

# Jamaica:

## Challenges for Prayer:

**The country finds itself in the midst of moral and social collapse.** Powerful South American drug cartels, using Jamaica as a transshipment point for cocaine destined for the USA, wield great influence. This fuels violence, putting Jamaica fourth globally for murders per capita. Rape and domestic abuse are widespread. As part of an anti-corruption drive, the government has invited greater participation from churches. Pray that government and church leaders may reject compromise. Pray for courage, moral integrity and determination to turn the country back to God. The National Leadership Prayer Breakfast brings church leaders together with leaders in politics, business and the security forces to address and pray for these issues.

**Jamaican Christianity needs reformation and renewal.** It enjoys one of the world's highest number of churches per square mile, but the majority of self-proclaimed Christians in Jamaica neither attend church nor lead a Christian life. Networks – such as the Jamaica Council of Churches, the Jamaica Association of Evangelicals and the Jamaica Pentecostal Union as well as many ministers' fraternals – seek to address and combat the political and social ills while working for unity and true Christian faith and practice in the Church.

**With the most evangelicals and the best-resourced churches** in the Caribbean, Jamaica can and should be a spiritual leader in the region for evangelism and mission, training and unity. Pray that the 15 Bible schools and seminaries in Jamaica as well as the Keswick teaching conferences, which serve the whole Caribbean, may be powerhouses of biblical theology, practice and vision.

**Young people.** OAC has reached over one million in its 20-plus years of evangelistic outreach to school assemblies. CCCI has a presence on both university campuses in the capital. CEF ministers through Bible clubs, camps and devotions in schools. IFES and SU have a combined ministry (SCFSU), producing Bible reading materials and witnessing in over 200 schools and 20 tertiary institutions. Pray for effective evangelism and discipling of young people that will prepare them to cope with the many challenges of life.

**The less evangelized** who need prayer:

*a) The very poor* have little exposure to the gospel except by radio. There is a large underclass, including the pseudo-orphaned “barrel children”, among whom mostly Catholic and Anglican ministries work. These gospel-neglected people have little by way of moral foundations; pray for the whole gospel to touch their lives and communities.

*b) The Rastafarians* began as a protest movement that mixed Christian beliefs with Black consciousness ideas and deified the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I. They are well known for their reggae music and use of *ganja* (marijuana), as well as for their non-violent “peace and love” philosophy. They have considerable influence in Jamaica and have spread to Europe and North America. In recent years, a few prominent Rastafarians have professed Christ as Savior and become active evangelicals.

**Christian help ministries** – many serving the whole Caribbean.

*a) The Bible Society*, based in Kingston, channels Scriptures to most of the mini-states of the region. The Society has a strong vision of making Scripture accessible to young people in

particular.

**b) *Christian bookstores.*** Source of Light Ministries operates six Christian bookstores in Kingston and runs the region's largest Bible Correspondence Course. **CLC** has a notable ministry through three bookstores.

**c) *Christian broadcasting.*** Radio is broadcast in English by **TWR** (from within Jamaica) and by others from outside, totaling 77 hours per week. In the country itself, there is also a religious radio (LOVE FM) and TV station.

**d) *The Student Christian Fellowship and Scripture Union*** (SCF/SU), as well as Jamaica Youth for Christ and Jamaica Child Evangelism Fellowship, do valuable work among the younger generation. Many outstanding Christian leaders serving globally or in Jamaica are products of these ministries.