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See back cover for Table of Contents

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Reverse Missiology: Mission Approaches and Practices of African Christians within the Baptist Union of Great Britain

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This essay investigates the missiological implications of African Christianity in Britain. It explores the phenomenon of *reverse mission*—that is, the idea that people from former mission fields are now contributing to mission in Europe and North America.

Most studies on reverse mission focus on independent Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations with African roots. These churches with humble beginnings have emerged over time to be some of the largest and fastest growing churches in Britain. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) started in the UK in 1988 and now boasts of having about 864 church plants within the British Isles.[1]

Although African Pentecostal churches are growing and thereby attracting both scholarly and public attention, there is also a concentration and growing presence of Africans within historic churches.[2] For example, the number of Black Anglicans in Britain more than doubled between 1992 and 1998, from 27,000 to 58,200 attendees.[3] In addition, the largest Black church concentration as of the year 2000 was the Roman Catholic Church's 61,000 members, as compared to a total Pentecostal population of 70,000.[4]

In this essay, I document the mission contributions and struggles of African Christians within the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). I highlight the different approaches to mis-

1 Peter Brierley, *UK Church Statistics No. 3: 2018 Edition* (Tonbridge, UK: ADBC Publishers, 2017).

2 Historic churches in this context include the Catholics, Church of England, Baptists, Methodists and United Reformed Church.

3 Joe Aldred, 'The Black Church in Britain and Their Relations with the Ecumenical Movement, with Particular Reference to Black Pentecostalism', in Christoph Dahling-Sander, Kai M. Funkschmidt and Vera Mielke, eds., *Beiheft zur Okumenischen Rundschau: Pfingstkirchen und Okumene in Bewegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2001), 184.

4 Peter Brierley, *The Tide Is Running Out: What the English Church Attendance Survey Reveals* (London: Christian Research, 2000).

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sion taken by African migrants, such as church planting, evangelism, social action and racial justice concerns. In carrying out this research, I have interviewed eleven African ministers within the Baptist Union.

I. The Study of African Christianity

It is important to locate a study of African Christianity in Britain within the context of African theology. Studies of African Christianity consist primarily of contextualization work by African theologians, but also include a host of historical and anthropological treatments.

As African countries gained independence starting with Ghana in 1957, African theologians began to look at the relationship between Christianity and African traditional religions (ATRs). African theology's main preoccupation, as articulated in West and East Africa or Anglophone African countries, was the inculturation of Christianity into African worldviews.

The particular concern of this discourse was the nature of ATRs and their relationship of continuity rather than discontinuity with the Christian faith. Part of the argument was that just as the Jewish religion prepared the way for the gospel to be received, so did ATRs prepare Africans to receive the gospel in their own context.[5] That claim would make Christianity in effect a continuation of ATRs.

Although various African theologians articulated this point of view, their voices were far from identical. Pioneer exponents of this new contextual theology included Bolaji Idowu (1913–1993), whose works explored the relations between Christianity and Yoruba religion and spirituality, arguing for an indigenous church.[6] Christian Baeta (1908–1994) studied some churches in Ghana.[7] Harry Sawyerr (1909–1987) from Sierra Leone contributed to a strong mission theology.[8] John S. Mbiti, possibly the best-known of all modern African theologians, developed a systematic study of ATRs.[9] Kwesi Dickson (1929–2005) discussed the theoretical basis for the working out of Christian theology by African Christians with respect of the rise of Third World theologies.[10]

Although African theology initially concentrated on the task of relating Christianity to African religions and culture, by the early 1970s it began to consider its mission as the liberation of Africans, in terms of socio-economic development and political emancipation.[11] This was especially true in the

5 Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 1992).

6 E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (Lagos, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria, 1962); Bolaji Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

7 Christian Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some Spiritual Churches* (London: SCM, 1962).

8 Harry Sawyerr, *Creative Evangelism: Towards a New Christian Encounter with Africa* (London: Lutterworth Publishers, 1968).

9 J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969).

10 Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984).

11 John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today* (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1995), 137.

apartheid situation in South Africa. A South African Black theology of liberation was developed by the likes of Basil Moore, a South African Methodist theologian;[12] Steve Biko, a lawyer and activist who died campaigning for the freedom of South African Blacks; and later Desmond Tutu.

A similar theology of liberation arose elsewhere in Africa, seeking to free Africans not just from neo-colonialism and the effects of globalisation, but also from domination by African dictators. One such voice was the Liberian theologian Burgess Carr (1936–2012), former General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACCC).

Since the mid-1980s we have also seen the explosion of African 'womanist theology' in independent scholars such as the Ghanaian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Musimbi Kanyoro and Isabel Phiri. Other avenues for the expression of womanist theology have been women's theological events, organizations and publications. The main concern of this theology is the liberation of African women from Africa's patriarchal heritage, consequences of which have included female genital mutilation, domestic violence, abuse and rape.[13]

Although previously there was a distinction between African theologies of inculturation and African political theologies, this is no longer the case due to various socio-economic and political changes taking place across the continent.[14] In addition, African charismatics and Pentecostals have dominated the Christian scene on their continent during the last 40 years, giving rise to a distinctive African Pentecostal theology.[15]

One pioneer of modern African theology, Byang Kato (1936–1975), advocated against most of his peers a distinct African evangelical theology. Kato was one of the few voices who argued for a discontinuity between ATRs and Christianity.[16] Although discussions of the nature and scope of African Pentecostals and charismatics' theological contributions are ongoing, with regard to mission, church history and theology in the African context these groups are now accepted as significant contributors to global Pentecostalism and world Christianity.[17]

The explosive growth of African charismatics and Pentecostals, amongst other expressions of African Christianity, has driven the phenomenon of reverse mission. These Africans are among the numerous Christians from the majority world who are planting churches and doing mission in

12 Basil Moore (ed.), *Black Theology: The South African Voice* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1973).

13 Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity*.

14 Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century', in Ogbu Kalu, ed., *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2007), 418.

15 Clifton Clarke (ed.), *Pentecostal Theology in Africa* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 1.

16 Byang Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (Kisumu, Kenya: Evangelical Publishing House, 1975).

17 A. H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); A. F. Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity* (New York: Orbis, 2017).

Europe and North America. One notable African theologian whose research has examined the explosive growth of African charismatics, as a backdrop to understanding African Christianity in the diaspora, is Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu.[18] I have also described reverse mission in Britain by looking at Nigerian Pentecostal history through twenty of its pioneers.[19]

In the British context, African churches are regarded as Black majority churches (BMCs). Studies of BMCs began in the 1970s with research commissioned by the British Council of Churches, which treated Black churches as sects at that time. Clifford Hill's resulting short piece, *Black Churches: West Indian and African Sects in Britain* (1971), was an early survey of Black churches in Britain since the 1950s.

The German Roswith Gerloff authored more mature works on Black majority churches. Her robust scholarship and research spanned the period from 1972 until her death in 2013. Her 2010 text *A Plea for Black British Theologies*[20] could be considered the foundational and pioneering text on Black British theology. However, her text primarily explored Apostolic Pentecostal churches and the Sabbatarian church movements. Nevertheless, her extensive writing and research on black Pentecostalism in Britain produced influential work on the social, cultural and missiological significance of the African Caribbean diaspora contribution to the Christian faith.

Roy Kerridge's book *The Storm Is Passing Over: A Look at Black Churches in Britain* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995) examined the beliefs and practices of BMCs such as funerals, wedding ceremonies and the use of traditional music. However, Kerridge did not consider the idea of reverse mission. In the late 1990s, Robert Beckford, building on Gerloff's scholarship, pushed the boundaries further by developing a political theology of African and Caribbean Pentecostal churches, using the Rastafarian ideology of liberation. His articulation of what can be termed a black political Pentecostal theology, or the Dread thesis as it is now known,[21] can be found in Beckford's first two books, *Jesus Is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998) and *Dread and Pentecostalism: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (London: SPCK, 2000).

Whereas Beckford's liberation theology was considered too radical for BMCs, Joel Edwards presented an evangelical theology with an integral mission perspective as he served among British evangelicals. He worked through the ranks to become General

18 J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) and *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

19 Israel Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibiris Corporation, 2011).

20 Roswith Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theology: The Black Church Movement in Britain in its Transatlantic Cultural and Theological Interaction with Oneness (Apostolic) and Sabbatarian Movements*, vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

21 David Muir, 'Theology and the Black Church', in Joe Aldred and Keno Ogbo, eds., *The Black Church in the 21st Century* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2010), 8–27.

Director of the Evangelical Alliance in 1997, becoming the first Caribbean and Black to hold the post since the foundation of the alliance in 1846.

In a book edited by Edwards, *Let's Praise Him Again* (1992), one of the contributors, Arlington Trotman, explored the identity of the so-called Black churches, arguing that the terms 'Black-led' and 'Black church' had been imposed by outsiders and that the terminology does not satisfactorily describe these churches.[22] Trotman critiqued these terms sociologically and theologically, contending that they were not adequate to describe African and Caribbean churches. His was an insider's articulation of how African and Caribbean churches perceive themselves. Other contributions in the book explored liturgy, such as the nature of worship, and preaching within African and Caribbean Pentecostalism.

Remaining gaps in the history of BMCs were filled by Mark Sturge's brilliant 2005 book *Look What the Lord Has Done: An Exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain* (Bletchley, England: Scripture Union). A similar book published in the same year was Joe Aldred's *Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth), which explored intercultural ecumenism from a Caribbean British perspective.

Although these two works have contributed to our understanding of the history of Black Christianity in Britain, they both did so through the lens of Caribbean British Christianity; African Christianity in Britain was not given prominent attention. In response to that gap, pioneering researcher Chigor Chike published *African Christianity in Britain* (Milton Keynes, UK: Author House, 2007) to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. Chike surveyed the doctrines and practices of African Christians in Britain, but said little about their history and nothing about reverse mission.

In that same year, also to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, *Black Theology in Britain* appeared, edited by two well-known Black theologians, Michael Jagessar and Anthony Reddie (London, Equinox, 2007). The book surveyed the current state of Black British theology, considering the works of some of its exponents such as Robert Beckford. However, this work did not explore reverse mission as such.

One source of robust scholarship on the implications of migration and globalization for the diaspora history and mission of African churches in Britain is Afe Adogame, an internationally known African scholar who has written, contributed to and edited more books and articles than any other African scholar I am aware of in Britain.[23] (Adogame currently teaches at Princeton Theological Seminary in the USA.) Altogether, he has edited more

22 Arlington Trotman, 'Black, Black-Led or What?' in Joel Edwards (ed.), *Let's Praise Him Again: An African-Caribbean Perspective on Worship* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway, 1992), 18–24.

23 Afe Adogame, 'African Christian Communities in the Diaspora', in Ogbu Kalu, ed., *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton: NJ: African World Press, 2007), 431–45; Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora*: *New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

than ten books and written countless articles in edited books and academic journals on African Christianity in diaspora. Adogame has explored the role of African Christianity in reverse mission, but primarily through Pentecostal and charismatic churches, therefore leaving a gap in terms of African migrants within historic churches.

My first publication, *Reverse in Ministry and Missions: Africans in the Dark Continent of Europe* (Milton Keynes, UK: Author House, 2010), looked at the history of European missions in Africa and then African missions in Europe through the prism of reverse mission. It was the first monograph specifically devoted to reverse mission. It also contained theological reflection by a reverse missionary who serves within a British church denomination. I described reverse mission and surveyed the various mission approaches used by African pastors and leaders. However, more information on BMCs has emerged since the publication of this work.

A fuller treatment of the history and mission of BMCs is Babatunde Adedibu's *Coat of Many Colours: The Origin, Growth, Distinctiveness and Contributions of Black Majority Churches to British Christianity* (London: Wisdom Summit, 2012). Adedibu's work offers ground-breaking research on the history and diverse theologies of BMCs in the UK, although he did not consider the idea of reverse mission in depth.

II. Blacks within British Historic Churches

Rebecca Catto's 2008 PhD thesis was the first in Britain to explore the subject of reverse mission by considering various case studies of missionaries from the Global South who were serving in mainline churches.[24] The case studies consisted mainly of short-term missionaries serving in Anglican and Methodist churches. Within the Catholic Church in Britain, reverse mission appears to be taking place as a shortage of priests is leading to invitations to bring in priests from Africa, Latin America and Asia.[25]

Since the 1940s, with the onset of large Caribbean migration to Britain, there has been some African and Caribbean presence within historic churches. The general assumption is that British historic churches rejected Black Christians, causing them to found BMCs. However, this assumption of a blanket rejection by historic churches is not accurate. Other reasons, such as mission commitment to Britain and loyalty to Pentecostal denominations back home in the Caribbean or Africa, led to the founding of some of these churches. In addition, some African and Caribbean Christians remained faithful to their original church affiliations by staying within historic churches. Their story is easily overlooked amidst the successes of BMCs.

Take, for example, the story of Sybil Phoenix, MBE (Member of the British Empire), who came from Guyana to London in 1956. Despite much racial discrimination within and outside the church in Britain, as well as personal

24 R. Catto, 'Reverse Mission: From the Global South to Mainline Churches', in D. Goodhew, ed. *Church Growth in Britain* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 91–103.

25 Harvey Kwiyani, *Sent Forth: African Missionary Work in the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014), 123–28.

tragedy, she remained in the Methodist church. Moreover, she worked within the Methodist church structure to create independent agencies such as foster homes, youth clubs and community projects that catered to the needs of young Blacks. In recognition of her community work in south-east London she was awarded an MBE in 1972.[26]

Why did some Blacks stay within historic British churches? One reason, as noted above, was loyalty to church brands from back home. Many who were Anglicans, Baptists or Catholics in their mother country preferred to remain within the same denomination in Britain. Also, not all Africans, Asians, Caribbeans or Latin Americans (whether they are white or Black) like independent Pentecostal churches. Some consider speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal practices unbiblical.

Furthermore, some Black families attend historic churches because they want their children to be eligible to attend church schools, due to the standard of education within these schools. Some Blacks belong to two churches for this reason, perhaps attending Catholic mass in the morning and going to a Pentecostal church in the evening. As a result, many second- and third-generation Africans and Caribbeans are growing up in the historic churches.

The presence of Africans and Caribbeans in historic British churches has not been an easy journey as there have been issues around race and ethnicity. To remedy the situation, racial justice ministries or agencies were founded within these churches, to care for minority Christians and to tackle racism. These agencies have also helped to facilitate conversations on the challenges of participating in multicultural multi-ethnic churches.

The Church of England, for instance, established the Committee for Black Anglican Concerns, later renamed the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC). In the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the ministry is known as the Racial Justice Group. In the United Reformed Church (URC) it is called the Committee for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries, in the Methodist Church the Committee for Racial Justice (CRJ), and in the Catholic Church the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ).

III. Mission Approaches and Practices of African Migrants within the Baptist Union of Great Britain

The ministry of African Christians within the Baptist denomination in England started with an African American, Peter Standford (1860–1909). Standford was born a slave in Virginia and became an ordained Baptist minister in 1878 in Hartford, Connecticut, USA. He came to England in 1882 and was invited to become the minister of Hope Street Baptist Chapel, Highgate, Birmingham in 1889, making him the first Black Baptist minister in Britain and an early example of reverse mission.[27]

26 J. Newbury, *Living in Harmony: The Story of Sybil Phoenix* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985), 14–15.

27 Paul Walker, *The Revd Thomas Peter Standford (1860–1909), Birmingham Coloured Preacher* (unpublished PhD thesis, Manches-

Other black Baptist ministers who were contemporaries of Standford included the Jamaican-born Joseph Jackson Fuller (1825–1908), who served as a Baptist Missionary Society missionary to West Africa, and the African American Thomas L. Johnson (1836–1931), a Baptist minister who trained at Spurgeon's College in London and served the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in West Africa as well.[28]

Amongst the first Africans to be ordained as a Baptist minister in the 1960s was William Fransch, who came from Zimbabwe (then Northern Rhodesia) in 1968. Fransch studied at Cliff College (1968–1969) and then at Bristol Baptist College (1970–1973). While studying at Bristol, he became the student minister at Stapleton Baptist Church. His other pastorates were at Frithelstock (a group of Baptist churches) in north Devon (1977–1982), Spurgeon Memorial Baptist Church in Guernsey (1982–1998) and finally Brockley Baptist Church in southeast London from 1998 to 2011.

In 1977, Fransch walked, carrying a cross, with his wife Celia and two children from Aberdeen, Scotland to Lands End (on the southwestern tip of England), sharing the gospel with many people during his 23-day trek. In 1980, inspired by the story of Abram walking the length and breadth of the land God had promised him (Gen 13:14–17), Fransch walked across the breadth of the country (from Hartland Point in Devon to Margate in the east) with some people from Frithelstock Baptist Church in nine days. Fransch's approach to doing evangelism by applying the story of Abram as a migrant serves as an example of reverse mission and challenges the general notion that most migrants are economic migrants.

The 1980s also witnessed the beginning of the story of Kingsley Appiagyei, Senior Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in London. Appiagyei has made immense contributions to the Baptist Union in Britain through church planting and considers himself a reverse missionary. He came to England in 1985 to study biblical Hebrew with the intention of returning to Ghana to teach in a seminary. But while studying at Spurgeon's College, he felt called to stay in the UK.

After completing his studies, Appiagyei started Trinity Baptist Church in his house in South Norwood. Under his leadership, Trinity has planted about 17 churches in Europe and an orphanage home in Ghana, called Trinity Hope Centre. About a dozen of these churches are in the UK, two in Italy, one in Denmark, one in the Netherlands and one in Ghana.[29] Appiagyei also became the first male African president of the Baptist Union in 2009–2010. He has helped to raise up many emerging ministers who have gone on to train for the

ter University, 2004); David Killingray and Joel Edwards, eds., *Black Voices: The Shaping of our Christian Experience* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 67.

28 Mark Sturge, *Look What the Lord Has Done* (Bletchley, England: Scripture Union, 2005), 69. On Fuller and Johnson, respectively, see my blog posts http://israelolofinjana.wordpress.com/2014/02/06/black-baptist-joseph-jackson-fuller-1825-1908/ and http://israelolofinjana.wordpress.com/2014/02/18/black-baptists-thomas-lewis-johnson-1836-1921/.

29 Olofinjana, *Reverse in Ministry and Missions*, 46.

Baptist ministry.

On 16 April 2017 (Easter Sunday), Trinity Baptist Church opened its new premises, called Oasis House in Croydon, with local and national politicians in attendance along with many high-profile church leaders from within the British evangelical church and BMCs. The new church building has a seating capacity of 3,000. Many of the second-generation members who had been born and dedicated in the church since its inception in 1987 spoke of how they have grown in the church and have been given space to follow God in their own way. As a result, the young people have their own choir and there are many other opportunities to engage in the church's life and mission through sports, music and social and community action projects. Trinity's engagement with second-generation Africans is quite impressive, considering that many African churches are struggling to engage this generation in Britain.

One of the significant leaders to have emerged from Appiagyei's mentoring is Francis Sarpong. In 1995, Sarpong founded Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church in East London, which today is recognized as one of the country's largest Baptist churches. Calvary has about fifty pastors and has planted about twenty congregations all over the world. Sarpong is also president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Another important African pastor whose leadership emerged during the 1980s is Kofi Manful, senior pastor of Faith Baptist Church in London. Manful has been involved in various conversations and committees among Baptists in London regarding racial justice issues. He and other African and Caribbean ministers formed the Black Ministers Forum in London in the mid-1990s to respond to the loneliness and isolation felt by Black ministers in the London region.[30]

Kate Coleman is another significant African Baptist leader. Born in Ghana, she came to the UK at a young age to join her family. She later became the first accredited and ordained Black woman in the Baptist Union (in 1991) and then the Union's first Black female president in 2006–2007. She has served in various national capacities within the wider UK church, such as chairing the Evangelical Alliance Council. Coleman is one of the foremost thinkers in the area of British womanist theology, as she reflects on what it means to be a Black female Christian minister leader within the Baptist context.[31]

One of the best-known African ministers within the Baptist Union—and outside it, for his immense influence and networking particularly among Pentecostals—is the British-born David Shosanya. His church roots are in African Pentecostalism, specifically the Apostolic Church in Nigeria. Shosanya led a Baptist church in London in the 1990s before becoming regional minister for mission there. In this role, he co-ordinated and strategized the

30 Sivarkumar Rajagopalan, 'Racial Justice', in Faith Bowers, Joe Kapolyo and Israel Olofinjana, eds., *Encountering London: London Baptists in the 21st Century* (London: London Baptist Association, 2014), 256.

31 Michele Mahon, *Sisters with Voices: A Study of the Experiences and Challenges Faced by Black Women in London Baptist Association Church Ministry Setting* (unpublished MA thesis, Oasis College), 7.

mission of Baptist churches in London. He is a co-founder of the Street Pastors initiative, formed in 2003 to reduce gun and knife crime in urban spaces in London. This initiative employs a pragmatic approach by sending Christians out on the streets on Friday and Saturday nights to offer practical help to people. Amongst other initiatives he has founded is the annual Ministers Appreciation Ball, which recognizes Christian leaders' contributions to church and public life nationally.

Osoba Otagie came from Nigeria to Britain in 2005 as a missionary. Osoba recalls thinking, 'I love London for holidays but not to live permanently'. But he felt God telling him to give up his corporate business work in Nigeria and to minister in Britain. Osoba had a strong desire to work with locals to spread the gospel rather than joining a Nigerian fellowship. Since moving to the UK, Osoba has pastored three Baptist churches and been active in the local ecumenical scene in London and beyond.

IV. Reflections on the Apology

In 2007, the Baptist Union decided to offer an Apology for the pernicious legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and ongoing racism. Why would it apologize for the slave trade when the Union was not even in existence at that time? The rationale behind the Apology can be gleaned from the following statement:

> In a spirit of weakness, humility and vulnerability, we acknowledge that we are only at the start of a journey, but we are agreed that this must not prevent us speaking and acting at a *kairos* moment. Therefore, we acknowledge our share in and benefit from our nation's participation in the transatlantic slave trade. We acknowledge that we speak as those who have shared in and suffered from the legacy of slavery, and its appalling consequences for God's world. We offer our apology to God and to our brothers and sisters for all that has created and still perpetuates the hurt which originated from the horror of slavery.[32]

This Apology was followed by an initiative described as the Journey, a vision strategy by the racial justice group of the Baptist Union to ensure that our structures change to reflect the diversity that God has given us.

African pastors within the Baptist denomination have different views about the Apology. Most of my interviewees welcomed it, while also observing that more work on racial justice within the Baptist Union is needed. One person commented that the Apology came rather late and should have been made ages ago, while a few felt that it was divisive and not helpful.

I participated in a Baptist meeting, held to follow up on conversations about the Apology, on 3 June 2008 at the Museum of London, Sugar and Slavery in Docklands. Different views were presented. Some struggled to understand why a whole new generation who have nothing to do with the slave trade should have to apologize to current descendants of its victims. Others contended that because we still expe-

32 On this project, see Sam Sharpe Project, 'The Journey', www.samsharpeproject.org/about-the-project/the-journey (accessed 9 September 2014).

rience the consequences of the slave trade such as racism, prejudice and neo-colonialism, an Apology is necessary for reconciliation so that we can move forward.

One common question is whether there exists any theological or scriptural justification for the Apology. John Cowell, one of the eminent Baptist theologians who spoke at the 2008 meeting, argued yes, citing 1 Corinthians 12:26: 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.' In essence, if our brothers and sisters of African and Caribbean backgrounds feel oppressed through the pain of racism and marginalization, then as the body of Christ we should feel that pain too and do something about it.

People are still wondering what changes the Apology will effect in the life of the Baptist Union. As noted above, the Journey is a racial justice strategy to move British Baptists from words to actions with regard to issues of integration, inclusion and cultural diversity. The Journey's vision was to set out practical steps to enable the Baptist Union in Britain to become fully integrated in ways that reflect its rich cultural diversity and so live out its core values of being a culturally inclusive community.

This racial justice group is working towards ensuring that Baptist churches, colleges, the Baptist Missionary Society, regional associations and other structures represent and reflect the multicultural, multi-ethnic, intergenerational diversity that exists within the Union. My reflection and observation since 2010, when I became involved with the Journey, is that we are gradually and slowly shifting towards a fuller representation, but that more work still needs to be done. One current concern is the need for our Bible colleges to move away from teaching only Western theology, in recognition of the fact that global Christianity has shifted towards the majority world. Part of this process will be to have tutors and teachers in our Bible colleges who are from African, Caribbean and Asian backgrounds.

In 2017, a decade after the Apology, *Journeying to Justice: Contributions to the Baptist Tradition across the Black Atlantic*, edited by Anthony Reddie with Wale Hudson-Roberts and Gale Richards, was published. This first-of-its-kind publication included contributions from Baptist scholars in Jamaica, the USA, Britain and Africa. In addition, other resources to help Baptist churches reflect on cultural diversity and the issues of migration were produced.

Moreover, a conference took place at Spurgeon's College in London on 8 April 2017, with the theme of *Justification and Justice: The Two Luthers*. The conference reflected theologically on the Apology by looking at the connection between Luther's theology of justification by faith and Martin Luther King's theology of racial justice. It stimulated considerable thinking around issues of racial justice and gender justice as essential categories of mission.

Hudson-Roberts, a racial justice enabler for the Baptist Union in Britain and one of the most senior African ministers in the denomination, has personally facilitated conversations around the Apology. His mission policy and approach has been to pursue integration, representation and diversity at every level of denominational governance

and structure, in conjunction with various executive teams. Hudson-Roberts has been at the forefront of challenging the Baptist Union on institutional racism, because he considers issues of racial justice to be an important part of mission.

V. Struggles and Contributions of African Migrants within the Baptist Union

To obtain a balanced view of the struggles of Africans within the Baptist denomination in Britain, we should start with what they value about the denomination. Most of my respondents value the Baptist Union for its theological grounding, ecclesiological distinctiveness, biblical emphasis, evangelical heritage, training, support for ministers, interdependence of churches, and useful personnel and resources. Some of the struggles and frustrations highlighted are racism, sexism, current debates on same-sex marriage, lack of visionary leadership, lack of Spirit-led initiatives and leadership, and placing Baptist tradition above the Scriptures.

What have African migrants contributed to the Baptist Union? The London Baptist Association, a regional body of the Baptist Union, has recognized publicly that some of our churches would have closed if not for the presence of people from the majority world, of whom many are Africans. One of my respondents affirmed this point but also mentioned that this participation has sometimes led to mono-ethnic Baptist churches in London due to white flight!

Other contributions by African migrants to the Baptist Union have included confidence and optimism in articulating the gospel publicly, church planting, charting emergent theologies from the Global South, renewed spirituality and cultural diversity. My respondents indicated that Africans have injected passion for prayer, church growth, visionary leadership, vibrant spirituality, dynamic faith, provision of church leaders (especially for the Baptist churches in London), biblical emphasis and—as one respondent described it—blood, sweat and tears!