

## FINALLY! The Church and the DJs agree

Some church leaders have come out in full support of Jamaica's dancehall fraternity while condemning the actions of international gay rights groups that are placing immense pressure on many local artistes.

While the church leaders who spoke, argued that it was wrong to incite violence against any group, most agreed that the dancehall artistes had a right to express their disagreement with the homosexual lifestyle.

"To those artistes who have continued to speak out against that kind of lifestyle in their music, I'll encourage them to keep up the pressure, not in a violent way, but certainly to continue to proclaim the message," Bishop Delford Davis of the Power of Faith Ministries in Portmore said.

The truth

According to Davis, while the church is completely against violence, the truth must be told and not censored.

"Truth is very costly, I think they should be strong enough to maintain their position in as much as they are being penalised. A price has always had to be paid for truth."

Davis said his message to the DJs would be to remove the element of violence from their music, but continue to spread the message that a lifestyle of homosexuality is immoral and wrong.

"Do not incite violence, but certainly continue to propagate the message of sanctity of human sexuality. We fully support the message that is proclaimed of God's purpose and plan for procreation and human sexuality," he argued.

For pastor Bobby Wilmot of the Joy Town Community Development Foundation when the gays took their lifestyle into the public domain they opened themselves for criticisms.

"When you were practising your homosexual lifestyle privately, fine, that's in your space. But the moment you bring it into the public domain you are saying to people they must accept it and therefore that gives me the right to reject it," he argued.

Wilmot continued: "Now as a man of God, I would reject it from a word of God, but the man who is in the dancehall, who is not coming necessarily from a Christian perspective, this is how he operates. He's going to come at it in his way."

Wilmot said while he does not support violence, he has to agree with the stance of the dancehall man.

"I would respond by saying Sodom and Gomorra was destroyed by God, so take heed to that, there's a lesson there!"

Wilmot bashed the gay community for forcing the cancellation of concerts featuring some dancehall artistes.

"When you cut me off like that, you are preventing me from bringing my views to the public - you are not fair, it can't be right," he said. "You say this is my lifestyle before the public, I must be allowed also to say I am against it."

Reverend Donald Webley of the, Rosemount Missionary Church in Montego Bay, St James was critical of both groups.

"The same level of force being used by the gay community to undermine the dancehall artiste is similar to the way in which some dancehall artistes have been advocating violence towards them. Both of them seem to be using a similar approach to get their messages across."

He added: "I think the dancehall artistes need to have the opportunity to express themselves but of course not in a violent way."

Webley said the recent demands of the gay community of reggae artiste, Buju Banton are ludicrous. "The demands that have been made upon him are outrageous and unreasonable."

According to Webley, Buju should publicly apologise and withdraw the anti-homosexual anthem Boom Bye Bye because it is clearly violent.

But Webley argued that the homosexual community should not use its power to undermine Buju's ability to earn or to support a lifestyle that he is morally against.

Homosexuals right

For Pastor Raphael Thomas of the Annotto Bay Gospel Hall believes that the homosexual community is right to target the concerts of some Jamaican artistes.

"I don't think it is right to promote violence against those who practise that kind of lifestyle, although it is not something that the church can endorse. They are people that the church must reach out to and seek to help them just like persons who are involved in other kinds of activities that are not considered right."

According to Pastor Thomas the violent approach of the dancehall artiste is not right.

"We respect the orientation of the DJs and their strong disagreement with that kind of lifestyle but it still does not give them a right to promote violence against the homosexuals." Pastor Thomas said.

"There are other ways that we can seek to correct, what I consider to be the unacceptable lifestyle of the gay community without seeking to be violent towards them," added Thomas.