



JCHS Policy Brief # 8

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The **Respect Jamaica** campaign: A wolf in sheep's clothing?

Summary: Taken at face value, the Respect Jamaica campaign appears to be a laudable and worthy contribution towards much needed improvement in social relations in the Jamaican society. The campaign however embraces the controversial term 'sexual orientation' and an undefined 'special needs'. In all other societies where the term sexual orientation is recognised or legally protected as a category for non-discrimination, this has resulted in the censorship of legitimate public debate and the penalization of anyone who in expresses disapproval of LGBT lifestyles, with Christians, Christian professionals and Christian business being particularly targeted. With further examination, the **Respect Jamaica** campaign appears to be part of a wider global strategy to advance the 'sexual rights' ideology in Jamaica. In this regard, the campaign may be considered a vehicle to deceptively advance on the Jamaican public, ideas that are contrary to human flourishing, good governance and social cohesion.

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Objectives of Respect Jamaica campaign

We believe that everyone – no matter who they are or how they are – should be afforded the basic right of Respect. #respectjamaica¹

Respect Jamaica describes itself as 'a multi-corporate initiative promoting the value of showing respect and good manners to all people as essential components of making Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business. We encourage the inclusion of people of varying race, religion,

¹ https://www.facebook.com/Respectjamaica/info/?tab=page_info

class, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, and special needs as all are deserving of respect. We also extend to showing respect for our island home and respecting - protecting - the environment.”²

The description of the campaign provided on a Youth Ambassador Recruitment application states however, that, “Respect Jamaica is an anti-discrimination campaign promoting the value of showing respect and good manners to all people as essential components of making Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business... Respect Jamaica seeks to enable youth advocates and leaders to make an impactful contribution to social change and community development.”³

Launched in 2014, the **Respect Jamaica** campaign has 30 corporate companies on board including Jamaica National, Digicel and Digicel Foundation, Island Grill, Wisynco, Caribbean Producers Jamaica and ATL Group, among others.

The advisory board consists of Adam Stewart (Sandals/ ATL), Christopher Zacca (president of the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica), Peter Moses (Citibank), Earl Jarrett (Jamaica National), Thalia Lyn (Island Grill), Brian George (Supreme Ventures), Tony Hart (Founder of the Hart Group of Companies), William Mahfood (Wisynco), Jason Henzell (Jakes Hotel/Treasure Beach Foundation).⁴

The campaign runs through social media, billboards, event partnerships with various organisations (e.g. the US Embassy’s annual Blues on the Green jazz concert, Mental Health week celebrations) school visits, youth for among other platforms.

Direction of current Human Rights debates

All laws and policies are framed within a certain philosophy. Local and global debates have been increasingly influenced by a philosophy that prioritises individual autonomy, personal preferences and pleasures at the expense of the common good of all society.

Human Rights is now the principal vehicle through which this secular thinking is being advanced; that is, awarding the claims of minority interests with the status of a ‘human right’ without:

- first assessing the validity of such claims,
- the impact on pre-existing and fundamental freedoms as a result of admitting new ‘rights’,
- demanding the reciprocal obligation of duty to society by the minority interest claimants.

The most pressing minority claim today is for sexual “rights”. Campaigners demand that all countries accept and legally protect all sexual expressions without further qualification as being normal, equal and good. The campaigners demand punishment of persons, businesses, civic groups and faith-based organisations who express disapproval of liberal sexual lifestyles and practices. Penalties include e.g. legal action, fines, imprisonment, dismissal from employment, or deregistration from professional bodies.

Sexual “rights” campaigners create or exploit a plethora of platforms to disseminate the idea of removing any obstacle to any form of sexual expression, e.g. media, entertainment, education, legal action, human rights debates, academia, public health among others.

The concept of sexual “rights” is being primarily promoted and supported by developed Western nations. The Caribbean, Africa (except South Africa) and Islamic nations have rejected the adoption of these controversial ideas on human sexuality.⁵

² Facebook page for Respect Jamaica. https://www.facebook.com/Respectjamaica/info/?tab=page_info

³ <http://www.youthjamaica.com/content/respect-jamaica-seeks-youth-ambassadors>

⁴ Jamaica Observer, January 24, 2014 http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/business/Denis-O-Brien-spearheads-Respect-campaign-in-Jamaica_15865048

⁵ 65th Session of UN General Assembly, UN Third Committee, 2010, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/gashc3987.doc.htm> , Last accessed September 7, 2016

Controversial Terms

The most controversial terms in the sexual “rights” advance are ‘*sexual orientation*’ and ‘*gender identity*’. These are Trojan Horses which, if adopted, force societal acceptance of perverse behaviours and which lead to statistically established harmful and negative outcomes for individuals and society.

Sexual orientation is neither clinically nor scientifically defined and has been seen as any sexual desire. The more popular association of ‘sexual orientation’ is with persons self-identifying as Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) however, the concept has no limit. The idea that pedophilia is one type of sexual orientation has already been advanced.⁶ Arguably, sado-masochism could also be viewed as a sexual orientation.

Gender identity’ is being used to normalize *gender dysphoria* (confusion about one’s sexuality) which is a mental disorder.

Neither of the terms is protected in the Jamaican constitution. Additionally, sexual orientation was considered and rejected by the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Constitutional and Electoral Reform in 199. For a more detailed expose on the sexual orientation, please see JCHS Policy Brief - Query on inclusion of Sexual Orientation and Gender (Identity) in Jamaican laws and policies.

The mechanics of the Respect Jamaica campaign

Like an advertising campaign, the **Respect Jamaica** initiative:

- (i) communicates a message,
- (ii) to persuade the Jamaican public to re-think existing perceptions and opinions about the stated issues,
- (iii) in order to influence and achieve altered attitudes and behavior.

The words used in this campaign must therefore be clearly understood in order to appreciate the message and its implications. From its Facebook page, the campaigners ask and answer:

“Why RESPECT Jamaica? It is time to take action. It is time to speak out and stand up in support of those who are marginalised and vulnerable—to make positive changes in our communities so our children will learn RESPECT, give RESPECT and enjoy a safe, cohesive and just society. RESPECT Jamaica is therefore needed to bring people together for nation building, building a brighter future for our children and engendering a society that is a more hospitable place for everyone.”⁷

They define RESPECT as “proper acceptance or courtesy; the condition of being esteemed or honoured.”

One may supplement this with an expanded definition from the Concise Oxford Dictionary. ‘Respect’ means ‘regard with deference, esteem and honor; avoid degrading or insulting or injuring or interfering with interrupting, treat with consideration, spare, refrain from offending or corrupting or tempting.

‘Discriminate’ is defined as ‘be, set up, or act on, the basis of a difference between or, distinguish from another, make a distinction, observe distinctions carefully, have a good judgment.’

Based on the ordinary meanings of these words, one may conclude that the **Respect Jamaica** campaign is calling on all Jamaicans to regard each other with esteem and honor, to avoid degrading, insulting or injuring’ (*respect*) all persons especially if they are of a different race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, and have special needs. Jamaicans are also not to make a distinction with other persons, not to act on the basis of a difference between options, not exercise good judgment towards differences, that is *discriminate*, especially if they are of different race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, and have special needs.

⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34858350>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Respectjamaica>

In recent times, many persons have adopted an incorrect understanding of the word ‘discrimination’. They often ascribe an automatic negative connotation seeing any kind of discrimination as inherently negative, without further examining the context.

‘Discrimination’ however, can be a morally neutral exercise that is necessary and important in many everyday activities in order to ensure the safe, appropriate and effective operation of life. What must be examined is the purpose for discrimination, whether the items being compared are equal in all senses and whether the discrimination (selection or non-selection) is on defensible and reasonable grounds.

Existing instances of discrimination that may be good, necessary and helpful include providing “senior citizen” queues in banks and other service institutions, or charging a lower bus fare for students. On the other hand, arbitrary discrimination that has no valid and legitimate purpose, ought to be eliminated. An example of arbitrary discrimination is paying a male employee a higher salary than a woman for the same work although both are similarly qualified.

Are race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, and special needs legally protectable?

The Jamaican Charter of Rights, 2011 states that “all persons in Jamaica are entitled to preserve for themselves and future generations, the fundamental rights and freedoms to which they are entitled by virtue of their inherent dignity as persons and as citizens of a free and democratic society.”⁸

The Charter then sets out a number of rights to which all Jamaicans are entitled such as right to life, liberty and security, freedom of thought, expression, equality before the law,⁹ among others. It also provides the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of being male or female,¹⁰ race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinions.¹¹ These are all behaviorally neutral traits.

The **Respect Jamaica** campaign includes four of the Charter’s categories - race, social class, religion and political opinions. It adds age, sexual orientation and special needs. Age is also behaviorally neutral, however, sexual orientation includes attraction and behaviour. It would therefore appear that the campaign seeks to persuade the Jamaican public that a sexual preference and behaviour is to be treated as equal to non-behavioural traits like skin colour.

Further, as what constitutes *sexual orientation* is limitless and includes abnormal sexual practices, the **Respect Jamaica** campaign can be seen as seeking to influence Jamaicans into thinking that an unlimited scope of sexual behaviours, some of which are prohibited in Jamaican law, contrary to biological design and with known harmful public health outcomes, are to be accorded *respect*, held in esteem and honor.

The campaign also communicates that Jamaicans ought not to *distinguish* between sexual preferences and behaviours, that is, all sexual behaviours are to be treated as equal. This would mean that legally prohibited sexual behaviours (incest, pedophilia, buggery), and behaviours that known to be inherently risky with medically proven unhealthy outcomes (e.g. buggery) would be placed on par with the biologically sound adult male-female sexual intercourse. This is obviously a dangerous, yet logical interpretation of the objectives of the campaign.

The argument may be made that the campaign is subject to Jamaica’s laws and prohibited behaviours are not to be assumed to be included. If this were the case, then why include sexual orientation at all? Why not make a clear disclaimer regarding the boundaries of our laws? This seems not to be the interpretation as the campaign has partnered and continued to partner with local and international LGBT activist organisations and individuals and exhibits these partnerships on their Facebook page.

⁸ Section 13 (1) (b)

⁹ Sections 13 (3) (a), (b), (c) and (g)

¹⁰ Section 13(3) (i) (i)

¹¹ Section 13 (3) (i) (ii)

The non-descript category of '*Special needs*' is open for interpretation. A physically, or mentally handicapped person could claim have special needs, as could a person with an illness such as diabetes, depression, or HIV/AIDS, a dietary restriction such as lactose intolerance. The term 'special needs' may also be used by LGBT advocates to claim that their sexual orientation' is a special need. This is an abuse of the concept of special needs. One cannot use one's behaviour over which one has control as justification to be treated in a special manner.

It should also be noted that LGBT activists have skillfully appropriated the terms 'marginalised' and 'vulnerable' to describe themselves. These terms have also been used in the **Respect Jamaica** campaign.

It is a legitimate expectation that every Jamaican should treat others with basic courtesy, and, violence against anyone ought to be discouraged and punished accordingly. However, the **Respect Jamaica** campaign can have the effect of fragmenting society into multiple minority interests, each competing for attention and special treatment. *Sexual orientation* along with the undefined '*special needs*' category could be used to appeal for treatment or privileges not available to all citizens, nor justifiable on public health or public interest grounds.

Pitting minority interests against each other, with the State being demanded to arbitrate and choose which to give greater preference will weaken social relations and undermine the very goals this campaign was ostensibly started to redress.

Other grounds for 'respect'?

A review of the **Respect Jamaica** Facebook page reveals an expansion of what should be held in 'respect. The below is a selection of short messages, posted to the Facebook page, which appear innocent and have a ring of truth to them. However, if applied without qualification, these slogans can lead to distorted interpretations.

- **March 26, 2016:** Being different is not a problem. Being treated differently is. STOP DISCRIMINATION!
- **March 12, 2016:** Out of many one people tells us that respecting difference is part of being truly Jamaican.
- **March 10, 2016:** Respect all family types.
- **March 5, 2016:** Different does not mean wrong #out of many we are 1.

A number of videos have also been uploaded. The '**Privilege Walk**' features persons ostensibly representing different designations. Persons were required to take a step forward or backwards based on their response to a number of questions posed to determine whether they experienced social advantage or disadvantage based on their designation.

Although the designations were not all listed, the persons who self-identified or were apparent from observing the video were a male Muslim, female Muslim, dreadlocked fair-skinned female, a man in wheelchair, a woman with lupus, Caucasian woman, a female dwarf, a transgender and a female resident of Tivoli Gardens. Some of the questions were:

- (i) was anyone called names about something they cannot change,
- (ii) raised in area with no gang-related crimes or prostitution or drug activity,
- (iii) had to skip a meal or were hungry because did not have enough money,
- (iv) received special treatment because of how look or speak,
- (v) felt uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, religion or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation,
- (vi) family had to move because could not afford the rent,
- (vii) own a valid visa to travel outside of Jamaica and Caribbean region.

A **Respect Jamaica** billboard just above the intersection of Wellington Drive and Old Hope Road, Kingston 6 states 'Respect me, no matter who I am.'

The Impact on Business and Religious Liberty

The experience of societies that have protected sexual orientation as a category for non-discrimination has led to increasing loss of freedom of speech, conscience and religious liberty against those who express dissenting views on the concept of sexual orientation.

Protecting sexual orientation would force Governments to ensure that schools teach lesbian gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) practices as normal; coerce business owners to support LGBT events even if doing so would be contrary to their faith beliefs; enable to creation of unisex bathrooms exposing girls and females to potential harassment and assault by ordinary men masquerading as transgender; and pave the way for acceptance of same sex marriage.

In countries that have recognised and protected these terms, Christian businesses or professionals have been sued, fined by Courts, fired, or lost jobs because they were not allowed to exercise their fundamental freedom of conscience or religious liberty, to freely express their opinions, to decline from affirming the homosexual lifestyle as normal and good.

For example,

- In May 2015, Ashers Baking Company in **Northern Ireland** was asked by Mr Gareth Lee, a volunteer with gay rights campaign group QueerSpace, to bake a cake with a pro-gay slogan. The Christian business declined the request, "We've said from the start that our issue was with the message on the cake, not the customer and we didn't know what the sexual orientation of Mr. Lee was, and it wasn't relevant either. We've always been happy to serve any customers that come into our shops."

The business was reported to the Irish Equality Commission (*akin to the proposed National Human Rights Institute*) which initiated the legal action. The Court held the business to be guilty of discriminating against Gareth Lee on the grounds of sexual orientation. Damages of £500 plus court costs was awarded to the homosexual claimant.¹²

- In Washington, **USA**, an elderly Christian florist, Barronelle Stutzman, was sued by her gay clients in 2013, because she refused to provide decorations for their wedding. Although the homosexual couple had otherwise used the florist's services for other occasions over 9 years without difficulty, they chose to sue her for this instance because she maintained that her Christian beliefs prevented her from selling flowers for the same-sex wedding, "because of (her) relationship with Jesus Christ".¹³

In both instances, there were other available and willing service providers, yet the LGBT activists refused to contact these other businesses.

- In 2015, the Mayor of Houston, Texas, attempted to force the citizens to accept a law entitled Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO). The law would have made it illegal to discriminate against someone based on 15 different "protected characteristics," including sex, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Mayor claimed that such a law was necessary to preserve Houston as "a warm welcoming place that tolerates differences and respects diversity."

¹² <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/may/19/northern-ireland-ashers-baking-company-guilty-discrimination-gay-marriage-cake>

¹³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-washington-gaymarriage-idUSKBN0LN0B520150219>

One result would have rendered bathrooms gender-neutral, that is anyone could use any bathroom regardless of their actual biological gender. The implications of enacting that law would have,

- Forced business owners to promote messages about sex and marriage that are contrary to their religious beliefs,
- Allowed men (self-identifying as women) into women's bathroom placing real women at risk,
- Led to a limitation on free speech rights with penalties for all who disagree, without exception.
- Religious liberty likely to have been treated as weak defence
- Incur high costs to individuals, community and the economy from unnecessary legal suits by activists or opposing citizens seeking to enforce their fundamental freedoms.¹⁴

Jamaica's experience

Admittedly, no legal action could be currently taken in Jamaica against an individual or business for not according 'respect' to a person based on their sexual orientation. However, it must be appreciated that the campaign to normalise LGBT behaviours is current, on multiple platforms and increasing. For example,

- (i) Advancing LGBT ideology across the globe is a major plinth of US foreign policy. In appointing a Special Envoy for LGBT 'rights', US Secretary of State John Kerry said, "Defending and promoting the human rights of LGBT persons is at the core of our commitment to advancing human rights globally – the heart and conscience of our diplomacy. That's why we're working to overturn laws that criminalize consensual same-sex conduct in countries around the world."¹⁵ The Envoy, Mr Randy Berry made a secret visit to Jamaica in May 2015.
- (ii) Through the UN's Universal Periodic Review on member state' human rights performance, the United Kingdom and numerous other European nations, Australia and the USA have repeatedly asked the Jamaican Government to repeal the buggery law, and protect sexual orientation, gender identity and other 'stigmatised categories' from non-discrimination.
- (iii) A Jamaican gay activist, Mr Maurice Tomlinson, is now challenging the constitutionality of the buggery law seeking to have it repealed by claiming that he has a right to engage in buggery.
- (iv) Mr Tomlinson also brought a legal suit against TVJ, CVM TV and PBCJ for their refusal to air his advertisements calling for tolerance of LGBT persons. Mr Tomlinson lost the case but has appealed. The matter is now before the Court of Appeal.
- (v) In 2014, proposals were put before Parliament to revise sexual offences legislation including giving minors access to contraception without parental knowledge or consent, legalizing prostitution and abortion.
- (vi) Various UN agencies such as UNICEF and other international groups have introduced controversial content in educational curricula for children teaching that homosexuality and other perverse sexual behaviours are normal.
- (vii) It will be recalled that in 2014, a prominent medical doctor was fired from his post at the University of the West Indies on the demand of pro-LGBT activists, on the grounds that his factual expert testimony on homosexual conduct and outcomes, was 'discriminatory' to that population.

¹⁴ <https://www.texastribune.org/2015/11/03/houston-anti-discrimination-ordinance-early-voting/>

¹⁵ <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/02/237772.htm>

- (viii) Discussions are taking place to establish a National Human Rights Institute which would openly protect sexual orientation as a category for non-discrimination. Once this term is protected in law, it is guaranteed that religious liberty will be suppressed and businesses targeted for punished on contrived discrimination claims.

JCHS Conclusions and Recommendations

- ❖ The JCHS acknowledges and applauds the good intentions and honorable motives of the persons in corporate Jamaica who are heading this campaign and very likely, do not intend to trample on the freedoms of Christians.
- ❖ The JCHS emphatically agrees that respecting all *persons* is a necessary ingredient for a healthy society.
- ❖ Jamaican law is formulated within the Judeo-Christian philosophy, of which a foundational principle is *Imago Dei*, that is, all humans beings are made in the Image of God. It is only by adhering to this principle that the dignity of all human beings can be defended. Secularism provides no foundation for this principle.
- ❖ Jamaican law is formulated within the Judeo-Christian philosophy which defines human sexuality in accordance with design, that is, biology and anatomy.
- ❖ The Jamaican Constitution and law recognise only two sexes, that is, male or female.
- ❖ The Jamaican Constitution which is the highest law of the law neither recognises nor protects sexual orientation or gender. These illogical, imprecise and vague terms are to be rejected from introduction in any law or policy.
- ❖ Jamaican law prohibits the perverse sexual behaviours that would be normalized by acceptance of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ❖ Attempts to persuade the Jamaican public to accept controversial, illogical and unsound concepts must be exposed.
- ❖ Whilst recognising that courtesy is expected by all citizens towards each other and that some members of society require specific assistance in facilitating their participation in society, e.g. the physically disabled person, any calls to accredit additional treatment, over and above the existing rights must be thoroughly examined and if accepted, be based on justifiable grounds that are in the public interest.
- ❖ As long as sexual orientation is included in the Trojan Horse of *Respect*, the result, as illustrated elsewhere, will inevitably include discrimination against, and disrespect for the views and fundamental freedoms of one group of persons.
- ❖ Christian businesses who give support to this deceptive campaign must appreciate that they are comprising biblical principles, and they will not be exempt from eventually being targeted by LGBT activists.
- ❖ **Respect Jamaica** is working towards building public familiarity with a controversial term and concept. The purpose of this campaign, in conjunction with other efforts, is to force recognition and protection of sexual orientation on the hearts and minds of the Jamaican public. The true intentions of this campaign must be exposed.

“If radical ideas are repeated often enough, in enough venues and over a sufficiently long enough period of time without being adequately refuted, they eventually take hold. This holds true no matter how crazy or far-fetched the ideas are.”¹⁶

¹⁶ *Stand for the Family*, Sharon Slater, Family Watch International, 2010, p.198, ISBN: 978-097788149-9



The Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS), incorporated in 2012 is a local non-profit organisation seeking to respond to social development challenges from the perspective of Judeo-Christian principles and values.

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