



MESSAGE FOR CHURCH SERVICE – EDUCATION WEEK 2026

(12 minutes, Revised)

**Theme: “Reformation Now: Rebuilding a Resilient Education System Buoyed
by the Eternal Father and Unrelenting Unionism”**

Beloved brothers and sisters, colleagues in education,
partners in nation-building,

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our
Eternal Father.

Today, we gather at a defining moment. As we mark the
beginning of Education Week 2026, we do so under a
theme that is not only timely—but urgent, prophetic, and
uncompromising:

**“Reformation Now: Rebuilding a Resilient Education
System Buoyed by the Eternal Father and Unrelenting
Unionism.”**

Not later. Not eventually.

Now.

And if ever there was a moment that demanded reformation, it is this moment.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, we have witnessed not just physical damage, but systemic strain. Schools have been disrupted, communities unsettled, and educators called upon to give more than they ever thought possible. Teachers have shown extraordinary commitment—often in the face of personal hardship—continuing to serve even when their own circumstances were uncertain.

And in all of this, one word has been used repeatedly—resilience.

We hear it everywhere: “Our teachers are resilient.”

“Our students are resilient.”

“Our system is resilient.”

But today, I want us to pause and interrogate that word.

Because too often, resilience has become a convenient expectation rather than a deliberate investment.

We praise resilience, but we do not build it.

We celebrate endurance, but we do not support it.

We applaud sacrifice, but we do not compensate it.

And that is a problem.

Resilience is not accidental. It is intentional. It is cultivated. It is resourced.

You cannot demand resilience from a system that you have not strengthened.

You cannot expect resilience from teachers who are overworked, underpaid, and under-supported.

You cannot build resilience on rhetoric—you must build it on policy, on investment, and on justice.

So, when we speak of rebuilding a resilient education system, we must understand that this requires action.

It requires investment in infrastructure so that our schools can withstand future shocks.

It requires investment in technology so that learning can continue even in times of disruption.

It requires investment in psychosocial support so that teachers and students can heal and recover.

And it requires investment in the people who are at the heart of the system—our teachers.

But our theme does not stop at resilience. It speaks of being “buoyed by the Eternal Father.”

And this is critical.

Because while systems may falter, God remains constant.

He is our anchor in the storm.

He is our refuge in times of trouble.

He is our strength when our own strength is insufficient.

Scripture reminds us: “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”

And so, our reformation must be grounded not only in policy and planning—but in purpose, in faith, and in divine guidance.

But let us also be reminded:

Faith is not passive.

Faith calls us to act.

Faith calls us to stand.

Faith calls us to pursue justice.

And that brings me to the second pillar of our theme:

Unrelenting unionism.

Unionism, for the Jamaica Teachers' Association, is not about confrontation for its own sake.

It is not about disruption without purpose.

It is not about self-interest.

Unionism is about justice.

It is about ensuring that those who serve are not exploited.

It is about ensuring that those who give are not diminished.

It is about ensuring that those who carry the future of this nation are themselves supported and sustained.

Unionism is stewardship.

Unionism is advocacy.

Unionism is accountability.

It is the mechanism through which we give voice to the voiceless.

It is the instrument through which we challenge inequity.

It is the shield that protects the dignity of the teaching profession.

And in this moment, unionism must be unrelenting.

Because we find ourselves at a critical juncture.

Negotiations with the government have reached a crucial stage.

Decisions being made now will shape the lives of teachers for years to come.

And let me say this clearly:

This is not merely a negotiation about salaries. This is a struggle for social justice.

When teachers—who shape minds, build character, and carry the future of this nation—are among the lowest paid in the region, while others enjoy far greater compensation, something is fundamentally wrong.

That is not just an economic issue.

It is a moral issue.

And so we say, with clarity and conviction:

Teachers must be paid a salary that reflects their value and their worth.

Not as a favour.

Not as an afterthought.

But as a matter of justice.

Because when you underpay teachers, you undermine the system.

When you undervalue teachers, you devalue education.

And when you neglect teachers, you compromise the future of the nation.

This is why our advocacy must continue.

This is why our resolve must remain strong.

This is why our unionism must be unrelenting.

At the same time, we continue to engage with critical policy matters that will shape the profession.

The Jamaica Teachers' Council Bill remains one such matter.

We have made another formal submission to the Minister of Education, because we believe that any legislative

framework governing the teaching profession must be one that empowers, not restricts.

It must uplift the profession—not constrain it.

It must recognize teachers as professionals—not merely regulate them as functionaries.

Reform must be done with teachers, not to teachers.

And so we will continue to ensure that the voice of the teacher is heard—clearly, firmly, and unapologetically.

But even as we speak of policy, negotiations, and advocacy, we must never lose sight of our higher calling.

We are not just educators.

We are not just administrators.

We are not just union members.

We are nation-builders.

And nation-building requires courage.
It requires us to stand when it is uncomfortable.
It requires us to speak when it is unpopular.
It requires us to act when it is difficult.
And so today, I leave you with this charge:
Let us move beyond rhetoric to action.
Let us move beyond endurance to empowerment.

Let us move beyond survival to transformation.
Let us build resilience—not just speak about it.
Let us practice faith—not just profess it.
Let us embrace unionism—not just benefit from it.
Let us stand together—anchored in God, united in
purpose, and committed to justice.
Because the task before us is great.
But the God who calls us is greater.
May He strengthen our hands for the work ahead.
May He grant us wisdom in our negotiations.

May He give us courage in our advocacy.

And may He unite us in our mission.

And as we embark on this Education Week, may it not simply be a time of reflection—

but a time of reformation.

Reformation now.

God bless you.