though, that this is not a comprehensive list.

1. Create a timetable
2. Meet assignment deadline
3. Seek clarification on anything that can prevent full grasp of any concept.
4. Participate fully in every class activity.
5. Place books and other materials strategically to aid easy retrieval.
6. Establish a journal- make entries daily
7. Share your knowledge willingly.
8. Develop a relationship with peers- schedule leisure time
9. Respect the classroom code

Conclusion

History is replete with evidence of discussions centred on the benefits of learning to apply strategies which help to make learning more meaningful. SQ3R and PQ4R methods are frequently utilized to achieve absorption and comprehension of targeted information. Tips and tricks are also essential for cohesiveness among the group.

Contributed by: Elaine Allen



THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND ITS EFFECTS ON SCHOOLING: SKIBO PRIMARY SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVE

In March 2020, schools were forced to close their doors physically to students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in school administrators needing to find ways to meet the needs of students remotely. The Ministry of Education Youth and Information convened online workshops aimed at equipping students, teachers, administrators and parents for online learning. Pockets of training were organized to address the technological need of teachers if they were to be successful in online lesson delivery. While this change was sudden and inconvenient for majority of the stakeholders involved, it propelled Jamaica closer to the 'Technological Revolution' era. It forced the Skibo School to embark on a programme to upgrade its internet infrastructure. Laptops and tablets were given to some students at this school who had severe financial challenges.

The COVID 19 pandemic has also brought to the forefront the inequality in the educational system which revealed a clear distinction in the ability of students to access education due to their socioeconomic backgrounds. As a result, students from lesser financial means missed out on online lessons due to the lack of devices and connectivity issues. This is especially evident in rural areas such as the Skibo District in Portland, Jamaica, where 33% of the students enrolled at the Skibo Primary School are unable to benefit wholesomely from the online teaching and learning experience.

Parents often complained that they were unable to monitor their children in online classes, hence students exit classes to engage in leisure activities such as playing computer games and watching movies. Students at Skibo also admitted that they experienced difficulties: following and understanding lessons online, working on various projects alone; and poor internet connection, resulting in a stressful environment for both students and teachers.

Overall, Skibo sees the COVID 19 pandemic as a welcomed catalyst for transforming the Jamaican education system into a 21st century technology driven space.

Contributed by: Principal Board, Skibo Primary School

The Unstoppable Monster!!

The Corona Virus, a highly communicable disease, which was first identified in one of the Asian countries, quickly spread to other countries. A flurry of activities, studies, experiments were executed by scientists as they sought a cure for what had now become a seemingly unstoppable Monster, a force labeled – COVID 19. Predictably, on March 10, 2020 the first case of Corona Virus was identified in Jamaica. The Jamaican government reacted swiftly, instituting restrictions which affected the operation of institutions and public spaces. All schools were immediately closed and remained so for approximately nine months while the Ministry of Education explored several alternatives for students to continue their education to learning in a physical space. They gravitated towards the on-line delivery modality on approved platforms. This proved challenging as most students and teachers were not adequately prepared to engage in the virtual space. The preparation deficit was compounded by factors such as Internet connectivity, lack of devices, disinterest among some parents and students, inadequate retooling of teachers, need for teachers and students to reconfigure their homes to accommodate virtual learning, and the ever-present socio-economic status of students.

Disarray

The entire education system was in disarray. Many stakeholders were in a state of disillusionment when it was disclosed that some students refused to be included in the population of school-aged children, but had opted instead, to "join the work force" – based on a story aired on Television Jamaica. These are numbered among the 120,000 who did not access any learning platform, as reported in the Daily Gleaner May 5, 2021. The Minister of Education and Information also zoomed in on the reality in some classrooms when she said "We know that there are many challenges facing students and parents. We know that not everyone has proper connectivity and even in cases where they do, they might not have the money for the data plans

and so on," Many Educators are perturbed by the fact that the learning loss experienced by our students is likely to negatively impact their future. Concerns arise because of the low socio-economic status of the households from which a large number of the school-age population in focus come. What continues to haunt educators and by extension this nation, is the stark reality that there seems to be no permanent fix for this unstoppable Monster, COVID 19 and its variants, Delta and Omicron. In an interview with Educators in Manchester, Observer Staff Writer, Kasey Williams, captured the views of one Principal, who articulated the collective position of his colleagues in the parish. He said "We are in dire straits"... We utilize the platform that is most suitable – Google Classroom – and we encourage the students to use [it...] he further explained that "households with one phone, headed by a single parent [with] four or five children in that household are at a disadvantage.. "How do they (children) get online?" Such situation is replicated across the Island. In frustration, some students have opted out of the education system, and have found employment in local and national spaces. Special education schools and units continue to wait for a resolution to their issues.

Special Education Students

While attention was focused on the impact of the pandemic on the regular school population, students in our special education units and schools have been grossly underserved as they required individualized in person attention. Research shows that this situation is not unique to this Island, for as revealed by The Washington Post newspaper 14% of the USA special education student population have been affected by the pandemic. According to the Washington Post they recorded major setbacks in learning as parents experienced difficulty getting them to log on and stay focused. Burgstahler, in expressing her views to the Gleaner Newspaper Reporter, admitted that "...Managing virtual learning is difficult but managing virtual learning for two kids who have special needs is much harder,". "As I'm giving my son support

in his class,...my daughter practicing writing with her toes". Teachers of students with special needs in an interview with the Gleaner on the effects of online learning, said "It was really difficult because ... students are really hands-on and ...we cannot do practical lessons online. It's clear then that intervention is needed to bring these and other students into the learning situation. The question then is, how are we addressing this learning gap to achieve change?

Manifested Changes

As the reality of the hiatus in the education of the nation's children brought about by the pandemic became ostensive, the Ministry of Education collaborated with other stakeholders, in making change happen via online learning platforms. It proved woefully inadequate in meeting the leaning needs of the student population, hence designated slots on radio and television were employed to widen the reach. To complement the movement towards the desired change, computer, Tablets, and other gadgets were supplied to some students by the Ministry of Education as well as private partners. Access to the internet also improved. The mandatory summer programme, "Recover Smarter", staggered reopening of schools, the blended approach to learning, change in the administration of National and International examinations and other localized activities engaged in by schools, are testament to the effort being made by stakeholders to arrive at a full and complete education for all students. Indeed "You can't change the direction of the wind, but you can adjust the sails to reach your destination" (LifeTasteWell.com).

Conclusion

To date, none of these programmes has been able to fully cauterize the learning loss due to 10-months break in students' education. It is hoped that with the resumption of in person classes, teachers will employ strategies that will move the nation's children closer to bridging the gap in their education. **Cont'd on page 10**

As the unstoppable monster COVID19, continues its trek across the Island, leaving the education system in disarray, let us as stakeholders, collaborate as we focus on providing the tools needed to equip or students to function in the global village.

Contributed by: Elaine Allen

RELATED PHOTOS

Pre-COVID Classroom



JBU Early Childhood Institution



Springvale Primary students doing plant migration



Calabar Primary & Junior High Students



Oracabessa Primary students on nature walk

Learning Loss during the COVID Pandemic



Extracts from Television Jamaica Newscasts on Learning Loss during COVID

The Classroom during COVID



Watt Town Primary School students at play



Townhead Primary & Infant School



William Knibb High students social distancing



Calabar student- Culture Fair

Contributor: Elaine Allen

Virtual Tutorial

"There's no way they can get a fulsome education from online schooling ... The entire educational approach has changed... Students downplay the importance of school due to it being online... insane workload ... hours are shortened... and there is definitely lower-quality instruction and monitoring... I worry that the months with no peer socialization and no extra-curricular activities will hurt students... it's just too impersonal... We're only moving backwards in education and learning skills".

What you just read, is a summary of online learning and its impact on teaching and learning, as seen through the eyes of some parents, teachers and students and captured by Sunday Observer's staff writer-Kimberley Hibbert, October 18, 2020. Those sentiments were multiplied as the effects of the pandemic intensified, resulting in immeasurable challenges. The most appalling from a JBU Education Committee perspective, was the disclosure by the Minister of Education that one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) students did not access any class since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Subsequently, a meeting of the committee was held and a decision arrived at to conduct Virtual tutorials with students in the exit grades at the Primary and Secondary levels in the school system.

Execution

The implementation of this initiative was predicated on the result and analysis of an Island wide survey to establish areas of greatest need. One hundred and fifteen responses were received, the availability of facilitators confirmed, and time and date for the tutorials circulated. The tutorials were conducted between May 6 and 20, 2021 at 3:30pm on each occasion. Six facilitators managed the process, three at the CSEC level (Mathematics and POA), three at the Primary level (Primary Exit Profile (PEP)). Platforms familiar to students such as Google Meet, Teams Meet, and What's App were employed. Most classes were conducted for a minimum of two hours, instead of the agreed 45-50

minutes. Ninety-three (93) students participated.

Sacrifice

We are grateful to our teachers (Mathematics -2, POA- 1, PEP- 3) , who upon realizing the knowledge gap and the need for students to be equipped for the national and international examinations, committed themselves to the advancement of students in areas mentioned. Inevitably, it was at great personal sacrifice, since there was no abatement in the performance of their work obligations. This, in our opinion, was true service offered by committed teachers, who saw teaching, not as a job, but according to Dr. Ralph Tyler , "*as human service... and as a mission*". We commend the students who attended faithfully and also those who shared their success with the committee upon receipt of examination results.

Presentation of Token



Contributed by: Elaine Allen



OUR LEGACY



The Honourable Rev. Dr. Burchell Knibb Taylor OJ, CD, PhD MA, BD

The Hon. Rev. Dr. Burchell Knibb Taylor was born on November 1, 1938 to parents Austin and Marinetta Taylor of Sandy Bay, Hanover, and was named Burchell Knibb, after Thomas Burchell and William Knibb, two great missionary emancipators. His parents hoped he would similarly impact the lives of people.

Under the guidance of his pastor, the Rev. Edmund Greaves- Mount Carey Baptist, Burchell responded to the call to the Christian ministry and was trained at the Calabar Theological College, graduating in 1963 with high academic honours. He began his pastoral duties in the Porus-Zion Hill Circuit of Baptist Churches in Manchester, and subsequently accepted a call to the Bethel Baptist church where he served for forty –seven years.

Under his Godly leadership and inspired preaching, Bethel grew numerically from 250 to over 2,000 members, making it the largest congregation in the JBU. Rev. Dr. Taylor encouraged, motivated and equipped members to use their God-given abilities and gifts in the service of Christ, and their fellowmen. This brought new vision and led to a rich flowering of ministries, and the planting of churches at Mona, New Haven, Portmore and Mount View. In addition, the circuits of Arcadia, Buff Bay, Hope Hill, and Jones Town have been strengthened by Bethel's missionary partnership.

Rev. Dr. Taylor conceptualized and guided to implementation at Bethel, the listed programmes: **Cont'd on page 12**

- After-school homework and reading programme
- Cyber-Centre
- Summer employment and work experience programmes for youths and young adults
- Basic schools in three economically depressed communities
- An adult education programme,
- Healing ministry incorporating prayer, counselling and medical services
- The Bethel Lay Institute
- Cooperative Thrift Society,
- Legal aid clinic
- A lunch service
- Ministry to the homeless programme

Having completed B.A. (Hons) and M.A. degrees, at Regents Park College, Oxford University, England, in record time, his thirst for knowledge grew, and so he enrolled in a doctoral programme. Being an avid scholar and voracious reader, he disciplined himself to complete the gruelling doctoral programme despite his extremely demanding schedule.

Early in his ministry though, the Rev. Dr. Taylor recognized that he needed a help mate, and a confidante, so in 1965 he married Ann Elizabeth Edgar, a high school teacher of English, who later accompanied and remained with him in England throughout his period of study. Dr. Taylor and his wife are proud parents of three sons who are making outstanding contributions nationally, in the fields of Law, Architecture, and Education and Scientific Research.

Dr Taylor is approachable and accessible and is revered by all with whom he interacts, evident in the tributes given at his retirement as pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church Half-Way-Tree. An article in the *Daily Gleaner*, described him as "always willing to serve anyone, anywhere, anytime...an easy-going

person who made people feel comfortable in his presence". Church secretary, Deacon Glendon Brown, described him as "a big brother, mentor, confidante, counsellor, and benefactor", while then President of the JBU, Rev. Dr. Devon Dick referred to him as a "servant, a saint and a scholar". In addition, the phrase "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith" used by Barnabas, was thought to be the finest compliment that the Jamaica Baptist Union could pay to the man, Rev. Dr. Taylor, whose exemplary life, work, value and witness still resonates with people, nationally and globally.

Rev Dr. Taylor also wrote a number of books and theological papers. He spent an extraordinary number of hours teaching seminary classes, supervising doctoral candidates, delivering lectures, and preaching on special occasions both nationally and internationally. The most astonishing thing is that the Rev Dr. Taylor undertook all the necessary research and preparation for his numerous engagements despite his deficiency in computer related skills.

Dr. Taylor impacted the life of the JBU in positive ways; serving with distinction in the office of President between 1976 and 1988. Committees and commissions which he chaired, include the JBU's Mission Agency. He presented many recommendations to the JBU, which resulted in a more streamlined, responsive and service-oriented denomination. He also served as mentor to many young pastors.

Internationally, Dr. Taylor is well respected as a church leader, preacher and theologian, whose service extended to the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship where he served as President and the Baptist World Alliance as Vice President respectively. The Baptist World Alliance in particular, benefitted from the scholarly and sound presentations he delivered frequently to its study commissions. At the interdenominational level, he inspired and challenged many through Keswick

Convention, National Leadership Prayer Breakfast, and numerous other speaking engagements.

Dr. Taylor's contribution to the religious life and socio-economic development of Jamaica did not go unrecognized. In 2000 he was awarded the Order of Distinction, Commander Class (CD), and in 2015 was vested with the sash of the Order of Jamaica (OJ). This humble brilliant servant of God never allowed the accolades bestowed on him to prevent him from displaying the true qualities of a life totally surrendered to God.

Rev. Dr Taylor gave fifty-three years of dedicated and distinguished service to God and the denomination. We thank God that he continues to serve God through other avenues.

Honourable Rev. Dr. Burchell Knibb Taylor, OJ, CD, PhD, MA, BD, the Jamaica Baptist Union is proud of your accomplishments.

Excerpt- from JBU Citation in honour of Rev. Dr. Taylor



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