



JCHS Policy Brief # 6
March 2016

**The Imperative of the Healthy Family to Achieving
'A Partnership for Prosperity'**

Contents Page

Introduction	Page 1
Family as a policy focus	2
For national security- Marriage: an imperative for peaceful communities	3
Education – set the boundaries on sex education	4
Stop PORN Jamaica	5
Preserving Constitutional Freedoms	6
Children: Remove unreasonable barriersagainst the best welfare of the child	7
Abortion – offering healing to wounded men and women	7
The buggery law - for the Common Good	8
Islam	8
Secularism	9
Questions: The JLP Manifesto	9
Appendix 1: Brief on Sexual Orientation	11

Introduction

A nation's citizens are best able to partner with their Government to achieve prosperity when they are confidently capable of doing so. This requires that children – our future, be born and nurtured in the best possible environment, and the encouragement of healthy inter-personal relationships among members of society.

The Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS) asserts that it is only when the health of marriage and family life are placed at the centre of national development, that true economic and political independence can be achieved. The condition of the family (the core unit of society) must be given substantive policy and multi-stakeholder attention and commitment in order for Jamaica and Jamaicans to collectively and sustainably reduce crime in the nation, unburden the public health system, increase educational levels, and foster real national growth.

We are grateful that the current laws of Jamaica are grounded in the Judeo-Christian philosophy that recognises and protects what is most foundational and fundamental to the flourishing of any society and for the common good:

- (i) respect for life
- (ii) recognition that marriage between one man and one woman forms the core of the natural family, the bedrock unit of society, and
- (iii) fundamental freedoms that entrust liberty with boundaries to all citizens.

Sadly, certain social practices have undermined the potential of our family-friendly laws with costly and deleterious effects on the children, men and women of Jamaica. Attempts are being made in the name of "rights" to normalize, and even legalise, dysfunctional family structures and unhealthy sexual practices, which are neither positive nor normative to our culture and history.

The public needs an honest discussion and factual information about the consequences of these harmful lifestyles. The government must take the lead in promoting restorative policies and programmes to counteract the evident, yet rarely acknowledged effect of the condition of our poor family life on all the factors that are critical for national development. These include economic growth, social cohesion, the educational performance of our children, and the mental and physical health of all citizens.

It will require fearless and bold leadership to propel this sensitive, yet desperately needed, foundational theme into the national psyche, and into making policies which will secure our hope for effective and sustainable prosperity.

We propose the following as essential points to consider and to action in order to undo the legacy of colonial plantation slavery, as well as to safeguard Jamaica's children from the enslaving traps of the modern sexual "rights" movement.

*The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society
and is entitled to protection by society and the State.
Article 16(3), The United Nations Declaration, 1948*

Family as a policy focus

1. Introduce in law and policy a clear statement that preserves and promotes the natural family as foundational to any future development for Jamaica.
2. Define 'family'. The present reality is that there are many arrangements in which children are reared, however the best practice model, to which we ought to aspire under Vision 2030, is the faithful monogamous union of a man and his wife, who together raise their biological or adopted children in a nurturing, low-conflict home.

3. Establish a national family policy with linkages to education, health, youth, finance, national security, labour and social security, justice and culture.

"Where the out-of-wedlock birth rate is much higher even than the national average—[the society pays] a huge price in delinquency, drug abuse, crime, incarceration, hopelessness, and despair."

*Manhattan Declaration 2009*¹

Marriage: an imperative for peaceful communities

"The professional literature of criminology is surprisingly consistent on the real root causes of violent crime: the breakdown of the family and community stability. The sequence has its deepest roots in the absence of stable marriage."²

Sustainable solutions to human problems rise out of secure families and safe small communities. A key plank for any approach to reducing crime must be restoration of stable families with nurturing fathers in the home.

Sadly, there is no consistent message in current Jamaican media that communicates marriage as the ideal to be pursued and that is accessible to all regardless of economic status. Local media tends to glorify single parenthood and casts casual sexual relationships in a positive light. This message needs to be changed. The public needs to be educated on the benefits of intact married families which provide better economic, physical, emotional, and psychological health for men, women and children.

Policies should utilise local studies on the association between criminality and family life and family structure. There is ample data supporting the benefits of stable marriage and religious observance for the prevention of violent crime. Policy makers can draw on the expertise of social scientists, child and family health specialists in shaping an effective national plan to combat crime and violence.

Simple initial steps could be to:

- (i) All relevant curricula should clearly state that sex is best saved for and experienced within marriage. The benefits of marriage should be highlighted in all relevant curricula of older students (e.g. better mental, emotional and physical health, better pooling of economic resources, greater educational achievement for children).
- (ii) Instruct the National Family Planning Board to revise its messages to recommend marriage as the best context for sexual relationships.

¹ A Christian manifesto affirming the sanctity of life, traditional marriage and religious liberty.

www.manhattandeclaration.org

² *The Real Roots of Crime and Violence: the breakdown of marriage, family and community.* Dr Patrick Fagan, 1995
<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1995/03/bg1026nbsp-the-real-root-causes-of-violent-crime>

- (iii) Encourage the development of national *Relationship Education* courses in conjunction with the church, marriage and family counselors. Based on the number and density of churches, this can be implemented at the community level, island-wide.
- (iv) Attendance at such Relationship Education courses should be made mandatory for all persons before the Courts on matters related to the breakdown of family life, or neglect/abuse of spouses and children.

Incentivising marriage through tax breaks would also send the message that marriage is important and has significant individual and collective benefits for all Jamaicans.

"Vast human experience confirms that marriage is the original and most important institution for sustaining the health, education, and welfare of all persons in a society. Where marriage is honored, and where there is a flourishing marriage culture, everyone benefits—the spouses themselves, their children, the communities and societies in which they live. Where the marriage culture begins to erode, social pathologies of every sort quickly manifest themselves."

Manhattan Declaration 2009

Education – set the boundaries of what is acceptable content for sex education.

A policy guideline should be established as to what constitutes sex education curricula that is in the best interest of our children.

The JCHS calls upon the Prime Minister to formally declare to the nation and world that our educational curricula will not contain material developed by the SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), UNESCO, UNICEF and like groups in their attempts to promote illogical, and harmful concepts such as 'comprehensive sexuality education', 'sexual and reproductive rights or health' or prostitution as a recommended profession.

These terms have been used to facilitate an "orifice neutral" definition of sex, a definition of gender based on individual feeling rather than biology, and the fallacious notion of unlimited access to abortion as a "right". The harmful and socially destructive philosophies of such groups seriously undermine parental rights by promoting the "rights" of children to engage in sex at a time and in a manner of their own choosing.

We advocate that our sex education curricula should be grounded in the healthy lifestyle choices which are:

- (1) delayed sexual activity
- (2) avoidance from the harms of premature sexual exposure
- (3) and a healthy view of the proper place for sex in a committed heterosexual union.

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We call upon the Prime Minister to warn the United Nations and other international organisations that Jamaica will not bargain with the welfare of our children and youth, or allow them to be used in the dangerous experiment of re-ordering society.

The content and reach of today's pornography have created an unprecedented and unregulated social experiment. Once a social issue involves problems that affect individuals or groups beyond their capacity to correct – responsibility needs to shift from individual accountability to holding the forces and influences that cause it accountable.

End Sexual Exploitation.org

Stop PORN Jamaica

The Caribbean is said to be one of the highest porn-consuming regions in the world with Jamaica leading. In light of the established societal effects of pornography, the consumption of pornography - sexually explicit and exploitative materials in the media - should be declared a public health crisis in Jamaica.

Like other addictive substances, pornography impairs the brain's control and judgment centers. As such, data has shown the correlation between porn consumption and greater acceptance of the rape myth (that women want/enjoy rape), incidents of rape, sexual harassment, violence against women and children, child sex abuse, prostitution, trafficking, child pornography, increased STI rates, and increased sexual dysfunction (such as erectile dysfunction) among young men and the decreased productivity of workers.

Pornography feeds the demand for child sexual exploitation and the prostitution and trafficking of women and children.³

Overwhelming research has shown the negative impact of viewing violent pornography on health and on the brain, especially to developing children and adolescents.⁴ Among other effects, pornography gives children unrealistic ideas about sex and relationships - that violence is appropriate and women are to be subjugated. As adults, it becomes difficult to form intimate emotional bonds beyond sexual arousal and pleasure with real human beings.

National prosperity cannot be achieved if the citizens are at war within and among themselves. We call on the Government to declare war on porn in order to save our future.

³ Multiple studies provide this information. <http://pornharmresearch.com/2013/12/talking-points-pornography-and-criminal-behavior-and-attitudes-research/>

⁴ *Why Pornography is a Public Health Issue*, Cordelia Anderson, M.A. Founder and Director of Sensibilities Prevention Services

We recommend the following as non-exhaustive action steps:

- Require internet service providers to provide filters for parents to block children's access to pornography sites
- Extensive public education on the dangers of pornography
- Greater enforcement of prohibition of explicit content in media programming
- Research into triggers of crime to explore local statistics and linkages between crime and pornography.

"[SOGI laws] expand state interference in labor markets, potentially discouraging economic growth and job creation ... endanger religious liberty and freedom of speech ... mandate education and employment policies that undermine common sense in the schoolhouse and the workplace." ⁵

Constitutional Freedoms: remove and block controversial terms that silence honest debate

The undefined terms 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' (SOGI) should be rejected from introduction in any law or policy. They have been used as the basis for claims to 'rights' which do not exist in international human rights law. Of note, is the fact that CARICOM states to the United Nations rejected the inclusion of this term in UN documents.⁶ Additionally, the Jamaican Constitution does not recognise 'sexual orientation' as a ground for non-discrimination.⁷

The acceptance of these terms in national policy will effectively censor free speech and lead to the punishment of those who hold an opposing view. Please see the attached explanatory brief in Appendix 1.

As such, we ask that the following be revised to remove the term 'sexual orientation' that was introduced without public knowledge or consultation on the implications of its implementation:

- Staff Orders for the Public Service, 2004
- the Consultation Code of Practice for The Public Sector, 2005
- the Electronic Transactions Act, 2007
- Draft Data Protection Bill, 2015
- and any other policy, law or bill in which the term has been introduced.

Institutions which operate in the Jamaican jurisdiction should not be allowed to have these terms in their bye-laws.

⁵ *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity laws threaten freedom*, Ryan Anderson Ph. D, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/11/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-laws-threaten-freedom>

⁶ GA/SHC/3987 . Minutes of discussion of report of Special Rapporteur on Right to Education, to UN General Assembly Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), 65th sitting, 25 October 2010.

⁷ Section 13 (3) (g) provides the right to freedom from discrimination on the ground of being male or female, race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinions. No further grounds are stated.

"Sociology, psychology, anthropology, sociobiology, medicine and social history [make clear] that children do best when they are born into and raised by their two natural parents. Under *any* other setting – including one-parent, step-parent, homosexual, cohabiting or communal households, children predictably do worse.

The Natural Family: A Manifesto 2005

Children: Remove unreasonable barriers that mitigate against the child's welfare

Children do best when raised by their married biological mother and father in a loving, low-conflict environment. Where children have been abandoned or neglected by their biological parents and are relegated to the status of 'ward of the State', their emotional wounds place them at greater risk for sexual and physical abuse, juvenile delinquency, risky behaviours and initiation into crime.

The ideal option is, where possible, to pursue the healing and restoration of broken families in order for parents and children to be reconciled. This will require teaching and mentoring parents on how to be good parents. If removed from their home, children in need of protection and care should be placed with loving foster or adoptive mother and father, rather than placed in residential homes for extended periods, so as to mitigate against permanent emotional scarring.

A culture of death inevitably cheapens life in all its stages and conditions by promoting the belief that lives that are imperfect, immature or inconvenient are discardable ...

Travesties [flow] from the same loss of the sense of the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of human life that drives the abortion industry and the movements for assisted suicide, euthanasia, and human cloning for biomedical research.

Manhattan Declaration 2009

Abortion – offering healing to wounded women and men

The abortion law is not routinely enforced and there are countless women and men who are silently suffering from its known damaging effects. 'Post-abortive' effects on women include a higher risk for physical illnesses such as infertility, endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, cervical infections, breast cancer and subsequent premature births.

Mental health wounds include increased risk for a variety of mental health problems (panic attacks, panic disorder, agoraphobia, PTSD, bipolar disorder, major depression with and without hierarchy), and substance abuse disorders.⁸

⁸ Priscilla K. Coleman, *Abortion and mental health: quantitative synthesis and analysis of research published 1995-2009*, British Journal of Psychiatry (2011). The analysis, conducted by Priscilla K. Coleman from Bowling Green

Lesser known are the deep and life-long wounds to men's psyches by abortion, impacting their relationships and self-identity.⁹

Public education campaigns on the dangers and consequences of abortion must be undertaken as well as the provision of counselling for women who have had abortions. There is no safe abortion, whether legal or illegal. It destroys the life of mother, father and unborn child.

The buggery law - for the Common Good

The buggery law is not simply about prohibiting a non-procreative sexual act and is not restricted to homosexuals. The law is a positive statement on what a society accepts as appropriate sexual conduct. This law is a critical pillar in preserving the definition of marriage as the union between one man and one woman.

The retention of the buggery law will preserve access to counselling and care for persons struggling with same-sex attraction and homosexuality. The law is a barrier to unconscionable offensive materials being taught in any educational programme in schools, children's homes or places of safety. Repealing or revising the buggery law has not been proven in any society to be necessary or sufficient for reducing HIV in high risk groups.

Such essential ideological statements ought not to be handled lightly by simply calling for a referendum or conscience vote without significant, extensive and comprehensive public education and discussion. Preserving the buggery law is 'doing the right thing' for the Family.

Public health education programmes must also advise against the practice of buggery in recognition of the data that show that buggery is the prime driver of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Islam

The global advance of Islam and the impact of Islamic terrorism on individuals and society is a real threat to Jamaica. The Ministries of National Security and Education ought to be aware of and vigilant about the steps employed by Islam to establish itself

State University, Ohio, USA, is the largest study of its kind and is based on 22 published studies, with a combined number of participants totalling over 850,000. Cited in Christian Concern UK booklet on *Abortion*.

<http://www.christianconcern.com/sites/default/files/Abortion-proof.pdf>

⁹ *The Effects of Abortion on Men: its Emotional, Psychological and Relational Impact*, Vincent M. Rue, Cynthia Tellefsen, <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=8089>

in our country. Islam often portrays itself as a peaceful, family-friendly religion. However, this is a strategy to gain political and social power over communities.¹⁰ The danger is that Islamic philosophy is incompatible with, and is the natural enemy of, democracy.

This is to be sharply contrasted with the Judeo-Christian philosophy which recognises the inherent dignity of all human beings and promotes fundamental rights such as freedom of religion, speech. In this way, Judeo-Christian sets the right framework for democracy.

Secularism

Secularism could be defined as the rejection of religious interpretation, religious institutions and religious influence from the public square. Jamaica is not a secular country as evidenced by the words of our national anthem and pledge.

The JCHS does not assert that Jamaica is a theocracy (a state run by priests on behalf of God) but rather, a plural democracy in which the laws are informed by the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Any suggestion that Christian prayer be replaced with a generic prayer to a 'Supreme Being' is contrary to the Christian persuasion of our nation. Additionally, both religious liberty and protection of the family have suffered under Western democracies that have adopted secular philosophies. Examples of such nations are Sweden, Norway, Finland and the United Kingdom.

The JLP Manifesto

We also seek clarification on the following items stated in the JLP manifesto of 2016:

1. *Page 16. Establishment of a Human Rights Commission to...ensure that as we navigate the waters of our changing society, the rights of citizens will always be protected.*

The experience of other Western democracies with Human Rights Commissions or National Human Rights Institutes has been that they become tools for advancing the ideology of "sexual rights", which censors free speech, and abrogates freedom of conscience, parental rights and religious liberty.

¹⁰ A highly recommended publication on how Islam over-took the British Government and society is *Londonistan* by award-winning British journalist Ms Melanie Phillips.

Please clarify the justification for introducing such an entity in Jamaica where we already have the Office of the Public Defender, and the design and functioning of a Human Rights Commission.

2. *Page 15. Institute a programme to remove and repeal outdated legislation.* What specific laws are being defined in this way? The law which criminalizes murder is no more recent than that which upholds healthy sexual behaviours.
3. *Page 15. Protect vulnerable groups.* Vulnerable groups should be defined, as well as the basis and causes of their vulnerability.
4. *Page 43. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights /HIV and AIDS: The JLP will seek to ensure that women and girls have the information, tools and access to facilities to meet their sexual and reproductive health needs... with a view to reducing early and unplanned pregnancies.*

As indicated above, these terms are interpreted as providing contraception to minors and abortion without parental knowledge or consent. Is this what is being advocated by the JLP?

5. *Page 43.* Advancing '*gender based*' policies and programmes which focus solely on females at the expense of males.

No society can progress if the safety and well-being of only **one** gender is fostered at the expense of the only other one; this is harmful to all of society particularly children. A 'gender' based' ideology that promotes the advance of females over males, or suggests that females are of more value than males, is false and self-serving in creating the challenges it purports to resolve. Jamaica already has gender inequality due to male marginalization and under-achievement.

Appendix 1

Brief on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The concept of 'sexual orientation' is "a complex and amorphous phenomenon that often defies consistent and uniform definition."¹¹ Neither biology nor genetics can account for sexual orientation and gender identity in order for the terms to be clinically or scientifically defined. The UK Royal College of Psychiatrists has acknowledged that orientation may change over time and popular notions are constantly expanding making it harder to define a fixed class of persons.

It should be noted that a number of former homosexuals submitted an amicus curiae brief to the US Supreme Court same sex marriage case of Obergefell v Hodges. The parties affirmed that "sexual orientation is a fluid, transient, personal characteristic, and that individuals can and do change their sexual orientation."¹²

For this reason, sexual orientation cannot be compared to such fixed characteristics as ethnicity or gender. Neither has there been any evidence of the existence of a 'gay' gene.¹³ Even if a 'gay' gene were to be discovered, it would not change the fact that same sex attraction, identity and behaviour does not accord with design in the universe.

Taken at face value, any sexual desire may have a claim to be included as an orientation. An evident danger is the uncertainty about which desires may be included in the future for example pedophilia. On the grounds of predictability and certainty in law and policy making, this nebulous term should be rejected.

The term 'gender' has been used to create a (false) distinction between 'sex' which is determined by biology and, what it means to be male or female according to social norms. The claim of identity fluidity through the contrived term '*gender identity*' is being used to normalize *gender dysphoria* (confusion about one's sexuality) which is a mental disorder.

"A common myth is that gender is merely a "social construct". Some claim we can choose our gender because it is fluid, changeable and determined by our

¹¹ Dr Paul McHugh, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences at the John Hopkins University School of Medicine, *Brief in support of Hollingsworth and Bipartisan Legal Advocacy Group addressing the merits and supporting reversal*, Supreme Court docket, Nos. 12-144. 12-307 (2012)

¹² Amicus Curiae Brief of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays Supporting Respondents, NOS. 14-562, 14-556, 14-571, 14-574. April 2015. <http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/>

¹³ National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, <http://www.narth.com/#!/narth-position-statements/c1ae> . Accessed June 8,2015.

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*feelings about ourselves, not by our biology. In others word, under this radical definition, there are no fixed categories such as male and female. ..One goal of the sexual rights movement is to make "gender" mean in laws and policies, something that one feels or choose rather than what someone is (i.e. male or female)."*¹⁴

The experiences of countries that have accepted sexual orientation and gender identity as a protected category for non-discrimination has not been equity, but discrimination against those who hold opposing views, thus depriving them of their genuine fundamental rights of freedom of speech, conscience, and parental rights.

International law does not recognise the notion of 'sexual orientation and gender identity' neither is there any consensus among UN member states on the use of these terms. Finally there is no obligation on States to enact laws that give individuals any special benefits or protections on the basis of their sexual preferences and behaviour or to sanction an individual's feeling about their gender identity.



The Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS), incorporated in 2012 is a local NGO. We seek to respond to social development challenges from the perspective of Judeo-Christian principles.

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¹⁴ *Stand for the Family*, Sharon Slater, Family Watch International, 2010, p.184, ISBN: 978-097788149-9