



# THE JAMAICA BAPTIST REPORTER

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Established 1874

*Caribbean Light Shines Bright*

## Rev. Johnson Elected Chair of BWA Global Council

**BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA**

In a groundbreaking moment for the global Baptist movement, Rev. Karl Baldwin Johnson of Jamaica has been elected as the first person from the Caribbean to serve as Chair of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Global Council during the organization's 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, July 7-12.

The historic election marks another significant milestone for Caribbean Baptist leadership on the world stage, following the tenure of another distinguished Jamaican, Rev. Dr. Neville Callam, who served as the BWA's General Secretary/CEO from 2007-2017.

**SEE MORE ON PAGE 19**



### Edwards-Warrick Becomes First Caribbean President of BWA Women

In what has been described as "a new era of leadership for the global network of Baptist women", Reverend Karlene Edwards-Warrick has become the first Caribbean woman to be appointed President of Baptist World Alliance Women (BWA Women). Ruba Abbassi of Jordan will serve as First Vice President.

**SEE MORE ON PAGE 20**



# The PRESIDENT'S

# Message

Rev. Dwight D. Fraser



## Transitioning Between Outgoing and Incoming Church Years

Warm greetings to all readers of The Baptist Reporter. Your continued engagement with the information and inspiration offered within these pages provides ongoing motivation to those who contribute, curate, and distribute its contents.

By the time this edition reaches you, we shall be well into the waning weeks of the current church year. This period typically triggers considerable activity directed towards closing the outgoing year appropriately and beginning the incoming year meaningfully. This process, when approached conscientiously rather than merely routinely, can significantly enhance the maturity of our congregations as spiritual communities and improve the efficacy of ministry offered in the next cycle. The critical elements outlined below can assist this transition.

The first essential step involves conducting a thorough assessment of ministry programmes from the concluding year. This creates opportunities to determine what proved effective and what did not, what remained relevant and what became outdated, and what addressed felt needs versus what missed the mark. This evaluation must include understanding the contributing factors to effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Particularly important is grasping the extent to which ministry programmes served God's mission and the degree to which the congregation embraced and engaged with these initiatives. When

conducted robustly and comprehensively, such assessment generates insights that prove both informative and transformative for congregations continuing in God's mission.

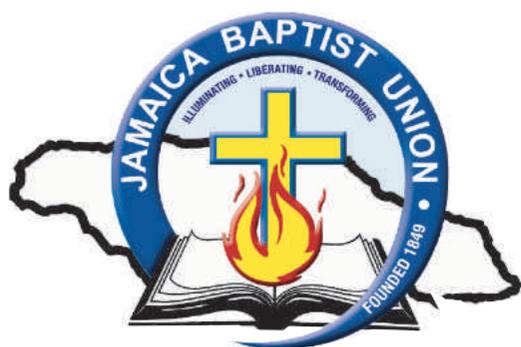
The subsequent step requires approaching ministry programmes for the coming year with careful discernment. Church ministry programmes should not exist merely to maintain activity or simply arise from our thinking and strategising abilities. Ultimately, they must represent the outworking of our understanding of God's will for our lives and witness as Christians and congregations. This necessarily requires praying, listening, and yielding to divine guidance whilst engaging in research, analysis, and determining the best missional course for respective situations. When we discern God's leading, we position ourselves optimally for impact within God's mission.

A list of activities or calendar of events, even after such reflection, does not constitute a ministry plan or programme. Substantial additional work ensures appropriate development of ministry programmes to enhance effectiveness. Essential questions must be addressed for each initiative: Who comprises the target group? How many people should it reach? What resources are needed for meaningful implementation? How many people are required for effective execution? How can

we bring our best creativity to this programme? Sometimes we fail to apply the same excellence to church work that we demonstrate elsewhere. Attending to programme development details can dramatically impact their intended outcomes.

Well-developed programmes cannot implement themselves. Deep commitment from the broadest cross-section of the congregation is essential to ensure programmes are both enacted and effective. As congregants mature in Christ and in their disposition towards kingdom work through assessment, discernment, and programme development, they become more available to participate in bringing programmes to fruition. When congregations participate in these processes, they develop ownership of programmes and overall church ministry, increasing likelihood of ready and consistent engagement. Without deepening commitment to God through participation and implementation, the entire assessment, discernment, and development process becomes futile.

I pray that we shall all arrive at healthy and engaging ministry programmes this year, then commit to implementing them appropriately during the new church year. Next year, we can engage in processes that deepen ministry effectiveness even further, continuing this cycle of growth and service.



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**We invite you to submit your articles, stories, poems and comments by email, fax or send them to the above address.**



# FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Rev. Merlyn Hyde Riley



## A New Government

Jamaicans, albeit still too few, exercised our franchise on 3 September 2025, which resulted in the return to government of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and Dr. The Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, as the country's ninth Prime Minister. We extend congratulations and our critical support to the JLP as they provide political leadership for the next five years. In the same vein, we commend the People's National Party for its participation in the elections, which should augur well for the quality of our democracy and, we hope, for the interest of the people.

As a country, we cannot forget that this election came at a time of heightened and worrying concerns by church and civil society about our nation. Several of these issues remain, and it is therefore incumbent upon us to hold our leaders accountable in how they steward Jamaica. The church has a responsibility to be the conscience of this nation and to raise her prophetic voice in the interest of the common good.

We have seen a steady erosion of the values which have formed the bedrock of our society. How shall we go forward? We should model values of

righteousness, honesty, justice, truth, and love. Let us commit to a moral revolution and the spiritual transformation of our society.

I call upon all JBU members in this season to rise and embrace the call of our National Anthem: "Justice, Truth be ours forever, Jamaica Land we love".

## Life and Work of the JBU

The Jamaica Baptist Union is at a critical juncture in our life and work. We are just about mid-point in exploring our Ten-Year Thematic focus "Keeping Faith with the Word in an Ever-Changing World", and in a few months, we will transition from the focus of our two-year thematic emphasis "Pursuing Integrity" to a new thematic emphasis "Countering Poverty".

This is a crucial next step, since integrity demands that each person is treated fairly and justly and has equal opportunity to flourish. We encourage you, then, to begin to contemplate how your congregation and association may embrace this theme over the next two years and beyond.

Furthermore, as we engage in the planning process for the next church year and beyond, be guided by the

JBU's Five Year Strategic Plan (2025-2030) in the determination of plans and programmes at the church, circuit, and association levels. As a reminder, the Strategic Priorities agreed by the 2023 General Assembly are:

1. Promoting spiritual growth and missional engagement
2. Advancing and strengthening training and leadership development
3. Heightened strategic emphasis on youth and children's development
4. Financial viability and effective asset and property management
5. Fostering effective administration, communication, and greater accountability across all levels of the Union

These were decided after widespread consultation, and we look forward to the plan's implementation. Remember to consult the plan as you prepare for the new church year in your churches, parish associations, and as agencies, auxiliaries, and committees of the Union.

We give God thanks for the abundance of grace over this past church year, and we look forward to what God will do in and through us in the days ahead.

# Editorial *Living as the People of God in Community*



Rev. Eron Henry

As Jamaica grapples with persistent challenges that seem to defy easy solutions, the church is called to model an alternative way of living in community.

amplifies conflict rather than understanding. Baptist churches must become visible spaces where the revolutionary love that once challenged slavery now challenges the systems that perpetuate hopelessness and violence.

The command to practice hospitality to strangers (*philoxenia*) addresses one of Jamaica's most pressing challenges: the breakdown of community trust and the social isolation that feeds both crime and depression. With social exclusion persisting, our churches must become radical spaces of welcome.

This hospitality extends beyond Sunday morning courtesy to active engagement with those our society marginalises: the homeless populations visible in Spanish Town and Kingston, the youth aging out of state care with nowhere to go, the returning residents whose criminal records make them unwelcome in legitimate society, and the internal migrants who come to urban areas seeking opportunities but find only struggle.

The promise of entertaining angels unaware takes on prophetic significance when we consider how God might be present in the very people our society discards. Every act of genuine welcome becomes a testimony to the gospel's power to transform both individual lives and community relationships.

Churches must lead in creating inclusive spaces where hospitality is practiced not as charity but as recognition of shared humanity. This means opening our facilities for community use, creating programmes

that welcome rather than judge, and ensuring that our worship spaces reflect the diversity of God's kingdom rather than the segregation of human prejudice.

With one of the highest homicide rates in the Americas and frequent states of emergency that expand security force authority, our society has become accustomed to viewing certain people as expendable. Churches should actively engage through sustained ministry that recognises the humanity of all, including those who are incarcerated. It requires advocacy for justice system reform that addresses the root causes of crime rather than simply expanding punishment. While maintaining our convictions, we must extend Christ's compassion to all who suffer injustice.

Congregations must become safe spaces where trauma can be addressed, where victims find support rather than judgment, and where the community response to suffering reflects the heart of Christ rather than the hardness of a society grown accustomed to pain.

Despite expectations of economic growth, serious social issues predominantly affecting youth, including high levels of crime and violence, reflect deeper spiritual and social malaise. In a culture where respect is often measured by material display and where legitimate paths to prosperity remain limited for many, the church must model an alternative economy based on sharing rather than accumulation, generosity rather than hoarding, and trust in divine provision rather than anxious striving.

Cont'd on page 4

As inheritors of the legacy of George Liele, Sam Sharpe, Paul Bogle, and George William Gordon, Jamaica Baptist Union churches are uniquely positioned to demonstrate biblical principles in ways that address our nation's deepest needs.

The scriptural call to "let brotherly love continue" takes on particular urgency in a society where interpersonal conflicts increasingly result in violent deaths. The Greek term *philadelphia* envisions bonds that transcend the artificial divisions that fragment our communities: political affiliations, class differences, and generational tensions.

This brotherly love must bridge the garrison communities that politics and violence have created, reaching across the invisible lines that separate uptown from downtown, rural from urban, and the educated from those denied educational opportunities. Baptist congregations have historically played this bridging role, and our current mission requires nothing less than a renewal of this unifying witness.

This love cannot remain abstract when communities live in fear, when young people see violence as their only option for respect, or when social media

# Window on the Word

By Reverend Dr. Devon Dick

## WHAT SHALL WE DO?

**Scripture Lesson:** 2 Kings 6:8-23

**Text:** "Oh, my Lord, what shall we do?" 2 Kings 6:15

We live in an age marked by violent territorial conflicts: the war between Palestine and Israel, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, all centred on the capture of land and influence. The dispute between Guyana and Venezuela in the Caribbean revolves around territory and resources. The geopolitics of maintaining captured lands, establishing dependencies, and pursuing control over Greenland, oil reserves, or trade routes by powerful nations with large armies, all concern land and influence. What shall we do? The story of Elisha facing the threat of the mighty Syrian army to Israel provides valuable insights.

The account in 2 Kings 6 reveals the fear of Elisha's servant when he witnessed the might of the Syrian army. This was a military confrontation over territory and influence between Israel and Syria. Thousands of Syrian soldiers were poised to invade Israel. The people of Israel, including Elisha's servant, were terrified. Yet Elisha, prophet of God and successor to Elijah, reassured his servant: "Don't be afraid." Moreover, Elisha prayed for his servant's eyes to be opened to see God's presence and protection. Finally, Elisha prayed that the Syrian soldiers would be struck with blindness.

### Don't Be Afraid (v. 16)

"Don't be afraid" is a frequent scriptural injunction. It was spoken to Joshua as he led his people to the Promised Land (Joshua 1:9).

What is fear? Fear is an unpleasant and distressing emotion caused by the threat of danger, evil, pain, or harm. Some people fear

sudden and unexpected change. There can also be fear of the unknown; people often prefer to stick with the evil they know.

What would you do if you were not afraid of losing your popularity or reputation? What evil would we confront if we were not afraid of losing property, limb, or life?

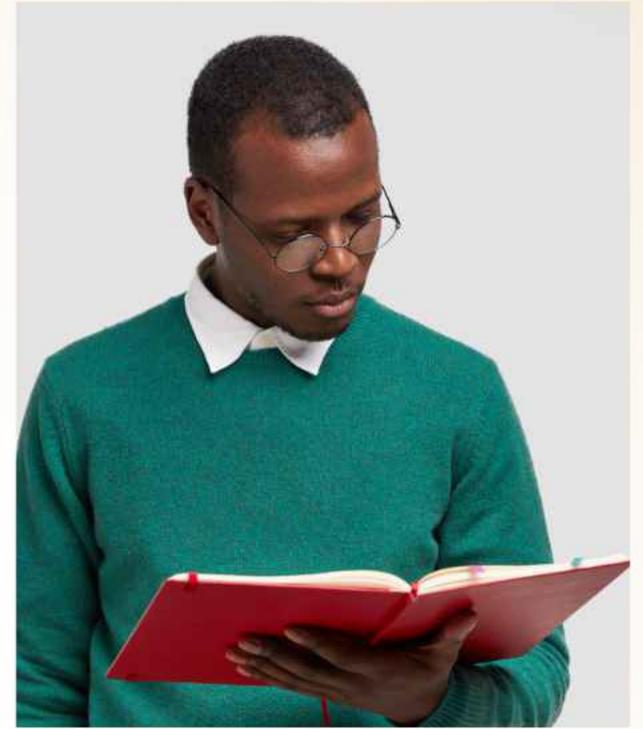
"Fret not thyself because of evildoers"—those who plan evil and are ill-intentioned. Don't fear what flesh can do to you. "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." I will not fear even if ten thousand stand against me. Do not fear, because God is with you. God will protect you by His presence. Don't be afraid, because God is with you.

Embrace the future in faith. Have wholehearted trust and confidence in the presence, protection, and promises of God as revealed in Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

### Open Your Eyes (v. 17)

Twelve people went to spy out the land. Ten saw giants and declared it impossible to possess the land. These ten did not believe that God could help them. They did not believe they could possess the Promised Land. Only Caleb and Joshua saw potential, not problems. They saw possibilities. They believed that God would help them succeed.

What difference would it make in our lives if we had a different perspective? What difference would it make if we saw the potential and the possibilities? The bewildered disciples walking on the road to Emmaus only understood the resurrection of Jesus when their eyes were opened to a better interpretation of Scripture and a proper understanding of God's ways. We need to perceive what God is doing and adopt a different perspective on life.



### Strike Them with Blindness (v. 18)

Elisha's prayer that the Syrian soldiers would be struck with blindness was not a prayer seeking revenge; rather, Elisha prayed for the use of a non-lethal weapon in the fight against the mighty Syrian army. Blindness can lead to good outcomes. Paul's blindness served a good purpose (Acts 9), it led to his conversion and his experience of God's grace. Similarly, in Genesis 19, the men who wanted to assault the strangers in Lot's home were blinded to prevent them from committing evil.

Elisha's prayer for the soldiers' blindness was to prevent them from doing evil. This prayer was not seeking revenge but rehabilitation of the soldiers. It gave the Syrian soldiers a chance to repent.

In this violent Jamaica and world, we need more people like the Right Excellent Sam Sharpe, National Hero and Native Baptist pastor, who preached and practised non-violence as a way of overcoming oppression by a brutal British army. Non-violence and passive resistance ought to be explored when dealing with potentially violent situations.

### Editorial cont'd from page 3

This doesn't mean ignoring genuine economic needs or discouraging legitimate ambition. Rather, it means creating communities where worth isn't measured by wealth, where those who have share with those who lack, and where contentment is found in right relationships rather than material accumulation.

The JBU, with 340 churches and more than 40,000 members across the island, possesses both the infrastructure and the spiritual mandate to lead this

transformation. Our Mission Agency's theme of "Integrity in Missional Action" calls us to ensure that our witness matches our words, that our community engagement reflects our gospel proclamation.

As a church committed to both proclamation of the word and social action, we cannot retreat from society's challenges into purely spiritual concerns. The same gospel that once challenged slavery now

challenges every form of oppression and injustice that diminishes human dignity.

The promise that "the Lord is my helper" and the assurance that God "will never leave you nor forsake you" provide the foundation for the kind of costly, sustained community engagement that transformation requires. These are not merely personal comforts but communal promises that enable congregations to invest in long-term change even when immediate results seem elusive.



# KIDDIES CAMP 2025 MARKS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

The Jamaica Baptist Union Kiddies Camp celebrated its fifth anniversary from 7th to 12th July 2025 at Nutshell Baptist Campsite in Duncans, Trelawny, welcoming 40 young participants for a week of spiritual growth and fun-filled activities under the theme "God in Me: Inside Out".

Led by Camp Chief, Rev. Stacey Laylor-Knowles and Chaplain, Rev. Gary Johnson, the camp accommodated 17 boys and 23 girls, with 15 children graduating from the programme. The week featured daily Bible talks with Uncle Gary, creative activities through "Kreative Kidz Korners", and engaging evening sessions

including movie nights, bonfire storytelling, and scavenger hunts.

Children were divided into two competitive houses: the Peace Keepers (blue) and Truth Speakers (red), fostering teamwork and friendly rivalry throughout various activities. The programme incorporated the sub-themes "Choose Peace", "Talk Truth", "Walk Holy", and "Live Good", designed to help children understand how God's presence can transform their daily lives.

The camp's spiritual impact proved significant, with 12 children making personal faith commitments during the closing service.

According to the chaplain's report, nearly all campers expressed a desire to serve God more faithfully, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in nurturing young spiritual development.

Special highlights included the Fun Splash water activities, Mini-Olympics competition, and the anniversary celebration dinner.

Despite minor challenges, the milestone anniversary camp successfully fulfilled its mission of combining spiritual education with enjoyable recreational activities for Jamaica's youngest Baptist community members.



# Junior Camp 2025 Explores Christian Living Through Daily Practice



The Jamaica Baptist Union Junior Camp 2025 programme, centred around the transformative theme "God in Me: Inside Out" with daily sub-themes guiding spiritual development throughout the week-long experience.

The structured programme began each Monday with arrival and registration at noon, establishing the foundation for a week of spiritual growth. The camp's innovative approach divided each day into specific themes, starting with "Choose Peace" on Tuesday, followed by "Talk Truth" on Wednesday, "Walk Holy" on Thursday, and concluding with "Live Good" on Friday before Saturday's commitment service and departure.

Each day commenced with early morning staff prayer and praise sessions, followed by general devotions and physical exercise before breakfast. The morning schedule included Bible study sessions and "Inside Out Expressions", designed to help participants understand how faith manifests in daily behaviour. Afternoon activities featured mission trips, organised games, and "Holy Splash" water activities, whilst evenings

concluded with house meetings and personal reflection time.

The programme's educational materials included daily puzzles, scripture-based word searches, and interactive activities such as the "Choose the Good Path" decision-making exercises. Participants completed commitment cards expressing their intentions to live differently after camp, addressing practical areas like respectfulness, honesty, appropriate speech, and environmental stewardship.

A significant element involved the "Holy or Not?" activity, where campers evaluated various actions against biblical standards, encouraging critical thinking about Christian behaviour in everyday situations. The programme also featured themed devotional thoughts, such as Tuesday's message that "doing good isn't just a camp thing, it's a God thing", emphasising the continuity of faith beyond the camp experience.

The comprehensive approach combining spiritual instruction with practical application demonstrates the JBU's commitment to



developing young people's understanding of how Christian principles translate into daily living, creating a bridge between faith and practical behaviour that extends well beyond the camp experience.





# INTERMEDIATE CAMP ADDRESSES REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES THROUGH FAITH

The Jamaica Baptist Union Intermediate Camp 2025 brought together 158 young people aged 13 to 15 from across Jamaica for an intensive week of spiritual development and practical life skills training from 21st to 26th July at the JBU Conference Centre in Duncans, Trelawny.

Under the overarching theme "God in Me: Inside Out", the camp addressed contemporary issues facing teenagers through a structured daily programme. Led by Chief, Rev. Milton Bailey and Chaplain, Rev. Junior Ross, the week progressed through four specific sub-themes: Choose Peace, Talk Truth, Walk Holy, and Live Good, each designed to connect biblical principles with everyday challenges.

The camp's innovative approach included interactive reality sessions tackling difficult topics such as conflict resolution, emotional management, and civic responsibility. During the

"Choose Peace" theme day, participants organised a peace march where different houses created posters addressing anxiety, addiction, and anger management. This practical application demonstrated how faith-based principles can address real-world struggles.

Daily Bible studies centred on the story of the widow of Zarephath and the prophet Elijah from 1 Kings 17:8-16, exploring themes of trust, provision, and faith during difficult circumstances. The programme included "Ask Me How" sessions on dealing with emotions and being good citizens, alongside "Hot Seat" discussions where campers could anonymously ask counsellors about challenging topics.

Recreational activities balanced the intensive spiritual content, featuring movie nights, games, competitions, and a talent show where participants showcased abilities developed

through week-long auditions. The camp culminated in Sports Day and "The Glow Edition" banquet before Saturday's commitment service.

The camp's spiritual impact was substantial, with 29 young people making first-time commitments to follow Christ and many others seeking prayer for spiritual renewal. The week's combination of worship, practical teaching, and peer fellowship created an environment where teenagers could explore faith whilst addressing the genuine challenges they face in contemporary Jamaican society.

The programme's success demonstrates the effectiveness of connecting traditional biblical teaching with modern issues, providing young people with both spiritual foundation and practical tools for navigating adolescent challenges



# YOUTH CAMP 2025

The Jamaica Baptist Union Youth Camp 2025 concluded successfully at Nutshell Baptist Campsite in Duncans, Trelawny, from 28th July to 2nd August, welcoming 157 young people under the inspiring theme "God in Me: Inside Out".

Led by Chief Rev. Vanessa Burnett-Logan and Chaplain Rev. Garry Knowles, the camp attracted 66 male and 91 female participants who engaged in a comprehensive programme of spiritual development and creative expression. The week featured daily chapel services, Bible study sessions, and innovative "Express Yuhself" creative groups covering art, drama, dance, culinary skills, and church media production.

Campers were divided into five houses named after biblical figures: Gideon (blue), Nehemiah (green), Joshua (yellow), Deborah (white), and Esther (red), fostering healthy competition throughout the week. A special Culture

Clash event on Emancipation Day celebrated Jamaican heritage, encouraging participants to explore their cultural roots through music, poetry, and traditional dress.

The camp's spiritual impact was significant, with four campers graduating and several making faith commitments during the closing service. Morning chapel sessions and Bible studies received excellent ratings, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in nurturing young people's spiritual growth.

Despite operational challenges, the camp succeeded in its primary mission of spiritual enrichment and community building. The positive response from campers and the measurable spiritual outcomes demonstrate the continued value of this annual youth ministry initiative, providing a foundation for addressing identified improvements in future programmes.



# Women's Federation Elects New Executive



The Jamaica Baptist Women's Federation (JBWF) has elected a new executive team to serve from September 2025 to August 2027, following their Annual General Meeting held at the Ocho Rios Baptist Church on 14th August.

Sister Kimberly Campbell-England of Burchell Memorial Baptist Church in St. James has been elected as President, succeeding Sister Georgia Crossman-Small of Hanover Street Baptist Church.

The new executive leadership team includes Sister Dafflyn Campbell of Emmanuel Baptist Church, St. Mary, and Sister Candice Walker of New Haven Baptist Church, Kingston and St. Andrew, both serving as Vice Presidents. Sister

Rita Bailey of Paradise Baptist Church, Clarendon, assumes the role of Secretary, with Sister Carmen Morgan of Port Antonio Baptist Church, Portland, as Assistant Secretary.

Financial oversight will be managed by Sister Annette Grant of Bethel Baptist Church, Half Way Tree, as Treasurer, and Sister Paulette McLennon of Annotto Bay Baptist Church, St. Mary, as Assistant Treasurer. Public Relations responsibilities will be shared between Sister Shereen Hills-Bennett of Ebonyvale Baptist Church, St. Catherine, and Sister Buley Moulton of Petersfield Baptist Church, Westmoreland.

The executive also includes fourteen additional members representing churches from across

Jamaica's parishes, ensuring broad geographical representation and diverse perspectives in the Federation's leadership. These members span from Portland in the east to Hanover and Westmoreland in the west, demonstrating the Federation's island-wide reach and inclusive approach to leadership.

The elections took place during the Federation's Annual General Meeting, which preceded their Open Day celebrations. Reverend Merlyn Hyde-Riley, General Secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union, addressed the gathering, offering support and encouragement to the newly elected leadership.



# Spiritual Empowerment Conference

The Jamaica Baptist Union's Christian Education Department successfully conducted its Spiritual Empowerment Conference from 6th to 9th August, marking another year of providing Christian leaders with essential resources for navigating contemporary challenges. The 87-year-old conference continues its tradition of revitalising leadership and equipping participants with knowledge to discern divine guidance whilst responding to life's complexities.

Conducted entirely online via Zoom due to ongoing adaptations in conference delivery, the event attracted more than 60 devices connecting participants across Jamaica and beyond. The digital format maintained the conference's accessibility whilst preserving its intimate atmosphere of spiritual reflection and learning.

The conference's central theme, "Christianity in the Grey", addressed the challenging terrain of moral decision-making where clear distinctions between right and wrong become blurred. This timely focus acknowledged the reality that many believers find themselves navigating spaces of uncertainty, where traditional binary choices prove insufficient for complex modern dilemmas.

The programme explored three distinct yet interconnected aspects of moral complexity. "Sitting on the Fence" examined the psychology and consequences of indecision, providing

practical guidance for moving beyond paralysis towards decisive action aligned with Christian principles. "Tip-toeing the Line" addressed the delicate balance between justice and mercy, exploring how believers navigate situations requiring nuanced responses whilst maintaining integrity.

The final theme, "Taking a Stand," challenged participants to identify non-negotiable principles and develop frameworks for making decisions that align with divine will, even when such choices prove difficult or unpopular.

Daily devotional exercises commenced each morning from 6th through 9th August, establishing a foundation of spiritual preparation for the day's sessions. Evening services on 7th and 8th August provided opportunities for deeper reflection and community worship, maintaining the conference's balance between intellectual engagement and spiritual experience.

The conference's success reflected collaborative efforts from its planning committee and distinguished contributors including Kenisha Fowler-Henry, Andre and Shaneil Alleyne, Shauna Malcolm, Joniel Powell, Renice McFarlane, Rev. Dwight Fraser, Rev. Dayne Grant, and Rev. Taniecia McFarlane, who served as moderators, presenters, and panellists throughout the programme.



# Dancing the Emancipation Story

On Sunday, 27th July, five churches and the United Theological College of the West Indies united to host the 32nd Churches Emancipation Lecture at Boulevard Baptist Church, presenting a celebration of freedom through dance that challenged conventional narratives of liberation.

The evening began with participatory worship as patrons joined in responsive reading and sang "Rivers of Babylon", setting a tone of resilience and faith. A combined choir directed by Deacon Joseph McIntyre performed "Holy Mount Zion", which Master of Ceremonies Mrs. Shermaine Robotham Wright described as "more than music" but rather "a chant, a spiritual offering, reminding us that even in the darkest times our people knew from whence their help came".

Dr. L'Antoinette Stines, founder and artistic director of L'Acadco, one of Jamaica's leading contemporary dance companies with a global touring presence, delivered a presentation entitled "Spirit, Mind & Body: Dancing the Emancipation Story" that defied traditional lecture formats. Acknowledging influences from Rex Nettleford, Gerald "Bogle" Levy, and Pearl Primus, she wove instruments and song throughout her discourse, creating an immersive cultural experience.

Beginning with Bruckins, Dr. Stines corrected common misconceptions about this dance form. Rather than purely African, she explained it represents "Africa and Europe moving together, synergising to bridge cultures". Every gesture carries meaning, from movements symbolising the breaking of slaves' backs to those representing broken chains. She referenced the poignant song "Bury mi head but nuh bury mi foot", illustrating how enslaved people's creativity transcended their suffering. This creativity,

Stines argued, rather than the uncertain celebrations of 1834, constitutes the true legacy of Emancipation.

The presentation progressed through Jamaica's dance evolution, each form revealing layers of cultural resistance and retention. Kumina, with its Congolese roots and connection to nine nights traditions, brought soul-stirring drums and mesmerising movement as L'Acadco dancers in white, faces covered and armed with brooms, commanded absolute attention. Nyabingi followed with dramatic hand movements symbolising praise, which Stines characterised as "a revolution for freedom in a consciousness against colonialism", popularised by Rastafarians.

The journey continued through Reggae to Dancehall, which Stines described as "the voice of the voiceless" emerging from inner cities. She quoted Kamau Brathwaite's observation that "Africa explodes in Jamaica like a capsule", highlighting the African retention in these art forms. Dr. Stines also introduced L'Antech, her own creation described as "dancing in patois" a contemporary dance technique serving as a tool of revolution and resistance without identity crisis.

The presentation culminated with L'Acadco dancers in red, green, and gold, their choreography encompassing all elements of Jamaican dance history, embodying both the breaking of chains and creativity born from necessity.

Deacon Lassom McDermott described the experience as "magnetic and electrifying", noting how the presentation transported her to childhood memories with her grandmother, demonstrating the deep personal resonance of collective cultural memory.

As the evening concluded, attendees were reminded that Emancipation's story "is alive within the complex



of our living", not confined to history but continuing through the global phenomenon of Jamaican cultural expression.



# Reimagining Emancipation Through Gender and Memory



On Sunday, 25th July 2025, Phillippo Baptist Church presented its third annual Emancipation Lecture, commemorating the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. Professor Anna Kasafi Perkins, a distinguished scholar in Caribbean Theology and Ethics at The University of the West Indies, delivered a presentation entitled "Monuments, Mothers, and Memory: Reimagining Emancipation in Jamaica through Gender and Memory".

Professor Perkins' lecture, drawing on extensive research, presented four distinct takeaways that challenged conventional narratives of freedom:

First, she demonstrated how the narrative of freedom is both constructed and occasionally constrained by national iconography, whether religious or nationalistic in nature.

Second, using the Redemption Song sculpture at Emancipation Park in New Kingston and the Emancipation monument at the William Knibb Memorial Baptist Church in Falmouth, Trelawny, as primary subjects, she argued for reframing the meaning of emancipation in Jamaica through critical engagement with public monuments.

Third, she highlighted how, for an inordinately long period, the voices of enslaved and free women as agents of change were muffled, their contributions to emancipation largely disregarded.

Finally, her analysis of African women as slaveholders challenged conventional models of African female victims and European male oppressors, disrupting traditional historical narratives.

The highlight of the lecture was Professor Perkins' ability to contrast the romanticised vision of freedom with the harsh, gendered realities of slavery and resistance. This approach allowed for what the lecture's abstract described as a "nuanced understanding of emancipation as a continuous process that is not solely based on symbolic gestures but also on the ongoing confrontation of suppressed histories and contested identities".

Professor Perkins reminded the audience that the lecture, the church architecture, and the grounds themselves symbolised a pilgrimage to a hallowed place. This church, built in 1827 by enslaved labour under the watchful eye of its minister, Reverend James Phillippo, a long-time campaigner for the abolition of slavery, is a witness to the blood, sweat, tears, labour, and love of our ancestors.

The historical significance of the venue added depth to the occasion. Eleven years after the church's construction, following the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1838, newly freed people made their way back to the very church they had built whilst enslaved. Phillippo Baptist Church stands on 198 years of history, marking 187 years since the official proclamation of emancipation was read at the square, just blocks from the church's location. Historical records indicate that some of the shackles of slavery are buried beneath the tamarind tree just outside the building's main entrance.

Church pastor, Reverend Karl B. Johnson, in his introductory remarks, emphasised that the Baptists, and by extension the historic Phillippo Baptist Church, were uniquely positioned to raise awareness and promote this important historical and cultural milestone. He urged the congregation not to "drop the baton" in continuing this vital work of remembrance and education.

Both messages emphasised the value of community interaction and encouraged external participation, two defining characteristics of Caribbean theological and pastoral tradition. As Professor Perkins explains in her scholarly work, "the cultural helps give expression to the theological, because the divine is rooted in our cultural expressions". This connection between theology and culture made the celebration of emancipation particularly meaningful within the church setting.

Cultural performances enriched the evening, including the choir's rendition of the Negro spiritual "Fix Me" and a dance troupe's moving tribute to Bob Marley's "Redemption Song". Following Professor Perkins' lecture, historian and educator Sonia Glanville led a question-and-answer session.

# CHECKMATE FOR CHANGE



Jones Town sits amongst inner-city communities like Arnett Gardens, Trench Town, and Havana, collectively known as Jungle. Like its neighbours, Jones Town faces significant social and economic challenges, including persistent violence. Yet within this struggling community, Jones Town Baptist Church is making tangible differences in residents' lives whilst drawing them closer to faith.

Under Reverend Doreen Wynter's leadership, the church has adopted an innovative approach to community engagement. "Jones Town Baptist Church is an inner-city church, and we don't have a lot of professionals, as other churches do, so what we have tried to do is use the gifts of the people who are there," Reverend Wynter explained. This philosophy led to identifying Mr. Geoffrey Byfield, whose expertise in teaching chess at schools across Kingston could benefit their community.

The church recognised a critical need amongst local children. Many students attending both the church and Jones Town Primary School struggle with literacy, and the critical reasoning skills required for the PEP examination remain underdeveloped. Chess, with its demands for strategic thinking and problem-solving, emerged as a potential solution to strengthen these cognitive abilities whilst providing positive engagement for young people who might otherwise drift towards negative influences.

Mr. Byfield, who operates the Liguanea Chess Club and manages programmes at several of Kingston's premier academic institutions, brought considerable experience to the initiative. As a Rotary Club member, he had previously worked with Jones Town Primary School, viewing this expanded role as an opportunity for both education and ministry. The school administration embraced the proposal enthusiastically,

with Vice Principal Nicoline Blackwood noting that chess "demands a lot of thought, and that is what we want to build". Rather than relegating chess to after-school hours, the school allocated dedicated timetable slots, demonstrating genuine institutional commitment.

What began as a six-week pilot programme has flourished into a five-month success story. The children's enthusiasm has exceeded all expectations, with students racing to set up equipment on Thursdays and expressing disappointment when sessions are cancelled. "When you work with children, there's always some sense of fulfilment, and when you see the children excited, you're motivated and you feel good," Mr. Byfield reflected, capturing the programme's transformative impact on both students and instructors.

The chess initiative represents just one facet of the church's comprehensive community ministry. A football club, emerging from the Jamaica Baptist Union's Training in Discipleship Ministry programme, attracts more than 100 participants annually to its evangelistic competition. This year's tournament expanded significantly, offering cash prizes, trophies, and valuable opportunities to engage young men who might otherwise remain disconnected from positive community structures.

Looking forward, Reverend Wynter envisions expanding chess beyond the school into a church-based community programme, paralleling football's success in engaging residents. The sustainability challenge remains real, as Mr. Byfield acknowledges the programme's expense. The goal involves transitioning leadership to school teachers, ensuring continuity beyond external support. However, the students' overwhelming enthusiasm has justified continuing current arrangements whilst building towards this sustainable model.



## Mandeville Baptist Church Celebrates 185 Years



Formally founded in 1840 by the visionary James Phillippo, Mandeville Baptist Church proudly celebrates 185 years of faithful witness to the people of Mandeville and its environs. From its earliest days, the church has stood as a pillar of Christian service and devotion, firmly rooted in the Word of God and the mission of the Jamaica Baptist Union, of which it has been a member since the Union's inception.

Known for its deep spiritual grounding and rich worship life, the church has nurtured generations through the transforming power of the Gospel. Its five choirs, celebrated for their musical excellence, continue to inspire hearts and lift souls through the praise and worship that define its heritage.

Yet the impact of Mandeville Baptist Church has never been confined to the sanctuary. The church has long been a force for social upliftment, investing in education, training, and community development. Its Skills Training Centre equips individuals with practical tools for personal and professional growth through skills development in pattern making, dressmaking, drapery making, as well as cake making and decorating.

The church's outreach and fellowship ministries include the Social Outreach Ministry, the Mentorship Programme for at-risk boys, the Girls' Brigade, and the BOSS programme.

On Sunday, 16th March 2025, this rich history of faith and service was joyfully celebrated with the official launch of the church's 185th anniversary under the theme "Transforming Lives, Renewing Hope: A Legacy of Thanksgiving".

Guest preacher, Rev. Dwight Fraser, President of the JBU, reminded the congregation that the same God who sustained the past continues to call God's people into bold and faithful service. God's charge was one of courage, vision, and readiness to influence future generations for good.

The celebration was further enriched by greetings from distinguished guests, including Rev. Merlyn Hyde Riley, JBU General Secretary; Lt. Col. Hon. Garfield Green, Custos Rotulorum of Manchester; and Rev. Dr Earlmont Williams, Chairman of the Mandeville Ministers' Association.

The event was blessed by the presence of a wide cross-section of visitors from Mandeville and its environs, who gathered in joyful fellowship as witness to the church's unifying influence and far-reaching impact.

Among its anniversary activities, the church successfully hosted a Health Fair and its Inaugural Homecoming Extravaganza on 2nd August. The celebrations will continue with a Thanksgiving Service scheduled for 19th October. The year-long celebrations will culminate with a Thanksgiving Banquet and Awards Ceremony planned for March 2026.



# Grace Baptist Church Marks Diamond Jubilee

Grace Baptist Church in May Pen, Clarendon, concluded its year-long 60th anniversary celebrations on 11th August 2025, marking six decades of Christian witness with the theme "Celebrating God's Faithfulness: Reflecting, Restoring, Recommitting". The Diamond Jubilee journey, which began in August 2024, encompassed a comprehensive programme of worship, fellowship, and community service.

The Diamond Jubilee Journey began with the Opening Service during which president Dwight Fraser of the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU) brought greetings. Reverend Luke Shaw, pastor of Linstead Baptist Church, delivered the opening message. Reverend Shaw reminded the congregation that God's partnership had sustained Grace Baptist Church's ministry and witness throughout its sixty-year history.

September's Mission Month focused on "Mining the Diamonds", highlighting

the contributions of youth, men, and women in ministry. October witnessed a solemn Act of Covenant as members rededicated themselves to God, followed by a vibrant Rally of the Groups featuring songs, poetry, and dance. November's emphasis on stewardship, themed "Managing the Diamond", culminated in Believers' Enrichment Week. Reverend Dylan Toussaint, pastor of Edgewater Circuit of Baptist Churches, explored the meaning of stewarding God's resources, challenging members to examine their spiritual and material responsibilities.

December 2024 brought a particularly meaningful homecoming celebration, reuniting former and current pastors, moderators, and members. The church honoured Reverend Joseph Anderson and his daughter, Reverend Neville Callam, Reverend Michael Shim-Hue and Mrs. Shim-Hue for their distinguished service. The festive

season continued with a Christmas concert and a Watch Night bonfire worship service, blending traditional celebration with spiritual reflection.

The new year intensified evangelistic efforts, with January 2025 dedicated to family and friend evangelism. The anniversary Road March on 11th January, Men's Conference in March, and Community Walk and Witnessing in July provided visible testimony to the church's presence in May Pen. These efforts bore fruit with the baptism and reception of ten converts, equally divided between males and females, plus three additional female members received by transfer.

Throughout the year, the church maintained its regular ministry calendar whilst adding special anniversary events. The Lenten season's "Tested but Triumphant" theme provided deep spiritual reflection, whilst practical community engagement manifested

through the Health, Wellness and Well-Being Fair in July, which served more than 200 persons with health screenings and counselling services. Family-oriented activities, including Sunday School Anniversary, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Family Fun Day, strengthened intergenerational bonds within the congregation.

The celebrations reached their climax with culturally significant events: an Emancipation Celebration in the Courtyard on 31st July and an Emancipation worship service on 3rd August, connecting faith with Jamaica's historical journey to freedom. The closing service on 11th August 2025 featured greetings from JBU General Secretary Merlyn Hyde Riley and a message from Reverend Dr. Glenroy Lalor, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Half Way Tree, who drew from Joshua 24:13-23 to challenge the congregation to continued gratitude and service.

# Sutirah Rodney:

## Celebrating 100 Years of Grace, Faith, and Service

*19th July 1925 – Present*

Centenarian Sutirah Rodney joyfully celebrated her 100th birthday on 19th July 2025. Born in Crofts Hill, Clarendon, to Beatrice and Joshia Dawkins, she was the third of five children and the only girl amongst four brothers. Young Sutirah was known for her love of dressing up and admiring her reflection in the mirror—a sign of the elegance and meticulous nature that would remain with her throughout her life.

She attended the Baptist church in Crofts Hill for many years before joining the Church of God, where she was baptised at age 14. After completing elementary school, she welcomed her beloved son, Kenneth, before moving to Kingston in search of greater opportunities.

In the 1950s, Sutirah embarked on an exciting new chapter when she migrated to England, where she became a skilled seamstress. Kenneth joined her in England some years later. She later married there, though her husband has since predeceased her. Known for her appreciation of fine things, Sutirah's refined style and love of order were reflected in her home, her attire, and her approach to life.

An adventurer at heart, she eventually moved to the United States, where she expanded her skills by becoming a licensed cosmetologist whilst continuing her work in dressmaking. After five years, she returned to England before eventually



coming home to Jamaica in 1996, settling in Norman Gardens, East Kingston, where she still resides.

Encouraged by a friend, Sutirah began attending Boulevard Baptist Church in 1997, where she transferred her membership soon after. In her earlier years at Boulevard, she was an active and dedicated member of Fellowship Group Seven, participating in ministry and outreach with both her time and generous contributions. Even as

health challenges and reduced mobility limited her physical involvement, her care for others never diminished. She often enquired about the well-being of fellow members, offering encouragement and words of kindness.

Sister Rodney also delighted in hospitality, frequently inviting church members and family to her late son's property in St. Thomas for days filled with fellowship, joy, and delicious food. As a member of the Boulevard Baptist Women's Federation, she actively supported its many events, from tea parties to ingatherings and other community projects.

In 2020, she faced the heartbreaking loss of her only son, Kenneth, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet through her grief, she remained steadfast in her faith, trusting God to carry her through those difficult days.

Sutirah credits her longevity to a life of daily gratitude to God, healthy living, and a positive outlook. She continues to attend church services when possible, with the loving assistance of her grandnephew, Dwayne Walker, and her caregiver, embracing her later years with dignity and grace.

Her century of living reflects the scripture that has guided her journey:

*"Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come."*

**Proverbs 31:25**

# Seeing Beyond Limits:



John-Mark Little refuses to let limited vision define his life. Diagnosed at birth with degenerative myopia, a condition affecting three per cent of the global population, he lives with severe nearsightedness caused by excessive eye elongation that stretches and thins retinal tissues. The condition sometimes causes tears requiring laser surgery, yet John-Mark approaches each challenge with remarkable determination.

By third form at Cornwall College, John-Mark relied on vision in only one eye. Rather than withdrawing, he immersed himself in school life with support from teachers and classmates who assisted with notetaking. Despite restrictions on contact sports, he occasionally joined friends for after-school football. His 2023 transfer to another school proved equally successful, with new classmates and teachers providing welcoming support as he engaged both socially and academically.

Growing up in Pierce's Village, a small rural community, John-Mark participates at Mt. Peto Baptist Church, though its small congregation includes few young people. "There's no young person on the choir. I never thought of church as a place where you could get to know people or have fun", he reflected. This perception changed dramatically in 2020 when he first attended camp



## John-Mark's Story

online during COVID restrictions. The experience revealed an entire youth community he hadn't known he was missing, complete with breakout activities, science experiments, Bible studies, and new friendships.

The following summer, John-Mark eagerly registered for in-person camp at Nutshell, handling everything except payment and transport himself. His mother, Novlin, felt considerable anxiety about sending her only son away, knowing his visual limitations and complete dependence on his glasses. Yet John-Mark had told her, "the world is not waiting on him", so she gathered her courage and delivered him to camp.

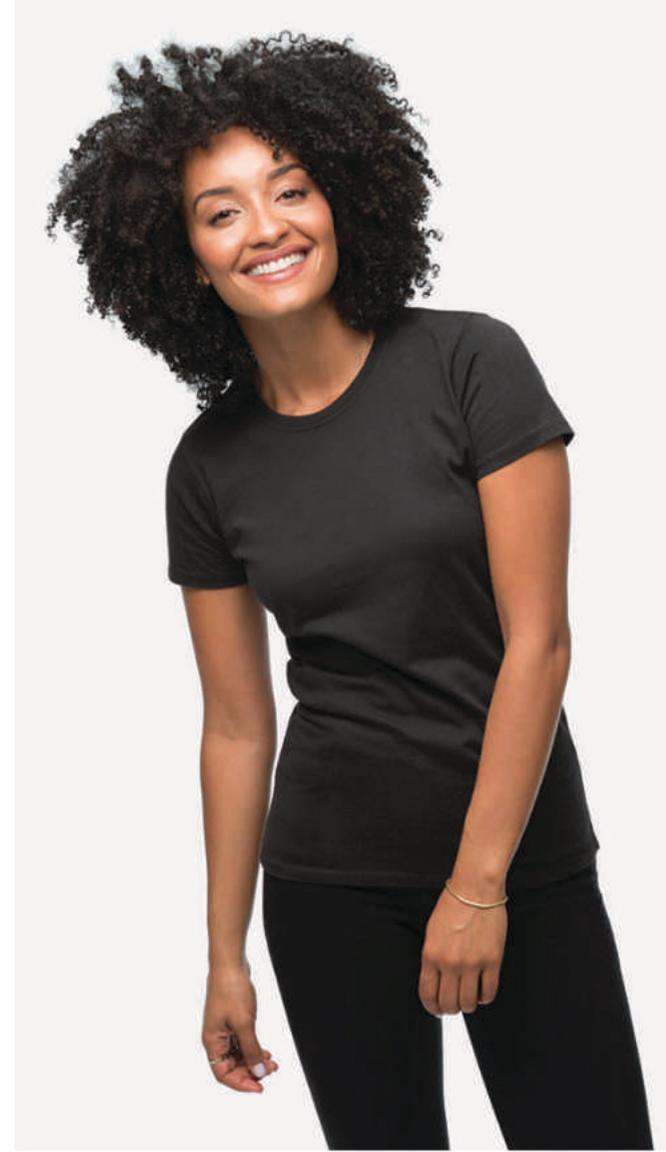
That year proved particularly challenging. Following examinations, John-Mark suffered an unprovoked attack by two older students, sustaining eye injuries. He was also struggling spiritually, believing in God's existence without feeling God's presence. Camp's intensive Bible studies provided deeper understanding and renewed connection. "Even now, I'm miles beyond where I was. I've learnt so much from

camp. Not even just learning about scripture, but it has taught me how to think", he shared.

Camp has also developed John-Mark's social skills. "Normally, I don't go out except for school, so I don't really have to interact with people I don't know. But at camp, there's only people I don't know. So I have to figure out how to navigate it, how to connect with different people and understand that everybody is different".

The annual beach trip highlights John-Mark's camp experience, though it presents unique challenges. Removing his glasses to protect them from water leaves him unable to identify people until they speak. He stays close to counsellors who safeguard his glasses whilst he enjoys the water near shore.

For John-Mark, camp represents more than summer tradition. It's become a source of confidence, faith, and personal growth, providing strategies for navigating life with limited vision and a community that values him for who he truly is.



# Thursdays in Black

We're excited to share that the Jamaica Baptist Union is proudly standing in solidarity with the World Council of Churches through the *Thursdays in Black* campaign, and we want you to be part of it. This powerful movement takes a stand against gender-based violence whilst advocating for justice and equality.

The *Thursdays in Black* campaign began in the late 1980s when the World Council of Churches established it as a peaceful protest against rape and violence, particularly during wars and conflicts.

Join us by wearing black on Thursdays and transform your wardrobe into a powerful statement for change. Let's stand together for justice, equality, and an end to gender-based violence.

Starting in September, we will launch the "Thursdays in Black Challenge", where participants post photos in their black outfits and nominate others to join in. Participants will be highlighted across our networks.

Ready to get involved? Let's unite for a cause that matters.





# Rev. Karl Johnson Elected Chair of BWA Global Council

## BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

In a groundbreaking moment for the global Baptist movement, Rev. Karl Baldwin Johnson of Jamaica has been elected as the first person from the Caribbean to serve as Chair of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Global Council during the organization's 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, July 7-12.

The historic election marks another significant milestone for Caribbean Baptist leadership on the world stage, following the tenure of another distinguished Jamaican, Rev. Dr. Neville Callam, who served as the BWA's General Secretary/CEO from 2007-2017.

Rev. Johnson's election as Chair of the BWA Global Council represents a continuation of Jamaica's outsized contribution to international Baptist leadership. The BWA, founded in 1905, is the world's largest Baptist fellowship, representing 266 conventions and unions across 134 countries and territories, with approximately 51 million baptized believers in 178,000 churches.

"The Jamaica Baptist Union gives thanks to God that in the election of the Rev. Karl B. Johnson as Chair of the Baptist World Alliance Global Council, we continue an established pattern of outsized contributions to leadership in the global Baptist family," stated Rev. Dwight Fraser, President of the JBU.

Currently serving as pastor of the historic Phillippo Baptist Church in Spanish Town, Rev. Johnson brings three decades of ministry experience to his new role. Ordained in September 1992, he previously served for 20 years as General Secretary of the JBU, a position he held until 2021.

The University of the West Indies-educated minister has been an accredited minister of the JBU since 1992 and is recognized as a public theologian, committed ecumenist, and passionate advocate for regional development. His service extends far beyond Jamaica's borders through leadership roles in several international organizations.

Prior to his election as BWA President, Rev. Johnson served as First Vice President of the BWA from 2020-2025 and was a member of the World Council of Churches governing bodies until 2021.

In recognition of his significant contributions to religion and community development, Rev. Johnson was conferred with the honour of the Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander (CD) by the Government of Jamaica in August 2020.

His extensive service portfolio includes leadership roles spanning educational institutions, media organizations, and civic bodies. He has served as Chair of the Board of Governors for Calabar High School (2004-2023), member of the Government of Jamaica Public Service Commission (2012-2018), and

currently serves as President of the Kingston Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

Rev. Johnson's election follows the remarkable tenure of fellow Jamaican Rev. Dr. Neville Callam, who made history in 2007 as the first Black person and the first person who was neither North American nor European to serve as BWA General Secretary. Dr. Callam's decade of leadership from 2007-2017 was marked by significant organizational growth, with the BWA adding 24 new member organizations during his tenure.

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) has enthusiastically endorsed Rev. Johnson's election, noting that this marks "the first time in its 120-year history that a person of Caribbean descent will assume the role of head of this highly respected Christian entity."

Rev. Newton G.A. Dixon, General Secretary of the JCC, extended prayers "that his tenure will elevate the supreme value and relevance of God's timeless Word in addressing the pressing problems of our day and promote authentic Christian witness to a troubled world."

Rev. Johnson is a graduate of the United Theological College of the West Indies and is known as a much sought-after preacher and teacher both nationally and internationally. He is married to Yvette, and they have three adult sons: Nicholas, Joel, and Nathan.

# Edwards-Warrick Becomes First Caribbean President of BWA Women



An ordained minister from Trinidad and Tobago, Reverend Edwards-Warrick brings more than four decades of experience in ministry and leadership to this role. Prior to assuming the presidency of BWA, she served as Vice President of BWA for five years. She also served as President of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union, one of BWA Women's seven continental unions, where she emphasised leadership development and intergenerational ministry. Additionally, she served as President of the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago Women's Department from 2018 to 2025.

"We are creating history today, and I say all praise and all glory and all honour to Almighty

God," said Edwards-Warrick. "I want to thank God that I have been given the opportunity and the honour of serving you as your President. I look forward to continuing to serve alongside some incredible leaders, many of whom I have served with over the last five years."

As one of her first responsibilities, President Edwards-Warrick co-led the communion service at the Closing Celebration of the 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, on 12th July 2025, alongside new BWA Chair Karl Johnson. This marks the first time a president of BWA has been given the honour to lead this important part of the Congress proceedings.

Both leaders were installed and commissioned at the 2025 Baptist Women's Summit held in

Brisbane, Australia, from 7th to 8th July. With more than 700 women from more than 60 countries in attendance, the summit served as a powerful moment of global celebration and spiritual commissioning. Surrounded by their families, Edwards-Warrick and Abbassi were prayed over by outgoing President Karen Wilson of Australia, who served from 2020 to 2025.

"It has been a privilege to serve over the last five years as BWA President. My heart is full of joy and anticipation as Karlene Edwards-Warrick takes up this mantle of BWA President along with Ruba Abbassi as First Vice President," said Wilson. "These women bring godly wisdom and great experience to their leadership roles. They are women of great character and will be a blessing to the global Baptist family."

# Baptists Unite for Global Mission



The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has launched the Acts2Movement, an unprecedented call for global collaboration amongst Baptists to advance God's mission as the Christian world approaches 2033—the 2000th anniversary of Pentecost, the Great Commission, and the birth of the Church.

Speaking at the Opening Celebration of the 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, on 10th July 2025, BWA General Secretary and CEO, Dr. Elijah Brown issued a passionate call to the 53 million Baptists worldwide to join this Spirit-led initiative aimed at bringing transformative change across the globe.

"Two thousand years ago, the disciples gathered in an upper room, and for the first time, the Holy Spirit permanently filled men and women. As a church in action, they changed the world," said Dr. Brown. "What if for the glory of God, we prayed, 'Lord, what you did 2,000 years ago, would you do it again?' A global revival in every language, in every neighbourhood, in every nation."

The Acts2Movement seeks to mobilise the global Baptist family along five specific paths, each inspired by the early church described in Acts 2 and aligned with the BWA's core ministry areas. These paths include the Bible Path, which engages with prayer and

support for Bible translations; the Witness Path, focusing on sharing testimonies of faith across communities; the Care Path, delivering intentional acts of service; the Neighbour Path, establishing neighbourhood chaplains; and the Religious Freedom Path, advocating for religious liberty worldwide.

Dr. Kyle Henderson, Director of the Acts2Movement, explained that the initiative synchronises with the broader 2033 vision of the global Christian community to fulfil the Great Commission. "Baptists are stepping forward to fulfil our sacred responsibility in this divine mission," Dr. Henderson stated. "As we look ahead to 2033, we anticipate the joy of standing together—celebrating all God has done through His Church and filled with expectancy for all He will do in the years to come."

Through the collaborative efforts of BWA members in 138 countries, the movement has set ambitious targets to achieve by 2033, including 450 million shared testimonies, 500,000 neighbourhood chaplains ministering to their communities, one million signatures on the Covenant for Religious Freedom, 1,159 Bible translations engaged with prayer and support, and one billion intentional acts of service.

Reverend Everton Jackson, Director of Integral Mission, emphasised the urgency of the initiative

given the complexities of the 21st century. "Mission in the 21st century must take into consideration emerging trends in relation to unengaged people groups, shifts in missional centres, financial disparity, mega cities and urban centres, and technology amongst other things," Reverend Jackson argued.

The launch at the Brisbane Congress witnessed an immediate response, with hundreds of attendees flooding the area near the stage to unite in prayer. Throughout the Congress, participants had opportunities to engage with different aspects of the Acts2Movement, preparing to bring the vision back to their individual churches and communities.

The movement offers flexible participation through three levels of engagement—walk, run, or soar—allowing individuals and churches to contribute according to their capacity. Resources and detailed information about the campaign are available at [www.baptistworld.org/acts2](http://www.baptistworld.org/acts2).

As Dr. Brown declared in his call: "For the first time in BWA history, we are calling every Baptist, every Baptist convention and union, every Baptist mission agency, humanitarian initiative, university and seminary, every church, every brother and sister to pursue an unprecedented Holy Spirit filled collaborative global mission."

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