

PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING IN THE  
BLACK CHURCHES IN BRITAIN:  
With Special Reference  
To Those In Leeds

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Leeds University, Department  
of Theology and Religious Studies

February 1990

Dedicated to the  
Black Community  
in Britain

## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore various aspects of pastoral care and counselling in the black churches in Britain. The first aspect of caring that has been explored is acceptance. When people are genuinely accepted by others there is the possibility for personal growth and development to take place. Such acceptance can be therapeutic. It contains health-giving qualities and is a means towards greater self-acceptance, especially by those who may be affected by a sense of poor value in the way they see themselves.

The second aspect is understanding. Part of what is discussed here is that people who are connected by and share similar life experiences, are equipped to care for each other in ways that those who are detached outsiders may not be able to. In other words, caring which is based on understanding is enhanced when the relationship is between persons who are party to the same difficulties.

The third and fourth categories consist of an examination of pastoral care within the context of housing and unemployment conditions. Aspects of care which are featured are those that entail sharing, support, and the promotion of self-help endeavours such as repairs done to the homes of church members. There is caring through the personal presence of individuals in the form of visits to homes, prayers offered and encouragement given. Ways in which such responses contribute to the affirmation of worth and the empowering of individuals so that they are able to take control of the adverse circumstances which affect them, are caring factors which have been explored as well.

The fifth area looks at the black family. Caring under the aegis of a network of support systems that nurtures and sustains individuals is featured.

The sixth category is worship. Most of the ritual aspects and component features which combine to make worship a fulfilling and satisfying experience are assessed.

Finally, the conclusion points to other related areas which might be looked at.

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## Acknowledgement

In any work of this nature it is difficult to overestimate the debt of sincere gratitude which is owed to those who have assisted in making it possible. To Dr. Haddon Willmer my original supervisor, as well as to Dr. Kim Knott, I express profound gratitude for the meticulous guidance, encouragement, interest and insightful criticisms which they made throughout the various stages of the thesis. Besides the academic link, their kindness in other spheres, together with that of Professor Hastings, facilitated an enjoyable research period in Leeds. I am, of course, entirely responsible for any inefficiency and shortcomings which may be found.

I must also acknowledge my gratitude to all the black church members who kindly allowed me into their homes and welcomed me to their churches. The various conversations which ensued and the observations made, have been informing, personally rewarding and invaluable. Other members of the black community who gave so generously and unselfishly of their time, I am greatly thankful. That is so particularly to the Reverend Hewlette Andrew - my brother, friend and colleague. It is my hope that the work may be a source of enrichment to the lives of all in some meaningful way.

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## B A C K G R O U N D   A N D   E X P L A N A T I O N

This thesis arose out of two predominant sets of factors which are directly related. One of the factors represents the definite shift in religious affiliation which many Afro-Caribbean people undertook after they had settled down in Britain. The other is the concern with which such an unexpected development was viewed in the Caribbean. For example, during the first half of the 1960's much of the religious information which was being received in the Caribbean about persons who had migrated to Britain was that they were joining newly organized Pentecostal churches. Such a development was puzzling because the majority of the immigrants had been very staunch members of the historic churches: stewards, local preachers, deacons, catechists and other categories of lay officers. A relevant question which was being asked was, why had those individuals changed their membership to the Pentecostal faith?

I was very interested in finding out what I could do to account for the change. Consequently, I began to gather all the relevant information that I could obtain about the religious activities of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. The most frequently mentioned piece of evidence which was given by friends and acquaintances whom I had had the privilege to speak to, centred upon the 'care' which they did not get from the historic churches in Britain. If the historic churches failed to provide them with the care that they expected to receive, I endeavoured to ask myself, could the new religious groups which they were founding and joining provide that care? If so, how? It was in an attempt to explore those queries that this thesis was undertaken.

The actual field research work here in Britain did not begin, however, until 1986. One of the things which struck me even then was the large amount of sociological attention that had been given to the religious practices of Afro-Caribbean people (see Hill 1963; Calley 1965; Hill 1971 and Gates (ed.) 1980 - to cite a few). However, there was a striking and corresponding lack of any real work done from the perspective of a pastoral care point of view. In other words, very little attention had been given to the ethos of pastoral care, or to a theological consideration in general, of the new churches and the people who founded them. The very factor which the black people themselves claimed had been the motivating inspiration for their change of membership and the establishing of new churches was not addressed. This work therefore, as far as I am aware of is



the first major attempt to date to look at the black churches in Britain from a pastoral care and counselling perspective.

### Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counselling Defined

The term 'pastoral care' (soul care) or the phrase 'pastoral care and counselling' are used to describe the entire range of the caring task of a pastor. That is, both the general and the particular aspects of the pastoral focus are included. It is necessary to say, however, that considerable speculation presently exists concerning whether or not pastoral care and counselling should be used together as being identical terms. In parts of the large body of literature available on pastoral care and counselling some writers use the terms simultaneously. That is, they are 'indispensably linked'<sup>1</sup> in purpose, meaning and function.

In other parts of the literature there are sharp distinctions made between the two. That is so even to the extent of showing basic degrees of contradiction between pastoral care on the one hand, and pastoral counselling on the other hand. For example, pastoral counselling, it has been argued, is primarily concerned with helping people to come to terms with their problems, whereas pastoral care consists of promoting those activities which bring persons in close community within the church. So then, pastoral care is geared towards building 'structures', and pastoral counselling functions to remove those inner conflicts within individuals sometimes caused by structures.<sup>2</sup> For those reasons the two often stand in direct opposition to each other. One is therefore needed to eliminate that which can be caused by the other.

Another argument that has been put forward is that pastoral care refers to the wide array of ministerial duties which are necessary for the building, nurturing and maintaining of a congregation. Pastoral counselling is seen in the narrower sense as that function specifically applicable towards the more personal relationships between pastor and parishioner in need of special help. It is therefore a 'unique form of pastoral care'<sup>3</sup> exercised especially when someone takes the initiative to seek assistance about a particular problem.

In the chapters of this thesis the terms will be used as being identical. In other words, to mean both the general and the particular aspects of the pastoral endeavour and referred to as 'pastoral care'. By pastoral care I imply in this specific context the meaningful, mutual concern, and the sustaining support effectively

given and accepted by one group to another, or to individuals who are members of the black church and the community of faith. It is caring that is akin to the general outreaching of selves with human endeavours on behalf of each other as they carry one another's load in the pattern of their master. Doing that is essentially what pastoral care in the black churches is all about. It is not particularly the 'professional' aspect of pastoral care, then, which only certain trained individuals are supposed to do, but more specifically one which all the members perform that I will be interpreting.

In doing so, however, if it becomes necessary to make any basic distinction between pastoral care and pastoral counselling - either for clarity, specificity or otherwise (as for example, in chapter two which deals with 'understanding as pastoral care in the black churches'), appropriate references and adequate lines of demarcation will be made so as to identify very carefully whether one term is being discussed, separate and apart from my use of the combined meaning.

#### Origin of the Black Churches

There is much speculation, coupled with a number of false assumptions, concerning the beginning of the black churches. Ira Brooks in his book Where Do We Go From Here? suggested that the Church of God in the Caribbean was founded by a Bahamian called Edmund Barr in 1909.<sup>4</sup> That view is supported by Malcolm Calley who also makes specific reference to Barr as the founder.<sup>5</sup> Both writers concur that the date was 1909. However, Harold Turner has advanced the view that the largest group within the black church movement - The New Testament Church of God, began in Barbados in 1936. And, that it too, has been among the 'various West Indian denominations to have followed their own peoples as immigrants to Britain and to have become established in this land also'.<sup>6</sup>

There is obviously a difference between what Brooks and Calley are describing on the one hand, and what Turner is portraying on the other. Such difference is essentially this: Hill seems to have taken a later arrival of the Church of God in the Caribbean - referred to at that time as the 'Elders' Church of God, and to have connected it directly with the black church movement in Britain. But that is not a true reality. The branch of the Church of God which was founded in Barbados, is not the same branch which was established here.

Equally so, there is another mistaken belief held by many people



which purports that the black churches in Britain were founded by Americans. One of the groups which is often named is the 'Wesleyan Holiness Church'. But that opinion is also speculative.

I will show later that the black churches were founded independently of any American initiatives. In addition, in the case of the Wesleyan Holiness Church, 'Pilgrims in Progress', the Pilgrim Holiness Magazine speaks proudly and in glowing terms of the 'religious faith brought by Pilgrim Holiness people from the Caribbean'. That was the 'faith' which formed the roots from which the Wesleyan Holiness churches of the 'British Isles would grow'.<sup>7</sup> Because of that reason the black Wesleyan Holiness Church also had no previous connections with the United States. Rather, it was the Pilgrim Holiness Church which was so connected. One of the founding members: Dennis Sampson informed us that the church was established here because the Holy Spirit impressed upon him a 'deep concern and sympathy for the spiritual well-being of (my) people in England'.<sup>8</sup> There were only 6 'holiness' believers in the first meeting of the Wesleyan Holiness Church. None was American.<sup>9</sup>

While the former black church, the New Testament Church of God, therefore, has its roots within the 'primitive' new religious movements in Jamaica, the latter - the Wesleyan Holiness Church - also has 'evangelical' roots in the Caribbean as well.

Was the branch of the Church of God which I have already suggested had been established in the Bahamas the same branch which subsequently moved to Jamaica and then to Britain? If it were so, then there would actually have been some connection between the founding of the black Pentecostal church movement in Britain and that in the United States of America because, Edmund Barr first heard the new teaching in the state of Florida. However, I will be showing that it was a Jamaican who established the black New Testament Church of God in Britain. And, the branch which was brought here was from a 'native Jamaican stock' not akin to the American/Bahamian or Barbadian counterparts of the pentecostal movement.

But before doing so it is essential to look first at yet another side of the mistaken assumptions about the origin of the black churches put forward this time by Malcolm Calley, so as to aid us in the quest for a more authentic picture of the true ancestry of the black churches in Britain.

Calley makes the claim that it was a 'Barbadian Church leader' resident in Jamaica who 'led his flock into the Church of God in about

1917'.<sup>10</sup> The validity of that opinion too, is also questionable. For example, Ira Brooks whose views I accept to be the more reliable because it is confirmed by my own empirical findings said that, the Church of God in Jamaica was founded by a Church of God 'evangelist enthusiast' named Mundle. Although he was conceived to be an 'illiterate',<sup>11</sup> person, he had been preaching Pentecostalism much earlier than 1917. Some time during the year 1910, Mundle heard that there was a similar kind of teaching in the United States which began there about four years previously.<sup>12</sup> However by that time he had already gathered many converts to his flock in Jamaica.

Both the date which Calley has put forward and the nationality of the founding personality - a Barbadian instead of a Jamaican national - differ from Brooks' belief. Calley does not say where the Barbadian resident first came under the influence of the new movement. But Mundle had been influenced by members of some so called 'primitive' religious groups better known to Jamaicans as 'Revivalists'.<sup>13</sup> Those had been syncretized christian and African religious forms prevalent on the island as early as the slave plantation system and which developed from shango, pocomania, malalism and kumina groups,<sup>14</sup> into an 'ecstatic' and 'Pentecostal flavour'.<sup>15</sup> These are ancestral characteristics of the black churches.

It is now appropriate to develop more fully the other part of the argument which was referred to as the 'independent' establishment of the black churches without American help or involvement. To proceed along this line is helpful because it is only after we have done so that we can remove the remainder of the existing web of speculation with reference to the origin of the black churches in Britain. That is, many persons still believe that the larger number of Afro-Caribbean peoples now living in Britain 'brought' their churches with them - meaning the black churches, and seemed to have missed the primary fact that on the contrary a far greater number of those persons had some previous allegiance to one of the historic churches in the Caribbean. It is to that misconception that we will turn our attention in due course.

#### The Independent Origin of the Black Churches

The main factor which seems to prompt most people to assume that the black churches in Britain were founded by Americans, is the answerability of some contemporary groups to external leaderships.

That is, they are affiliated with larger churches and have leaders in the United States. Examples of three such groups are the Church of God of Prophecy, the Church of God Seventh Day and INC., City Mission Church. However, while that is so, it must not be assumed that those churches or any of the others were founded with external help. Any relationship which presently exist with American churches has come about through invitation and mutual agreement after the local black groups became well-established in this country.

Malcolm Calley was on the right track, therefore, when he suggested that black Pentecostalism was not 'transplanted fully-grown from North America to the Caribbean'<sup>16</sup> - and consequently, to Britain. The truth is, it did not come even minutely grown. On the contrary, it originated from Jamaica (as we have shown previously).

So then, while some of the black churches originated in the Caribbean without American connections, others like the Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic and Mount Zion Pentecostal Church-Apostolic, for example, were founded here without having had any previous idea of an American counterpart whatsoever. Bishop Wilfred Wood, writing in The Hand Book of Afro-West Indian Council of Churches, said that the black church movement in Britain is 'essentially' Afro-Caribbean in character.<sup>17</sup> It is the independent nature of its beginning more than any other factor that provides it with such a character.

#### A Vision Actualised

In fulfilling the promise which was made earlier, it is a point of much interest to note at this juncture that the black church movement in Britain began with the ingenuity of Oliver Augustus Lyseight who had been a young convert to Pentecostalism in Jamaica. He arrived in Britain in 1951 and settled in the Wolverhampton area of the West Midlands. After having made several unsuccessful attempts to worship with native British Pentecostals, including those in Blackheath, 'persistent coldness' from those Pentecostals forced him to set up a meeting place for seven black Pentecostals in Wolverhampton where the black community was beginning to grow in numbers. In a direct reference to that momentous move by Mr. Lyseight, Ira Brooks wrote:

From the very start, Mr. Lyseight and his companions preached persistently among the people. The first venture into the community was a rented hall in the Wolverhampton Y.M.C.A. in Waterloo Road. The entire prayer group consisted of seven members.<sup>18</sup>

That 'venture' was the first public endeavour undertaken by the Black church movement in Britain.<sup>19</sup> Before that time, however, there were numerous religious meetings in the homes of black people wherever they



had settled. Those meetings too can be classified as churches since they represented an understanding of the 'gathered' community of christian worshippers.<sup>20</sup> That is so even if they were not public gatherings.

#### Previous Allegiance

As we have suggested, the impression is often given that the majority of the present members of the black churches had been followers of Pentecostal religious groups before coming to Britain. That, however, was not the case. Malcolm Calley's view, that Afro-Caribbean people who emigrated to England seldom joined English Churches but, rather, brought their 'religious groups with them',<sup>21</sup> is a case in point. Another such example is Ira Brooks' contention which stipulates that 'many' members of the black churches had been 'transferred from congregations of the New Testament Church of God in the West Indies'.<sup>22</sup> Those beliefs and pre-suppositions find ample support from another writer. Krister Otterson's notion, that many black people who emigrated to Britain 'tried at first to join English churches',<sup>23</sup> (suggesting as it does that they did not already possess the status of legitimate membership and, therefore, belonged to a church family), must be placed in the same context.

There are a combination of myths and half-truths contained in those assumptions which must also be corrected and put into their proper perspectives as well. For example, while it is difficult to obtain precise figures for the religious affiliations of Afro-Caribbean people upon their arrivals in Britain<sup>24</sup> - at least four major factors which are in contradiction to those views are discernible.

Firstly, by far the greater number of immigrant-blacks belonged to one or the other of the historic mainline churches in the Caribbean. Even if all were not active office bearers and clerics, they belonged to those denominations in the formal way, the majority of whom brought relevant letters of transfer of their membership to Britain. Therefore, they did not have to 'join' or even to 'try' to do so for that matter. Is it a normal pattern that one is expected to join an institution in which one already holds legitimate membership and has valid credentials to verify one's status? In this case, because of the historical links with Britain as the Mother Country, membership of the churches here was expected to be the 'norm' as it had been in the Caribbean.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the churches from

which the immigrants had come were all governed by Synods and Conferences in Britain. They were also led locally in the Caribbean by pastors who were the representatives of the parent churches in the Metropole. Consequently, all that was required of black members ought to have been a valid transfer of that membership from the Caribbean church to the apposite English counterpart of that denomination. However, when such transfer-documents were presented the majority of those who submitted them, having done so in the firm belief that they were genuine members, were not accepted into membership.

Secondly, it is evident that a few membership transfers were brought by people from the Pentecostal faith. But during the period of the migration years, the persons who were able to obtain the financial means to travel to Britain were hardly among those who would have associated themselves with Pentecostalism, referred to at that time as 'sideways' Churches. Such religious groups were looked down upon and were said to be deviant groups made up of the lowest class.<sup>26</sup>

The persons who actually migrated, therefore, represented more of those who were classified as middle-class. Among them were nurses, bus drivers, teachers, accountants, civil servants, together with self-employed shop-keepers and local wholesale merchants.<sup>27</sup>

In the light of those factors, therefore, to assert that many persons were transferred from the Pentecostal churches in the Caribbean to those in Britain is to exaggerate the facts in an unnecessary way. The majority of the black church members definitely came from the mainline churches.<sup>28</sup>

Thirdly, because the 'church' means so very much to Afro-Caribbean people, concepts like 'tried to join', and 'seldom join' create the false impression that those immigrants had had no previous religious connections and consequently, it was only when they arrived here that they endeavoured to affiliate themselves with a church congregation for the first time. That too, is an incorrect assumption.

Finally, if it were the case that most of the people had indeed brought their religions with them to Britain, a legitimate development would naturally be for them to have established those religions as soon as they were able. In which case, whether they had been genuinely 'welcomed' and cared for by the traditional churches or not, such christian gestures would have made no difference to the general outcome. The result would inevitably be the legitimate existence of black churches as a natural process.

One of the contributing values which such a supposedly inevitable outcome has, is a justification in defence of a rational stance and a reasonable position for the attitudes of the established churches toward the black christians. That is, whatever stance they had adopted: whether they had done what was christianly possible to care, to make black people feel at home and accepted as a natural extension of the church, they would still have left eventually. Therefore, any welcome or caring endeavour would have been in vain.

The fact is, however, that those black christians encountered rejection and even 'racial discrimination',<sup>29</sup> in their endeavour to continue their membership in the English counterparts of the historic mainstream churches to which they had already possessed full membership. It was membership in, and the faith of those religious groups, that Afro-Caribbean people brought to Britain.

Mr. Desmond Pemberton, one of the leaders of the black church movement, put it this way:

Black people brought back to this country a christian witness and a christian message...but they had learned the painful lesson that white christianity<sup>30</sup> makes no difference to how black people are treated.

It was the 'christian witness' and gospel message of the very religious groups which, as Clifford Hill has correctly suggested, 'was first carried to many parts of the Caribbean by Englishmen',<sup>31</sup> that was the official religion of the vast majority of Afro-Caribbean people who came here. They were in no doubt, therefore, that membership in them was a right whether they were in the Caribbean or in Britain.

The combined effects of deep shock and extreme disappointment which many black people experienced after discovering that such membership was not an automatic right gave rise to the need for pastoral caring and the founding of the black church movement in Britain.

Before looking specifically at the black churches in Leeds, it is appropriate to consider first the factor of methodology and also to say something about the black presence in Britain.

#### Methodological Approach

The approaches used for acquiring the empirical information contained in the thesis were threefold. They were,

- (a) formal questions
- (b) in-depth, unstructured conversations, and
- (c) attending and observing.



By formal questions I am referring to a number of questions (see appendix 1), which were used as the basis for proceeding into informal or unstructured discussions. For example, I began a discussion by asking a formal question which then led on to an in-depth conversation. In-depth, unstructured conversations, therefore, have been the major strategy used for obtaining the data. Those include conversations consistent with a 'non-directive' counselling nature.<sup>32</sup> This approach is widely used in the field of counselling. Its basic strength and usefulness in information gathering is that it helps to motivate, encourage and enable the persons whom one is in conversation with to speak freely without being prompted or coerced to do so. Part of the information obtained in that way was assessed clinically and presented as the case studies included in the thesis.

I attended numerous worship services on Sundays and Saturdays together with other weekday religious meetings. There were also many visits with church workers to the homes of members. During such visits I observed and participated in various prayer meetings and Bible study discussion sessions.

I also visited and conversed with people in three selected pubs, and in churches representing all the mainstream denominations in Leeds. Three similar congregations in London were included as well.

The information was collated between 1986-1989. During that period about 260 conversations were held. I attended a total of 95 worship services - sometimes as many as 3 in one day. The duration of the services ranged between one and eight hours. For example, worship in the Church of God Seventh Day begins at 10 A.M. on Saturdays and ends at 6 P.M. - most often, it is much later. There were 46 visits to homes and 6 to the pubs. Some conversations were done in Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester, Huddersfield and Sheffield.

### Black People in Britain

There has been a black presence in Britain for more than 500 years. Beginning as early as 1507 that presence has featured in varying material conditions and in sufficient numbers with significantly wide talents, to have had profound effects on almost every aspect of community life in Britain.<sup>33</sup> That was the case long before the present group began arriving in 1948.

More will be said about the black presence when we come to deal with the appropriate subsections in chapter four on 'those who came' and the 'availability of employment and the growth of black churches in Britain'. In the meantime, however, we will turn our attention to

black churches in Leeds.

### Research Focus

Eight local black churches in Leeds formed the principal focus upon which the investigation was centred. They all have common features by which they operate, are affiliated with national headquarters and represent a common pattern of caring that is characteristic of black churches in Britain as a whole. The churches include all the black religious traditions in Britain. Among them are Pentecostals, who are divided into Apostolic and Church of God Sabbatharian streams, and the Holiness traditions. They are as follows:-

a. The New Testament Church of God.

This congregation was established in 1958 by Pastors Curtis Grey and Poyser Grey. The group's first meeting place was in Louis Street at the then residence of Bro. P. Beckford. As the numbers increased, they moved to 281 Chapeltown Road and later to 3 Easterley Road, where the church building is presently located. In addition to the founding pastors, the following persons have served the church as leaders: Reverends Nelson, Kane, Little and Hastings, who is the present minister.

b. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.

This group was founded in April 1960. The first meeting was at the home of Bro. James Hodge, 18 Preston Terrace, Chapeltown. They subsequently moved to 51 Savile Place, then to the Shepherd's Lane Primary School, to the Cowper Street School, and later to the present church building in Leacock Place. The founding pastor was Reverend Edwards.

c. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.

This group came into being in May 1961. In that year at the invitation of a young Leeds girl, Bishop Dunn and Elder Miller came to Leeds from Birmingham. The visitors called a small group of family members together at the residence of Sis. Mabel Stanley, No. 36 Hamilton Avenue. Having assembled there for some time, the group then moved to 45 Hamilton Avenue - Elder Williams' residence. Later on they acquired their present church building in Victoria Road. The pastor is Sis. Mabel Parris.

d. The Church of God of Prophecy.

This congregation was established in 1962 by Pastor Austin Burke at Savile Drive, Chapeltown Road. The Congregation subsequently met at several locations. Those included a location in Brunswick Road in

the town centre, at No. 1 Roundhay Road, in Cowper Street at the United Caribbean Association's Hall, at Nos. 10 and 25 St. Martin's View, then in Meanwood Road, and presently at the St. Martin's Institute. The pastor is Reverend Douglas.

e. INC., City Mission Church.

This group came into being in 1973. It was established by Pastor Palmers at 17 Ellers Road. The group then moved to Avenue Crescent, Leeds 7. The pastor in charge is Deacon Wilton.

f. The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.

This congregation was established in 1975 by Elder Cunningham and Pastor Foster. The first meeting place was the Cowper Street Primary School. From there they moved to Harehills at the United Reformed Church building, then to Gledhow Terrace, Leeds 8, where they presently meet.

g. The Church of God Seventh-Day.

This congregation was founded in 1976 by Pastors Martin and Patterson. The first meeting place was at 79 Shepherd's Lane - home of Pastor Patterson. The group then moved to the home of Bro. Wint at Holdness Place, to the Roundhay School Room, to the St. Martin's Institute, and later to their present location at No. 2 Roundhay Crescent, Leeds 8.

h. Mount Zion Pentecostal Church-Apostolic.

This group came into being in 1984. They began to meet at 33 Hamilton Road under the leadership of pastor Williams. Having remained there for two years, the congregation moved to No. 2 Avenue Hill - its present meeting place.

The research findings have been interpreted and presented as a true index of what black people have said about their churches. It is an index of how the churches are caring in the light of the real situations and complex circumstances in which they find themselves. Such situations and the experiences which they engender, are essentially those of people in the position of under-dogs and ought to be judged by those criteria.

Chapters one and two deal with pastoral care in the black churches from the perspective of acceptance - values and understanding - ideals. In chapters three and four pastoral care is looked at in terms of housing and unemployment situations. In chapters five and six, pastoral care is considered within the context of the black family and worship endeavours. The conclusion points to specific aspects of the thesis which have presented themselves as essential possibilities for future research.



NOTES

1. See Michael Taylor, Learning to care - Christian Reflection on Pastoral Practice, S.P.C.K. London, 1983, PP. 14 ff.
2. See Brooks Holifield, A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1983, P. 345, and Frederick C. Keuther, 'Pastoral Counselling - Community or Chaos?', The Pastoral Counsellor 1, 1983 : 3 - 10.
3. Holifield, op. cit., P. 272. See also, John Patton, Pastoral Counselling - A Ministry of the Church, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1983, PP. 16 - 18.
4. Ira Brooks, Where Do We Go From Here?: A History of the New Testament Church of God in the United Kingdom. 1955 - 1980, Charles Roper, London, 1982, P.1.
5. Malcolm Calley, God's People: West Indian Pentecostal Sects in England, Oxford University Press, 1965, P.153.
6. See Harold Turner, Chapter entitled 'Caribbean Christianity' in Afro-Caribbean Religions, Brian Gates, (ed.), 1980, P.45.
7. See Pilgrims in Progress: A Review of the first 25 years of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in the British Isles 1958 - 1983, The Wesleyan Holiness Church, 1983, P.5.
8. Ibid; P.6.
9. A request seeking affiliation with the U.S. was made by the local church in Britain on 25th December, 1961, Ibid., P.10.
10. Calley, op. cit., P.154.
11. Brooks, op. cit., P.2.
12. This most significant outpouring of popular American Pentecostal revivalism seemed to have taken place in 1906 at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California. For more about this, see Andrew Walker, Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement, Hadder and Stoughton, London, 1985, P.239 and also, Rosewith Gerloff, 'The Black Experience in Britain', Christian Action Journal, Autumn, 1982, P.9.
13. Brooks, op. cit., P.2.
14. Having spent 4 years of undergraduate study in Jamaica, I can say that it is a proven fact that all of those new Religious movements portray similar characteristics to black Pentecostalism. Any subsequent refining on those similarities would have rendered them to compare most favourably with the black churches as we know them today. For more about those groups see George E. Simpson, 'Jamaican Revivalist Cults', Social and Economic Studies, Vol. V. No. 4, University of the West Indies, 1956; D. Hogg, 'Jamaican Religions', unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Graduate School, Yale University, 1964, and, David Mitchell (ed.), With Eyes Wide Open: A Collection of Papers by Caribbean Scholars on Caribbean Christian Concerns, CADEC, Jamaica, 1973, PP. 134 - 146.

15. Calley, op cit., P.15.
16. Ibid.
17. For more on this see A Handbook of Afro-West Indian United Council of Churches, 1984 edition, Centre for Caribbean Studies, 1984, PP.7-9.
18. Brooks, op. cit., P.13.
19. It became the New Testament Church of God in Britain.
20. See Henry Barclay, The Holy Catholic Church: The Communion Saints - A study in the Apostles' Creed, Macmillan and Co. Ltd. London, 1916, PP. 7 ff. and also, Matt. 18 : 20.
21. Calley, op. cit., P.1.
22. Brooks, op. cit., See Introduction.
23. See Krister Otterson, The Pentecostal Churches, The Religious Education Press, 1977, PP. 33 - 34.
24. A. D. Coleman (ed.), Demography of Immigrants and Minority Groups in the United Kingdom, Academic Press, London, 1982, P.57.
25. See Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation - The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, Church House Pub. 1985, P.42.
26. See John Wilkinson et. al., Inheritors Together: Black People in the Church of England, Race, Pluralism and Community Group Board for Social Responsibility, 1985, P.11.
27. Clifford Hill's belief, therefore, that it was a 'one-class' Migration which left the Caribbean and consequently, middle-class Afro-Caribbean people did not migrate is false. The nurses, shop-keepers and civil servants etc., were representatives of the Caribbean middle-class. For more about this see Gates (ed.), op. cit., P.70.
28. The percentage is put at what Paul Charman considers to be 'perhaps up to 50%'. See Charman, Reflections: Black and White Christians in the City, Zebra Project, London, 1979, P.41. But, pastors Edwards and Nelson have informed us that it is about 85%. Kenneth Leech believes that it includes 'very large numbers of....members of the mainstream churches'. See Leech: Struggles in Babylon: Racism in the cities and churches of Britain, Sheldon Press, London, 1988, P.22.
29. See Faith in the City, op. cit., P.42.
30. The Methodist Recorder, Thursday, 3rd October 1986. Mr. Pemberton was the chairman of the Afro-Caribbean United Council of Churches.
31. Clifford Hill, West Indian Migrants and the London Churches, Oxford University Press, 1963, P.36.
32. For more about this concept see Carl Rogers, Counselling and Psychotherapy, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1942, especially Chapt. 2.,

Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1951, pp. 3 - 231, and also, Paul Pruyser, The Minister as Diagnostician: Personal Problems in Pastoral Perspectives, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1968, pp. 39 - 43.

33. See Paul Edwards and James Walvin, 'Africans in Britain 1500-1800', The African Diaspora: Interpretative Essays (eds.), M. L. Kilson and R. I. Rotberg, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard, 1976, pp. 172 - 204 and, Peter Fryer, Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain, Pluto Press, London, 1984, pp. 1 - 32. In Leeds, for example, there are unconfirmed accounts of black people of African descent patronizing pubs, barber shops and marketing facilities in the city centre long before the 1950's.



A C C E P T A N C E   A S   P A S T O R A L   C A R E   I N   T H E  
B L A C K   C H U R C H E S

INTRODUCTION

The role of acceptance in the offer of pastoral care is a major one. That role is articulated and is understood within the context of God's free acceptance of all humankind in that, while we were yet sinners, God condescended to accept us as we were (see Rom. 5: 6-8). In the same way that God demonstrated His acceptance of each individual through Jesus Christ, so too, those to whom we offer pastoral care must be accepted as they are.<sup>1</sup> That acceptance must be unconditional. The reason for that is because without such unconditional acceptance there can hardly be any useful basis present, upon which true pastoral caring may proceed. Acceptance then, is one of the most basic and predominant components for effective pastoral caring.

There is evidence which seems to suggest, however, that many black christians were not accepted by members of the historic churches. Consequently, some of those black people were forced to leave the historic churches to find 'immediate acceptance and pastoral care' in the black church movement.<sup>2</sup>

If those black christians did not receive acceptance and care from the historic churches, had the host christians acted 'unchristlike' in the nature of the response which they had given?

This chapter will offer an evaluation of acceptance as a caring factor. Following that we will focus on how pastoral caring in the black churches is positively linked with acceptance as a Christlike paradigm. Indeed, as a distinguishing feature, and one of the most primary caring characteristics of the black churches. In doing that, we will look at examples of pastoral care in relation to the black Christians who remained in the historic churches to see how that caring relates to, and contrasts with, pastoral care in the black churches based on acceptance. The chapter will conclude by presenting and analysing a relevant case study of such caring.

I ACCEPTANCE EVALUATED

The term 'acceptance' as it is used in pastoral caring implies the ability to appreciate others as they are, and to ascribe equal value to the basic worth of each individual person. It consists further of the need to refrain from being unduly critical of, indifferent to, or

to be lacking in compassion about the plight of those who may be in need of our help. The concept entails, too, the necessity for those who care for others always to remember the fact that, even if some people may be in a position where they need our care, their possible unfortunate present circumstance does not reduce their humanity in any way. There must always be the recognition that they are still human beings. It is only that such persons might be experiencing a difficult patch in the path of life. Therefore, to face misfortune and to be in need of the assistance of others, is not to cease to be human, or to be regarded as less than human.

Acceptance as pastoral care calls for a 'firm conviction' on our part about what we are doing.<sup>3</sup> It entails placing sufficient worth upon each person, to the extent where we have 'a consistent attitude of good will towards them'.<sup>4</sup> That must be so irrespective of how extremely disturbing their condition might be.

When Christ led the way and accepted us at the time that we were helpless and died for us, there was no discrimination. We were received exactly the way we had been. That non-discriminatory action of Jesus has given a distinctive quality to acceptance as a caring factor. It prohibits us from putting any limitation upon how we accept the persons we are caring for.

There is, however, a sense in which the pastoral carer can hardly succeed in limiting acceptance in the caring endeavour even if one tries. In that context Paul Tillich describes acceptance as 'something which transcends'<sup>5</sup> us. And, Thomas Oden suggests that we are 'not the source' of that acceptance. Rather, we only point 'to an acceptance that has its source beyond' ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

#### In-Reaching and Out-Reaching

There is also an inner-quality about acceptance as well. That is one which the individual carer has at his/her command to give. This is the aspect of acceptance which stems from within the human giver. It is akin to 'inner genuineness', and is contrary to any 'phoney or putting on act', or that which is not compatible with the process of authentic pastoral caring.<sup>7</sup>

Acceptance is, therefore, a multi-faceted concept. It consists of an outward dimension given to it by Jesus Christ. Then, there is an inward dimension which comes from the individual as one gives it to others by caring for them in the name of Jesus Christ. That inward dimension represents a positive regard which the carer has as a result

of having accepted oneself as accepted by Jesus Christ.

Seen from the context of pastoral care in the black churches, it can be suggested that as the early migrants who eventually founded the churches accepted other migrants, they had been assisting each other to be able to deal with themselves as individuals. It enabled them to search themselves inwardly: to take stock, to make personal adjustments, so that they were able to cope in the midst of 'disappointments'.<sup>8</sup> Such personal adjustments in response to their experience of non-acceptance by the mainstream churches was essential for their survival.

Also, there was the outreaching function. This included those whom they cared for by means of acceptance and service to all black people who availed themselves. In that way pastoral care was given to those who were members or 'saints' as well as those who were not.

### Self-Esteem

Another primary function of acceptance is related to self-esteem. In this specific context, it takes into consideration the susceptibility of human nature. Therefore, attention is given to the fact that there is always a possibility for someone who is in need of pastoral care to be a deeply affected and vulnerable person. As a consequence, such people often have low evaluations about themselves. It purports that what may have affected them sometimes causes them to devalue their own humanity and self worth. Indeed, it suggests that such a state of affairs is what we might call 'an outlook of low self-esteem and poor appraisal about one's self,' or a depreciatory view about one's condition in life. For some people that outlook can be so negative that it sometimes leads to self-destruction.

How one perceives one's self during times when there is a particular need for pastoral care is very important. And, those who might be in any position to help ought to take the factor of that person's self-image into consideration. To do that is a priority. That is so because the necessity to try to 'validate the humanity' of such persons, or to help them to up-grade the level of their self-esteem, may sometimes be urgent and appropriate caring endeavours needed to be undertaken on their behalf as soon as possible. And, one way by which that can be accomplished is through acceptance.

When we know where a person who is in need of pastoral care is, as perceived by one's self in terms of just where that person's self-image is, then, the process of helping them begins. They have been



accepted where they are. Help begins with the acceptance of people where they are in pastoral caring.<sup>9</sup>

When there is a need for help and we respond to that need by successfully validating the humanity of such people through acceptance, then, that is one way of having cared for them. That process combines the outward resources which Jesus gave to acceptance when God accepted us, with the inward potential of individuals, endeavouring to apply them for the benefit of fellows in caring-accepting acts.

Many black people need to have their humanity constantly validated. The majority have very low self-esteem. The reason for that is partly because of their unique colonial history. It reflects what one man refers to as, 'our continued experience of struggle and pain as black people, who are inheritors of plantation slave mentality'.

Many of the black churches seem to be keenly aware of the adverse impact which those experiences bring to bear on their people. They are aware that there are serious consequences to be faced if nothing is done to help their members to deal with those problems. As a response, the churches are endeavouring to care for their members by providing the opportunities in which they are encouraged to develop what a prominent pastor calls 'practical caring for inner spiritual resources', to help them to cope. Primary among those caring resources is the value and use of motivation through the process of the development of self-esteem, self-acceptance and participation within the community of believers.

## II ACCEPTANCE AND PARTICIPATION

In the context of motivation by means of self-expression and participation to increase individual worth and to validate humanity, as a method of caring, members observe a principle which is respected by all. It is based on a series of unwritten rules and practices. Among those rules and practices is that no one is frowned upon, or laughed at in any demeaning way in the black churches. It is interpreted as an unchristian act to laugh critically at a member who is trying to make a contribution to any proceeding.

All individual inputs are accepted and considered to be valuable and enriching to the whole. Therefore, contributions are accepted as given. They are 're-affirmed' in simple and trusting ways by others, despite the level of talent, the skill, or accomplishment of the contributor.

No one is ridiculed, either for the simplicity or complexity of

a testimony, the sharing of a success or particular misfortune, or the nature and quality of the participation. Individuals who may be less articulate in what they are sharing are 'upheld' by the community which strengthens and encourages them by 'signifying' the input or the contribution.

The value of such attitudes and considerate-involvement by all the members, then becomes obvious. Under such circumstances and in that kind of supporting atmosphere, there is never any need to be fearful about the possibility or likelihood of having to defend what one may have to offer. There is, therefore, less stress to deal with by the individual contributor. Each person can then concentrate more fully on giving his or her best, knowing that there is nothing to fear, because, what they are offering will be accepted as an important contribution - equal in value to any other.

At the end of each contribution, other members of the church may offer an approving smile, accompanied by or supplemented with an appreciative nod of the head, or a responsive 'Praise the Lord', as they deem to be fitting. There may also be successive shouts of 'Amens', by others. And, even a hug and warm embrace or a handshake, are all in order.

The combined effects of all those meaningful common gestures by the churches go a long way in boosting the self-confidence of each individual and in promoting their personal development. In other words, they are provided with the necessary space in which to grow and to develop. By so doing the churches care by means of the affirmation of worth.

In that context, individual self-confidence is further enhanced. Through the process of participation there is the practice whereby no one person is allowed to play too many roles in the black churches. Activities are shared in such a way that there is a brisk rotation of functions which provides each person with the opportunity to take one's turn in the scheme of functions. Everyone is expected and encouraged to play a role.

Some of the functions which we have in mind here may consist of individuals being asked to lead the community in corporate prayer, the preaching of the word, the reading of the scripture, the rendition of a particular song, commenting on a chosen passage of scripture, or the sharing of a testimony. Similar examples of such participation take place in the youth groups, the Sunday Schools, the women and men's fellowships, as well as in all other auxiliary groups which might be attached to the churches.

Because members of the black churches are allowed to act as the 'Spirit leads' them to do, participations often take the form of unscheduled performances in many instances. These may come at any time during a meeting of the assembled congregation, or relevant group. And they do not necessarily have to follow any particular set pattern of procedure.

That is due to the fact that there is not a regular or fixed pattern in which, for example, worship must proceed in the black churches. On the contrary, what is being described here is akin to the degree of freedom to 'act' which members have, as they are spiritually motivated, to act. Therefore, a testimony attesting to the goodness of God, which an individual cannot refrain any longer from sharing, for instance, may be articulated. Or, a song rendered to express their present feeling of a sense of 'joy in the Lord', may be given before the scheduled preaching of the Word, or the reading of the Holy Scripture. That is so whether the song or the testimony was asked for and planned to be given at that specific place and time or not. Spontaneity is the essence of participation in the black churches.

In view of the fact that there are hardly any 'restrictions' placed on the need to conclude any event at a particular set or scheduled time, as far as many black churches are concerned, any event which is being undertaken, may go on according to the mood and the spirit of the people. Consequently unscheduled contributions are hardly seen to be taking up unnecessary time, which the church cannot allow. Rather, unscheduled performances and participations are welcomed and expected as normal.

All the various activities - scheduled or otherwise, are done in an atmosphere of warmth, acceptance, appreciation and involved-support. They are all generated by a sense of purpose and in the spirit of encouragement and enthusiasm. In other words, there is the presence of an atmosphere consisting of several ingredients that create the appropriate caring-relationships for human development, which is what it means to care in the black churches.

#### Caring Relationships

Human growth is enhanced, and it develops and flourishes better, where there are conditions which generate and sustain cordial relationships. This is a relationship which operates effectively and most meaningfully when it fully embraces its two-fold characteristic



components, involving others and self. The reason for this is because relationship necessitates a sense of involvement. Relationship cannot take place if it is not done in association with someone else. There is a relationship, then, when there is some form of interaction between two or more entities - usually, between persons or between persons and God.

Relationships can be meaningful and they can be meaningless. Also, they can be broken and become ineffective. One of the truest and most meaningful forms of relationship which is attainable, however, is the individual and personal one which is possible with God who created us for that specific purpose. But a true relationship with God is possible only when it is articulated in participation and in interaction with others within the community of believers in God. In other words, there can be hardly any true, meaningful, lasting and rewarding personal relationship with God, which is lived in isolation from what it means to relate to, and to live for others, as a response to what God expects of us for relationship with Him.

Whenever any human person fails to relate properly to others in God, and to God with and on behalf of others, then, the possibility of a broken relationship, either between God and self, or between one's self and others, becomes evident. When such conditions occur, there may be a real need for restoring what has been broken. One of the reasons for the necessity of restoration is due to the fact that without some form of meaningful, wholesome-restored relationship, either between God and self, or between one's self and others, it is not possible for any individual to continue to function as a normal person: in community with others, and in communication with God. That is because the conditions which the Bible refers to as 'separation' or alienation from God, have taken place (Isaiah 59:2).

Another way of stating this, is to suggest that what is implicit with a notion of the loss of spiritual health from God, or the loss of wholeness by the individual, may have resulted. It was consistent with the knowledge of the possibility of such a situation, and, therefore, to provide a cure for it, that God acted in history through the Life, Death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's action consisted, therefore, of that once and for all - curative activity for separation, in order to provide each individual with a chance for the restoration of wholeness and relationship with Him.

The writer of the Epistle of 1 John conveyed the intent of this when he wrote: 'and if anyone sins,' that is, in the likely event of a broken relationship with God on the part of an individual:

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 John 2 : 1 - 2).

The fact that each individual is required to maintain relationship with others as a condition for relationship with God, is emphasised as the writer continues to inform us that, 'If some one says, 'I love God', implying that one's relationship with God is a harmonious relationship but 'hates his brother' - also, implying that there is an impaired relationship with one's brother, then, such a person 'is a liar', because:

the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also (1 John 4 : 20 - 21, see also, 2 : 9 - 10).

It becomes very obvious then, to what extent to have a good relationship with others, is conditional upon, and is indispensable if we are to have a proper relationship with God which is not spurious in quality.

Thus, there are many people in the black churches who contend that the practice which is observed by affectionately referring to each other as, 'Brothers and Sisters in the Lord', is a principal affirmation of the genuineness of their love for one another in the context of their reciprocal love for God as a caring people. And, as human agents of healing through loving relationships.

### The Gospels

The concept of 'healing' or the restoration of individual wholeness and spiritual relationship with God as a consequence of human sin, is near to the heart of the Gospels too. It is no accident, therefore, that the verb meaning I heal, or 'I cure' ἰάομαι is frequently used in the Synoptic Gospels. Also, in this context, it is useful to observe that Sōzo which means 'I save', can be translated to mean 'I Heal', as well (See Matt. 4 : 23, 10 : 8; Mk.3 : 2, 5 : 23, 34 and Lk. 4 : 23, 8 : 36, 9 : 2, 11).

The restoration of health and wholeness or relationship with God is in keeping with a requirement of the Gospel message. And, an essential articulation of this is the requirement of the individual

to participate in the life of the community where, to live for God is to serve others as a means of promoting healthy relationships with God and with others.

To serve our fellows as a means of promoting a healing relationship with God and with them is to be engaged in doing pastoral care. And, in both cases, caring is possible through the process of 'acceptance'. In other words, God in Jesus Christ offers healing or the possibility of renewed relationship, when the individual accepts a special way of life with Him. On the other hand, when we accept others in God, we are not only doing to them what God has already done for all humankind, but also, we are caring for them by creating the necessary basis by which they are able to consolidate the healing which is already made possible by God through Jesus Christ.

It was from that context, therefore, that John Patton in his book Pastoral Counselling: A Ministry of the Church, suggested that, 'what heals' in pastoral care is 'relationship',<sup>10</sup> by means of the acceptance of others, informed by our sincere endeavour on their behalf.

In the black church movement, then, caring through the process of acceptance, healing and restoration, encompassing special relationships with God, through and on behalf of others, has become a very important principle consistent with individual faith and practice. The members take their duty in that regard with utmost seriousness, so much so that in all their undertakings, God becomes a real and active participant. Such an involvement by God, they believe, is manifested in, and informed by the very intense support system which the churches provide for their members. It is one which is always, 'each for all and all for each'. In other words, caring is made possible by the extent to which they perceive it to be their committed-christian duty, in faithfulness to the Gospel Message of Christ, to care for each other in genuine acceptance, relationship and participation, one with the other in God.

#### Pub and Church

What additional evidences do we have to support what we are interpreting to be examples of pastoral caring in the black churches - based on acceptance, as Christlike characteristics, which are clearly identifiable in those Churches? How does that caring relate to or contrast (a) with what we have previously implied was not obtainable by Afro-Caribbean people in the historic Churches. Also (b), what are the differences between the caring which some black christians receive



from their Churches,<sup>11</sup> and what might be obtained by 'other' black people, for example, from the 'secular pubs', which so many persons visit very regularly? In other words, can any distinction be made between what people get from pubs, through the process of acceptance, participation and relationships, as caring features of the black churches, which are also identifiable within the social interaction between people in those secular institutions, as part of what they offer to their customers?

In attempting to reflect on the questions as they have been posed, we will focus first of all on (b) while leaving (a) to be dealt with subsequently under another appropriate sub-heading, dealing very specifically with caring in the traditional churches. In doing so we will look at the evidence which is considered to be part of the reasons why some Afro-Caribbean people remain members of those churches, claiming that they are being 'cared for' in them.

(b) Among some of the most frequently recurring references which were made by the people whom I conversed with during my research activities, had been, how they perceived themselves as members of their various churches in comparison to those persons whom they referred to as 'pub goers'. For example, such labels as being 'unchristian', 'unsaved', 'lost' and 'worldly', together with the term 'winebibbers', were used in reference to and to categorize those who visited the pubs. There were also phrases like, 'non-fearers of God', and that, such people were only 'out to have a good time'. Also, that they were 'worshipping the pubs and not Christ', and, that those black people were being 'too dependant' upon the pubs.

It is necessary and appropriate to offer some relevant criticism of the assumptions which we have listed above. To do so is essential, because we take the view that they are based on beliefs which may be seen as 'self-righteous' assertions. In other words, they contain an element of what purports to be the classical 'holier than thou' attitude, which has so often seemed to be a trademark of fundamental christianity. That is the mode of christianity which many of the black churches exemplify. It is one in which they seem only able to accept ideas and images about themselves and their own religious groups as being the true representatives of the christian faith. Therefore, as far as they are concerned, other religious groups can never measure up to their own.

Those images and ideas about themselves and others are held in such

ways that they are portrayed as being on the 'right side of the christian life', while other people are both 'lost and wrong' in their ways of life. Because some of those images and ideas about the christian life are seldom thought through, the result is for those who hold them to appear to be judgemental, intolerant and to presume to know who is going to be among God's chosen and who will be damned.

Those are just a few of the negative implications which can be said to have suggested themselves as a result of the type of labelling which was made by the Christians whom we have quoted.

However, having said that, suffice it to be stated here also, that as we will see subsequently, some of the relevant remarks were made after attempts had been endeavoured to witness to the persons about whom they have referred.

Motivated, then, by what was being said so frequently and passionately by members of the black churches, on the one hand, and in the interest of obtaining accurate empirical information on the other hand (information which I believed would be useful in critically examining what I was hearing), it was deemed vital to speak with some of the visitors of a few selected pubs.<sup>12</sup> And, also, to observe those persons in the same way in which I had been doing by attending the black churches, listening to, and holding conversations with the members.

We will proceed by assessing some of the similarities and differences which are part of the results of my findings.

### Similarities

Some of the people who visited the pubs regularly claimed that the reasons why they went there were because they obtained acceptance, understanding and care from the pubs. They, therefore, expressed a remarkable degree of gratitude and indebtedness to the chosen pubs which they attended. Many revealed, among other things, the fact that if it had not been for the level of acceptance which they were receiving from other people in the pubs, and the quality of relationships which they had been able to develop among their friends, then, their lives would be 'intolerable'. It would be impossible for them to make it. That was so because they were too lonely otherwise to go on living without the 'connections' which they had established with the pubs.

Others contended that the pubs were the only places which gave 'validity' to their lives, and 'meaning' to the reason for their existence. The pubs were described as the centre of their world.



Remove that meaningful centre, and their lives would just 'fall apart', they believed.

It is interesting to note, however, that a large proportion of the various beliefs and responses from persons who are attenders at pubs, are in many ways strikingly similar to the very ones which were expressed by people from the black churches. Consequently, one of the more obvious conclusions which is possible to be made about the findings from both groups, is that, in their own ways, they were all receiving some form of caring. By that I mean, representatives from the two groups were attesting to the possibility of having been cared for through the process of socialisation in their chosen pubs, or as participating members of the particular black church to which the others belonged.

### Differences

One of the major differences is that, in the case of the church group, they were witnessing christians committed to a way of life which they believe is superior to that of the pub goers. That difference is reflected in the 'labelling' which they used to describe the pub patrons.

To what extent then, can it be said, that they were justified or not in their particular way of thinking about the others? There is the view which holds that, contrary to their own specific teachings, beliefs, motives and faith-values, they were being 'unchristian' themselves, when they referred to other people as unsaved and, non-fearers of God, together with the several similar terms which we have referred to previously.

This particular view has merit and can claim Biblical support because the church members appeared to have engaged themselves in the speculative practice of prejudging, when, to judge other people in such ways, is not in keeping with a true canon of how christians ought to relate to other people. Remembering that, they were specifically told by their Master, Jesus Christ,

Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves.  
For in the way you judge, you will be  
judged and by your standard of measure, it  
shall be measured to you (Matt. 7: 1-2).

Another way of stating what we are saying theologically, is to contend that the members of the black churches were not exercising the principles of pastoral caring when dealing with others. They did not seem prepared to 'accept' those who belonged to the pubs as they were.

They seemed bent on changing them first.

What are some of the implications of this factor to our understanding of pastoral care? Even if the reference to 'others' as used in this context, is particularly to those who were not directly involved in the community of faith, what was the caring christian response to them as far as acceptance is concerned?

In view of the fact that those particular questions are so very important to our discussion, they require detailed treatment. As a result, we will offer a more critical and developed assessment of acceptance as a caring concept, in order to reflect both the narrow boundaries and limitations which are implied above, and the wider horizon which it encompasses from the purview of its strengths and weaknesses as a spiritual factor. That will be done when we come to the section relating to acceptance as a 'spiritual reality'.

In the meantime, however, it is necessary at this juncture to look at the other arguments concerning the theological implications of the recognizable differences in the caring received from the pubs and that which is obtainable in the black churches.

#### Nature of the Caring

It was suggested that both those who attended the pubs, and those who are members of the black churches receive an element of caring within their different groupings. However, there are clear distinguishable features between the caring which is received in the black churches, and that which is possible from the pubs.

In the first instance, the quality of the relationship through which caring takes place in the pubs, consists of a horizontal and one-dimensional series of basic social interactions, limited between the participants only. There is the limitation made possible by human social action, which is confined purely to whatever degree of care is possible within the ambit of human restraints in the secular context.

Secondly, the quality, value and expectation of the caring from the pubs differs also. People seemed truly to be interested only in 'having a good time'<sup>13</sup> - for the moment, while they were there. They were less committed to obtaining something 'for the future',<sup>14</sup> as it is evident in the black churches. The level of participation, therefore, and the motives for them, were all different as well. That is because there seemed to be less importance attached to the reasons for their actions, which were mostly social.

When we compare the nature of the caring in the case of the black churches, however, the opposites immediately emerge. Here the set of relationships through which caring takes place are vertical and two-dimensional instead. That is, there is no longer the prevailing limitation which is confined to the human social and secular plane only. Rather, the relationship now includes 'God' as an added dimension. Consequently, instead of the limits that are evident about caring in the pubs, the relationship is now substantially enriched. Here it consists of the inexhaustible possibilities which make for interaction and operation on a much higher plane. It is one which involves the unlimited spiritual realm with God as participant in human affairs leading to personal salvation.

What motivates people to participate with God, and to be where they are, is not based only on meeting present-existential needs. More than that, there is the expectation of a future life, together with the additional element of hope, and a belief grounded in God which is not to be found in the pubs.

#### Some Effects

If the nature of the care which is evident both from the pubs and in the black churches show striking contrasts, so too, are the effects which the two communities have on the lives of their respective members. In pointing out some aspects of this, a pastor from one of the churches said,

The pubs with their particular emphasis on alcoholic beverages, tend to destroy health, and to shorten lives  
....Our church with its emphasis on salvation and service in the community, can contribute to good health  
....and to eternal life.

A number of relevant issues can be conceived of and be deducted from what the pastor has stated. Some of those issues surfaced when a black man who goes to a pub was invited to respond to the pastor's statement.

We will present part of that response and then attempt to show how the pastor subsequently defended his claims. Following that we will endeavour to offer some criticisms of the relevant factors as they have surfaced, in order to show how they contribute to caring in the black churches.

First of all, it was the opinion of the man from the pub that, contrary to 'destroying' his health, there are medicinal reasons why he drinks alcoholic beverages. It improved his health and enhances his 'social well-being', he claimed.



By way of supporting his views, and also, to show his knowledge of Scripture which he said, gave 'credence' to his drinking habits, he pointed out that, St. Paul instructed Timothy to,

No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailment (1 Tim. 5:23).

The man continued by saying 'there are churches in Britain that actually own pubs'.<sup>16</sup> That factor suggests to him that pubs are not 'undesirable places to associate with'. A religious denomination would not have been in direct possession of them, if they were 'disreputable things to have'.

So then, he feels that all the references which he has cited confirm that, both from the scriptural perspective, and also, from the point of view of practical and social examples, there are some good, legitimate reasons for his frequent use of alcoholic beverages. "As a matter of fact", he contended,

I can't see any difference between the euphoria which we're getting from the spirits that is in alcohol, and the spirit which the members of the black churches get when they worship....<sup>17</sup>

All of them got the very same 'feeling of high', in what they were doing and where they went in order to get it, he concluded.

Making a reply, the pastor said that he was 'in agreement' with his friend that some churches do have ownership of pubs, and encourage the use of alcohol. Also, there is, indeed, a marked-feeling of well being, which comes about as a result of drinking alcohol in the pubs, and the 'spirit of God', in the black churches. But, one cannot equate the two. They are not the same. One is derived from a 'personal relationship with God', while the other is only the result of a temporary means of escaping from the 'trials' of life. Those are the very trials which Our Lord invited us to bring to him (see Matt. 19: 29-30), instead of trying to 'drown them in drink'.

Then, it cannot be denied that many people who drink die of diseases such as 'sclerosis of the liver', because of the continued and prolonged use of alcohol. So, too, there are many other social consequences which directly affect the health and threaten the lives of people which are caused by alcohol, one of which is accident from drunk driving.

Because his church teaches 'total abstention' from the use of alcohol and cigarette smoking, none of the members are likely to



become ill due to the use of those stimulants. And, the One in whose Spirit they derive their happiness, the One in whom they are elated daily, is the same God who, in Jesus Christ said, 'I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly' (John 10: 10). The abundance of life which they enjoy here on earth, and hope to continue to live 'more fully in the next life', can hardly be obtained in a typical pub-environment.

Secondly, the pastor made mention of some additional effects of the social implications of alcohol and pub-culture on individuals and families, and how his church was providing pastoral care to people who were thus affected. The persons who were involved in that way can be divided into three categories. They are:

(a) those who are not members of the church, but who, when faced with problems that are created as a result of relationships with pubs, seek the assistance of the church to help to 'solve them'

(b) those who are pub-goers while their wives are members of the church and vice versa, and

(c) the children who may belong to groups (a) and (b).

The pastor reported that care in the form of 'counselling and support', is given by him on occasions when, for example, some men return home and they are drunk. They have used up a large percentage of their wages, or unemployment benefits, if they are receiving any. There is not enough money left to meet the 'material needs' of the family. As a consequence, serious quarrels with their wives develop. The wives are beaten up. They may then seek help and assistance from him, instead of involving the police. Reasons for not 'going to the police are', the pastor believes,

because of the numerous harsh experiences that Afro-Caribbean people have had with the police .... Many who have legitimate grievances are reluctant to seek redress from them. Then there are the cultural reasons why some prefer the less-tedious and exposed public implications and consequences that may come about if they invite the courts or social services in their personal affairs. Also, because of the particular standing of pastors in the black community, and what some of the women conceive of as, 'a deep love for their men' - even those who may not profess to be christians, seem to prefer to seek the intervention of pastors and not the police, when they have domestic problems.<sup>18</sup>

In the case of the children, the pastor mentioned that there are those who have been affected 'socially and psychologically' because of their fathers' behaviour. Some perform very badly at school.

Part of the reason for that is due to the many stresses and strains that their families are experiencing. He has been able to offer help to some of the children.<sup>19</sup> However, a major proportion of the problems which they have, come from the 'effects of pubs and alcohol on family lives', he concluded.

### A Critique

There might be an element of truth contained in the argument that alcohol provides some health benefits. But that could be so only when it is taken in moderation. And, contrary to what the man from the pub thinks, his consistent drinking habit may very well be slowly damaging his health. His inference that the Scripture condoned the drinking of alcohol - using the advice of St. Paul to Timothy and what Jesus did at Cana of Galilee as supporting evidence, must be considered in their contexts.

Paul told Timothy to 'use a little wine' (v.23), and not an excessive amount. And, there is no conclusive evidence that the wine which Jesus made was not free of alcohol.<sup>20</sup>

There is no place, then, in the life of black church members for any strong or intoxicating drink. That factor is taught and practised by all the churches. Consequently, many of the members point to what they believe is the writer of Proverbs description of the result of strong drink to be: 'the bite of the serpent and the sting of the adder'. No person in his or her right mind, they contend, would casually or knowingly decide to play with dangerous creatures like serpents and adders. Yet, as they see it, that is precisely what many people do when they drink alcohol. The teaching of the Scripture is against strong drink, and as such, any kind of indulgence is 'sinful', they conclude.

Regarding the claim which linked the euphoric feeling which sometimes comes about when people are intoxicated with alcohol, to the joyful experiences which others get when they respond to the movement of God's Spirit in the black churches, the man was mistaken not only when he contended that the two kinds of 'spirits' are the same, but also, by saying that the effects on both groups were identical.

When people react in the way in which they often do in the black churches, their actions must be construed to be in obedience to the Will of the Lord to, 'be filled with the Spirit'. It is not that of being drunk like, 'with wine', so that, they have no real control over what they do. Rather, this involves:

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with (their) heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph. 5: 17-21).

An interpretation of what St. Paul is saying, especially in (v.18), makes a clear distinction between the effects of what constitutes being influenced by, or to be drunk with wine, as against the needful and desirable attribute for persons to, 'be filled with the Spirit' of God instead.

To be filled with the Spirit of God, to give thanks, and to speak to each other with spiritual songs, are faithfully observed by people in the black churches. Such forms of Christian faithfulness have often been misunderstood by some observers. However, they are evidence of means of caring, as they allow the members the freedom to truly 'praise the Lord', for what God has done in their lives.

That is the freedom which is provided by the churches for their members to express themselves within the context of meaningful forms of 'acceptance' of, and fellowship one with another. They do so with an active living-faith, articulated in song, praise and genuine thanksgiving to God. Accomplishing that characterises an example of pastoral caring in the black church movement.

There is caring, too, as members observe the call to 'subject' themselves 'to one another in the fear of Christ' (Eph. 5:21). They believe that one way of subjecting themselves is to 'respect' each other. And, this aptitude towards respect for each other becomes synonymous with their ability to accept one another in the Lord, who has accepted them in the first instance.

Much of the same principle can be said to hold true for visitors to the pubs as well. They receive caring by means of acceptance and fellowship. There is also freedom to express themselves. However, that sense of expression has very little to do with an understanding of an endeavour to be faithful to God for what He has done for them, as it seems to be with members of the black churches. So too, part of the reason for accepting each other in the pubs, may not be as a result of endeavouring to subject themselves to one another in the fear of Christ, who has first accepted them.

### An Escape

The pastor's belief concerning part of what some individuals obtain from pubs as being only a transient form of escapism, may contain a



ring of truth to it. But, a similar claim can be made about religious groups like the black churches. They too, provide a measure of escape for their members. This is akin to a flight from reality. It is one which offers hope in, and places emphasis upon a future life, 'somewhere'. That seems to be done without a corresponding concern for any real attempt to improve the existing conditions which adversely affect their lives in this world. Because, as they see it, this world is not their true home. Rather, they are only 'passing by'.<sup>21</sup>

In what may well have been a reference to that type of attitude, Karl Marx suggested that religion had become the addictive drug upon which some people depended.<sup>22</sup> And, it could also have been for that very reason why it was necessary to describe religion as worthless currency in a society of valuable endeavours, which often served to prevent people from recognising and facing up to the realities which affect them and their immediate environments.<sup>23</sup>

Here too, then, it must be seen that what the pastor suggested was a way of life akin to the pubs only, might be said equally about his church also.

The position which we take, however, is that there seems to be sufficiency in whatever the two groups are seeking to find in the set of practices which they identify with. In their own ways, both in the pubs and in the churches, needs are met sufficiently to enable those who are helped to say that they are being cared for. But, while one form of that care comprises those attributes that are consistent with enabling persons to make commitments to God as a witnessing community, the other does not. Such difference, however, is due in part to the fact that pub-goers do not necessarily invoke God in their expectations of the benefits derived from pubs.

### III A SPIRITUAL REALITY

The suggestion was made implying that everyone is capable of deriving some degree of benefit from human interactions in which he or she is fully and genuinely accepted. This primary factor remains pertinent and valid, whether the acceptance is obtained in a church environment and within a witnessing community of faith, in a social setting like a pub, in a nuclear family, or on the basis of a one to one caring endeavour between two individuals.

In this specific context, Paul Tillich, in his book The New Being, refers to what he calls 'the power of acceptance which is greater' than those who give it, and those who may receive it.<sup>24</sup> What Tillich is



advocating here demonstrates to a large extent the fact that another vital aspect of acceptance is that it has the capacity which is not confined just to the narrowness of the respective human participants who may be involved. Rather, it possesses that greater dimension which is outside themselves. Therefore, acceptance provides the possibility for development. It allows people to grow, to actuate, to reach out, and to expand beyond themselves. This entails the opportunity for persons to begin where they are in life. And, then, from there, to progress outwards towards greater horizons, enabled by the insight gained from a new consciousness about one's self, having been accepted by others.

To achieve all of those possibilities is not impossible because, when we accept others, we enhance their consciousness to believe that they are truly 'somebody'. We affirm their personhood, indicating that they are whom they really are since there is nothing which prevents them from being that 'special' somebody, worthy of acceptance by us. Also, we enable and empower them by our action to see there is that greater than both of us 'Christlike-principle', which they can ascribe to.

William Glasser has aptly described this new consciousness about one's self which can come from acceptance as, 'a clear, strong, positive feeling of I am I'. This happens because,

All human behaviour, reactions, emotions, strivings are directed, in a basic sense, toward the furthering of a feeling of personal identity.<sup>25</sup>

Since the factors relating to the enhancement of consciousness come from us who are 'outside' those whom we accept, and what we are offering to them is that 'potential' which is greater than ourselves, then, such a combination contains possibilities which are wholly spiritual. Those possibilities are consistent with values and ideals that are capable, not only of enabling individuals to know who they are, but also, where they are in terms of place and time and, where they are located in them. So too, they are capable of leading persons to the place where they can have genuine liberating experiences with God. In those contexts, therefore, acceptance as a pastoral caring endeavour, has much merit.

#### The Motives of Members

Every one deserves the opportunity to benefit from the power and potential of acceptance as a caring factor in the name of Jesus Christ who first accepted us. Consequently, when the suggestion was made that the

members of the black churches may not have been caring for the people whom they described as 'pub-goers', 'non-christians', and 'non-fearers of God' (references which implied that those persons were not accepted as they were), that was the point which was being emphasized.

To ascertain the theological motive together with a probable justification for their claim, and, as a result, to see whether they had been caring then or not, it is necessary to determine what was the character of the prevailing circumstances under which the relevant statements were made. This specific way of approach is crucial so as to put into proper perspective two very vital pieces of information which can elucidate the position. They are;

- (a) the nature and level of contact or interaction which generated the claims, and
- (b) what those factors imply about the limits and strengths of acceptance as a pastoral caring concept, within the purview of the black churches.

In the first place, some of the black church members seemed to have been clear about their actions. They said that they had been trying to 'convert' the people who visit the pubs. In other words, they had acted as they understood their christian duty to 'witness' to others. That is, to try to obey the command of their Master, Jesus Christ, to make disciples of others (see Matt. 28:19). And, if necessary, they further stated, to try and 'compel them to come' into the fold (see Luke 14:23). Many followers of the black churches interpret the words of Jesus in this story — Luke 14: 16-24, to mean that they have a christian responsibility which is supported by Scripture, to force others into the 'faith'. They are not concerned to see that there are serious difficulties to contend with by taking such action. One of those difficulties is that Jesus Himself did not force anyone to follow Him. And, as such, means of duress are not compatible with Christian evangelism.

The desire to evangelize, however, is very strong among members of the black churches. That factor characterises the nature of the interaction between the representatives of the churches and the pub-goers whom they tried to convert. It was after the church members had tried and failed in their attempts to 'win over' the persons whom they had approached in the Name of Christ, that they made the relevant assertions as a matter of zealous Christian concern. That concern, even if it depicts an attitude which might suggest that as christians the Church members lacked the faith to persevere, they were reacting

as people who were sincere about what they believed had been the 'lost condition' that their brothers and sisters would remain in, if there was no change.

Secondly, what is most central about all of this for our discussion is the vital question that, even if the church representatives were acting in response to their christian duty to win others for Christ: were they not in effect acting contrary to what acceptance as a caring concept implies? To put it in another way: had they not actually declared to those whom they witnessed to that they must change their ways of life?

### Weakness

That particular approach, it must be conceded, contains one of the fundamental dilemmas, for acceptance as a caring christian concept. It is expected of christians, yet it limits the care which can be given. While christians are duty-bound to attempt to change or to 'convert' others to Christ, they cannot do so if they are also to care for such people by means of accepting them as they are. This presupposes the presence of a major contradiction in basic expectation, because christian conversion implies the hope of changing people from who they are presently, to whom they can potentially become in Jesus Christ (see Jn. 3 : 3 ff and Matt. 18:3).

The contradiction contains certain ambiguities which reveal that they are not compatible components in the context of how the black christians may have understood their religious duty.

Another way of stating this is to suggest that, even if both christian conversion and pastoral caring as acceptance can be understood within the same context of christian evangelism, to be basic undertakings and responsibilities for christians, they relate in such ways only in intent and purpose. They do not do so in application or method of approach. The black christians were not concerned about those distinctions. They were motivated by the desire to 'evangelise' above everything else.

However, it is undoubtedly within those very distinguishing features that the limits and weakness of acceptance as a caring christian factor are most pronounced. But, it is also in its weakness that its basic and underlying strengths are characterised.

### Strength

Aspects of the strength of acceptance in pastoral caring terms



have been proposed in the context of its wider usage. That is, we have made the claim that every human person derives some benefits from being accepted. That is a universal human characteristic, whether we are in a social club setting, or in the church and community of believers. However, the greater and more profound aspect of the strength of acceptance as a caring endeavour is derived when it is confined to, and operates within the community of believers. It is in this sense that the concept is applied in terms of its narrower usage. Here, the power and potential of acceptance is available to, offered and received by those who are the initiated. This grouping consists of the persons who have already made the initial conversion commitment to lead a different way of life in Jesus Christ. Here people are no longer required to change. They have already become changed persons in Christ. They are, therefore, on their way to greater things. Acceptance, as it relates to those who have thus been spiritually committed previously, generates an accelerated pace in christian maturity and caring. That is so as persons move on to know greater and to experience the depths of love in Jesus Christ and with others.

The power and potential of acceptance of this narrower but more endearing perspective, therefore, consists of that which is within the givers. It includes Jesus Christ, accepted by, believed in, and shared among all the faithful. It engenders much spiritual growth as persons aspire to become more and more like Jesus Christ (see Phil. 2:4, 1 Pet. 1: 15-16 and 1 John 3:2). It is here that Christians in the black churches actually 'live for each other', by living like Christ, as much as is possible. In that context, they strive honestly and sincerely to put into practice St. Paul's inducement: 'Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God' (Rom. 15:7).

To achieve those endeavours is very important to the Church members. Those are deeply spiritual matters to them. Here the power and strength of acceptance is so profound that individual personality does not matter very much. People are seen to be 'one' in Christ. They are all brothers and sisters - saints, of the common Lord. That state of being is another example of the basic difference between the caring which takes place in the black churches, and what happens in other secular institutions.

As long as a person is a 'born again' member of the black churches, then, one is accepted in a way that is almost beyond the capacity of



words to describe. Others recognise such persons as no longer his or her own but 'Christ's', who must consistently be seen to live in them.<sup>26</sup> One is expected to become, 'more spiritual' in every way. Consequently, members are supposed to demonstrate that there is always a personal desire and, indeed, a committed - readiness to live each day according to the way the spirit leads. This is indicative of the reason why it is often said that black church members are 'more spiritual' than other christians who may belong to the mainline churches.

For the majority of black church christians, an understanding of what it means to be more spiritual is to endeavour to 'live a holy life'. Indeed, the term 'holiness unto the Lord is our watchword', is a favourite saying of all the churches. One of the pastors expressed it in this way:

Our emphasis is on Godly righteousness and a holy life. We try to live in the spirit according to the will of God....We stand for what we teach and practice what we preach. Our standards are very high, but we know that if we continue to walk by the spirit, we will carry them out<sup>27</sup>.

Whatever christians who are members of the black churches do when the 'spirit moves', their actions are discerned to be, and interpreted as, the work of the spirit. When such things take place, the entire laos people believe they are signs that the Lord is present with them. In other words, the One who said, 'For where two or three have gathered together in My Name, there I am in their midst' (Matt. 18:20) to bless, manifests His presence powerfully in 'visible' activities among them, they believe.

The more it appears that an individual's movements and actions are spirit-motivated and controlled, the more such persons are recognised and accepted as having been chosen by God to be the 'vessel' which conveys the most lucid example of the Spirit's presence among them during a particular event. Those are supposed to be highly intensified feelings of elation, accompanied by personal satisfaction and self-worth experienced by most of the participants. The realisation that God has indeed made His 'presence' to be seen so vividly among them, becomes a therapeutic experience of immense spiritual proportion to everyone.

#### Dignity Affirmed

For many Afro-Caribbean people in Britain today, the black churches are the only places where they can go to claim a level of dignity and human

self-worth. Membership of those churches consists of a certain ethos which they can relate to and identify themselves with. It offers them the only genuine opportunity where to be 'different' is not a predisposition which works to their disadvantage in a society where, as one man put it, 'black people have the worst of everything'. That is, everything apart from what they get out of the black churches. All else seems to be decided upon in favour of those who belong to the majority group within the population. Tony Holden expressed part of that belief very aptly when he said,

The evidence suggests....(that) the ethnic minority communities are disadvantaged in all areas of their life. They live for the most part in the Inner City, there is also active discrimination against them.... (in) the way things are organised in favour of white people and against ethnic minorities<sup>28</sup>.

Reflecting explicitly, both upon the affirmative role which the black churches play in the lives of their members, and recognising the fact that the status of those very people is a servile one in the society, Rex and Moore in their book Race, Community and Conflict, have concluded that the black churches 'provide' for black people,

a meaningful framework within which they can understand and accept their relatively deprivileged position in the society,<sup>29</sup>

With assistance from, and under the aegis of that 'meaningful framework', their self-worth as a people is confirmed, and their dignity affirmed, as essential contributions of the pastoral caring process. This entails a means of instilling the necessary element of pride and positive self-image which they need to have about themselves. And, about whom they really are as a people who lack a positive identity.

#### Identity Validated

One of the attributes of pastoral caring in this context, then, is that it allows people the opportunity to develop a sense of identity about themselves.

A substantial number of Afro-Caribbean people living in Britain lack a sense of identity. Part of the reason for that unfortunate lack has to do with the adverse effects of their peculiar cultural past. That is one which was inherited from the colonial plantation experience. It is presently reinforced and supplemented by the many existing residual components of that past. They serve to prolong

and to sustain their subservient position in Britain today. Included among those components are the presence of 'racism', informed by beliefs and values associated with differences in the colour of skin which people have, together with factors about 'inferiority' and 'superiority' syndromes, that are used to maintain the status quo.

The need to have a well-defined sense of identity, is paramount in order to be able to establish and to preserve the dignity, self-worth, stability and development of any people. The need to be equipped with aspects of those vitally essential human traits are important because, as William Glasser has averred,

When we cannot establish our identity, we suffer what is probably the most upsetting of all human experiences.<sup>30</sup>

Even more than that, without a sense of identity, one has no real life of one's own, no culture and no purpose. And, without the presence of any of those primary human attributes, there is hardly anything left in a people.

The black churches help their members to become more aware of, and to be able to validate their identity in much the same way that the persons who are 'natives' appear to do with the presence of national institutions such as schools, colleges, universities and the armed forces, to name a few. There is a sense of 'belongness' which goes with membership of the black churches which offers what is needed to maintain a sense of purpose, and to have something to hold on to. And, since one of the ways in which such sense of purpose, belonging and identity-validation is achieved is by means of acceptance as a pastoral caring principle, in that respect, therefore, the churches' role in the lives of their members cannot be easily minimized.

### Self-Acceptance

The black churches are able to promote awareness and validate identity by inculcating virtues in their people which are commensurate with self-acceptance. When a people suffer from the effects of poor self image, a lack of dignity, or a confused sense of identity, they become prone to adopting a number of negative outlooks. One of those negative outlooks is to learn to 'hate themselves'. That is, invariably, such persons often wish they were members of some other race of people, instead of the one in which they are the authentic representatives.

There are several examples of black people in Britain who often wish they had been 'born white', instead of being black.<sup>31</sup> Some of the parents whom I spoke with, especially in the Chapeltown area of Leeds, were concerned about what they termed the 'attitudes' of their



young daughters who sometimes deliberately used certain brands of beauty cream in an effort to maintain a 'lighter shade of skin colour'. Others attempt to keep their hair 'straight' and long instead of the natural 'kinky' appearance. Part of the reason for those practices is based on the belief that what they have is not 'good enough'. In other words, the idea is, if they were of a 'fairer complexion', for example, they would stand a better chance of becoming successful and acceptable in a society where, 'to be black is to stand back', one of the parents stated. In that context, some people feel that one of the ways to 'move forward' in terms of increasing their life chances and to obtain the necessary criteria for possible upward social mobility, is to appear to be like the dominant group in the society as much as they can.

The group of researchers whose work culminated in the book With you in Spirit, appear to have observed such behavioural practices in other parts of the country, one of which is London. Consequently, they were careful to emphasize the need for proper 'role models' for black youngsters, and the need for black people in Britain, 'to remain conscious of the merits and values of their own blackness'.<sup>32</sup>

An acquaintance of this writer who is one of only two black consultant psychiatrists in the country informed how, on several occasions when he visits the homes of Afro-Caribbean families and introduces himself as 'doctor John', some of the children seem to be doubtful. Sometimes, they would say, 'No, you are not a doctor'. That is because in their experience, only persons who belong to certain ethnic groups are doctors.

Consciousness is instilled by the black churches as the members are encouraged to see and to realise that there is nothing wrong with, or degrading about being black. As a result, the type of skin colour which one has is 'adequate' enough. It does not diminish his/her basic worth in any way. Having been made in the image of God (see Gen. 1:26,9:6), they must accept and appreciate whom they are.

The churches promote the virtues of self-acceptance among their members by offering to them the opportunity, where they are 'at home' among equals - where they 'matter' - and where, they can always be themselves.

All those factors are examples of additional caring endeavours which possess much positive significance in determining how people view themselves. They are part of the product of acceptance as a caring influence.

#### IV DISTINCT GROUPINGS

It is now appropriate to begin to develop more fully the relevant section which we had referred to previously as, 'caring in the traditional churches'. The intellectual value of a consideration of acceptance as caring in the black churches in Britain is greatly enhanced if it is informed by, contrasted with, and includes assistance in respect of a treatment of the broader context of looking at 'other groups'<sup>33</sup> of Afro-Caribbean people who are not members of those churches.

In this precise context, then, two distinct categories of black people are identified. They are (a) those who remain totally committed to the traditional churches, and (b) those who undertake and ascribe to the practice which we shall call 'dual allegiance'.

We will proceed by comparing, assessing and analysing aspects of the caring endeavour as these have been conceived in the context of the two appropriate groups, and their significance for a look at pastoral care in the black churches, from the perspective of acceptance.

When the two groups of black people are looked at together, one of the first and more obvious factors which is revealed by the evidence concerning them is that they are definitely receiving some degree of care in the traditional churches. That is part of the reason why they remain. They receive certain fulfilling responses from the mainstream churches which are useful and valuable. Those responses reflect some of the principles which they can relate to and which have meaning to them.

So then, there are Afro-Caribbean people in those churches who maintain that they are 'accepted', and therefore, as a direct result, they are being cared for. However, there are others who complain about not being 'fully accepted'. Nevertheless, they continue to remain members of the traditional churches.

As a consequence, there are two primary, pertinent and inter-related questions that one can ask about the nature of that caring. First, what kind of acceptance constitutes the caring in terms of how it compares to, and contrasts with, the offer of care as it has been conceived, articulated and interpreted in the black churches? And, second, what are some of the contributing factors which can readily be identified to assist us in explaining why those persons continue to remain in the traditional churches if they are not fully accepted?

### Caring as Constituted

In traditional church congregations, even where Afro-Caribbean people are in the majority, the practice is for them to play subordinate roles. In that way, they have very little influence over what happens. The organisation of those churches' life and activities, as part of an historic tradition in the way things have 'always been done', are too entrenched to allow for much black participation. However, there have been attempts to redress that kind of imbalance. Certain recommendations were put to the hierarchies of both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, suggesting to the Church of England that,

Appointments (of black people) should be made to Boards and Councils of the General Synod, and a new Commission of Black Anglicans Concerns established, to enable the Church to make a more effective response to racial discrimination and disadvantage.... (affecting black people) and....The General Synod should consider how a more appropriate system of representation which pays due regard to minority interests can be implemented for the General Elections of 1990.<sup>34</sup>

And, to the Roman Catholic Church that, there is the necessity for a 'more effective' system of 'communication with Afro-Caribbean Catholics', which reflects,

a greater understanding of their problems  
and a greater awareness of their spiritual  
needs.<sup>35</sup>

A positive response to the relevant recommendations has subsequently been made. The representation of black people to the General Synod of the Church of England has been increased from Six to twenty-four.

However, an article entitled, 'Dismay over rejection of more blacks', written in Church Times, February 10, 1989, informed us that a 'measure' that,

would have allowed unsuccessful black candidates to be appointed to the Synod on a proportional representation basis of selection if the number elected by the normal process fell below a total of twenty-four....was rejected.<sup>36</sup>

It is not only a truism that black people are unduly and proportionately under-represented in the decision making process of the historic churches, there is also the fact that they seem reluctant to embrace the opportunities which they may have to make a contribution. The reality of that fact is pungently expressed in the words of a black person. When she was asked for the reason why she did not participate in the discussions which were taking place between members of the predominantly white congregation to which she belongs said,



I still don't feel free to put my views over especially in the presence of white people.... It wasn't the custom for black people to make their voices heard....for fear that they were not articulate enough, that they'd offend, or they would be rejected. Even when I don't really agree with what they are saying, because, I know it affects me. I allow them to have their way....Then, I'd go home and fret over it<sup>37</sup>

While this person could have articulated her views, fear of how others might respond prevented her from doing so. Her failure to speak seems to have been because of her own feeling of inadequacy and not the lack of ability.

However, some of the people who left the traditional churches to become very eloquent members of the black church movement claimed that it was 'restriction' on what they wanted to say and to do, as opposed to what was 'expected' of them, which were the motivating reasons for leaving.

There is much evidence to support the view that some black people are frowned upon whenever they may try to articulate their feelings and express their views in many of the traditional churches. For that reason, it is not too difficult to see why the member whom we quoted above had been reluctant to say anything.

Heather Walton et al, in their book A Tree God Planted, have spoken with candour about the 'objections' which come from 'white people'<sup>38</sup> (a number of blacks included) as a result of the way some black people express themselves. That is so especially with reference to the high 'tonal speech' sounds of Afro-Caribbean people.<sup>39</sup>

Such objections come also as a result of what is seen as the 'noise'<sup>40</sup> emanating from Pentecostal churches, as opposed to the calm and order which characterises the way of procedure in the traditional churches.

The differences are aptly expressed by a young man who had been a member of a mainstream church but left to join the New Testament Church of God in Easterley Road, Leeds. When he was asked for the reasons why he had ceased to be a member of the particular church he said,

At Roscoe, everything comes from the pulpit....everything remains inside you after the service, but it shouldn't be so. You go to church because God has blessed you. He's helped you to overcome because everywhere you're under the control of others....at work you're at their mercy, in the society you're nothing, you come to church to seek peace and to find yourself. You feel like giving God thanks openly, to let everybody know....but if you express yourself as the Spirit leads you, and you shout 'amen', 'Praise God', 'Hallelujah'....say how much you love God because you want to give God thanks,

they'll laugh and ridicule you. You are scorned. But here you're free. There's openness and you can participate freely and you get a sense of release, feel relieved and free to say it loudly.<sup>41</sup>

Those words are an accurate summary of both the feelings and reasons of many black people in the context of how they perceive and respond to the objections of others, together with what ought to be expected of them in the traditional churches.

How this young person has expressed himself may not make any claim to intellectual style or competence. There may be an indication of faulty logic, and his sequence of thought-pattern might even be poor. He would make no pretense to scholarly articulation. But what he has said represents a clear expression of reality. It has been part of his personal experience. And, he is speaking on behalf of a number of other Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. Those include the majority who, like himself, have left the traditional churches. For example, there is brother Legister who said that he left the Anglican Church because he felt 'out of place in it'. He was always 'tensed'. And, there was the fear of reprisal, together with the feeling that 'I'd to apologize for wanting to express myself in worship'. Also, there are persons like Sis. Allice and Bro. Green who left the Methodist Church to join the Church of God Seventh Day and The Church of God of Prophecy respectively, citing among other reasons for having left: the fact that their 'spiritual needs were not being met', and that the denominations identified too closely with too many of the 'discriminating' practices of the society.

One of the factors which the first informant mentioned was that 'everything comes from the pulpit'. Evidence of that very practice has been part of my own observations about proceedings in that church. What is implied here is the practice whereby, invariably, the minister conducted the entire worship service. He read the Scripture passages, preached the message, and also read out the notices. Very little, if any opportunity at all was given for individual members to contribute to the proceedings.

However, we have established the position that meaningful participation is crucial and intrinsically related to acceptance. And, those two caring concepts determine the nature of the relationship through which effective caring may take place. So then, scope for the right combination of those factors which are necessary seems to be woefully absent where black people are concerned: in the traditional churches in general and in the Roscoe Church in particular. Therefore,

in a true sense, 'everything' does appear to remain 'inside you', because of the quality of the care which is available to the black members. Despite those factors some black people will not leave the traditional churches. The question must still be asked: 'why do they remain?'

#### V SOME CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

1. Social Explanation. There are a number of powerful social reasons why black people remain in the traditional churches. Those who fall into that category are mostly persons who consider themselves to be among the 'black middle class', or those who are striving for upward social mobility-status.

In a direct reference to those persons, Pearson suggested that they are,

Mainly middle-class black people or those with middle-class aspirations, who find a home for themselves within established churches whilst those who perceive themselves as working class are more likely to become involved in black churches or lose contact with organised religion.<sup>42</sup>

The social impetus which motivates those people is not different from what it had been during plantation slavery. And, the traditional church in Britain is supposed to have the same 'status symbol' which the estate great house formerly had on the slave plantation in the Caribbean. The people who actually served in the estate great houses, having been 'elevated' nearer to the ultimate source of all power - the master, were deemed to have attained a much higher social standing, far above that of their fellow slaves who laboured in the fields. So too, it seems to have become applicable among some black people in Britain. To belong to the Church of England, or to be a member of one of the Methodist Central Halls in a British City, translates into social pluses for some Afro-Caribbean people. Consequently, it has been observed that, 'some black people' associate themselves with the Methodist Church because,

they value the prestige brought by their links with the Central Hall (on account of) its standing in the community and its traditional formality - works against experimentation and change.<sup>43</sup>

The 'prestige' which a mainstream church may possess in the community is interpreted as having benefits for them. It enhances their own personal status and makes them feel proud to 'belong'.



It is useful to note that even if the Roscoe Church in Leeds, for example, is not a Central Hall, the fact that it is a traditional church denomination seems to serve the same purpose as the Central Hall. Therefore, most of the black people in Chapeltown who are members of that church (including those who may belong to any of the other mainstream churches) take pride in being so connected.

Also, it must be noted that whereas most churches in Britain today may not possess much prestige in the estimation of the majority of native Britons, the same thing is not true for most Afro-Caribbean people. That factor is true both for the persons who go to those churches regularly, as well as for those who may not go to them. An essential aspect of the reason for that is because of the historical importance which is ascribed to the traditional churches by those followers in particular, and what religion means to black people in general. For the majority of those persons, then, membership of an historical church is akin to what a black man has described as the 'expression of a colonial consciousness which evokes memories and has intrinsic values that are deeply cherished'.

To a large extent, therefore, membership of a traditional church denomination in Britain is motivated by what Pastor Brown sees as a 'conscious desire and a deliberate effort to become as much a part of white middle-class society as possible'. In that context, it does not seem to depend so much on what they may be able to obtain from those Churches as far as pastoral caring is concerned in the same way as it is with members of the black churches. That is, pastoral care which emphasises and offers the promise of a future place in heaven, as distinct from caring that reflects the attainment of social status here on earth. So then, what this particular group of Afro-Caribbean people desire most of all, and what they derive from their alliance with the established churches, may not include aspects of caring with the promise of a future heavenly reward as the paramount reason for going to church. That is by no means a primary and wholly-important criteria for them. They look for additional incentives such as educational attainments and middle-class status which can be translated into, and can supplement what they need for survival and caring.

For example, while they do not rule out the possibility of going to heaven some day, they are not so 'heavenly-centred', as to be preoccupied with heaven as an end in itself, as it seems the case with members of the black churches. Their aim is to seek a more tangible stake in this world and not to perceive themselves to be only 'passing

through'. One of the members articulated it this way:

I haven't the desire to live only on the hallelujah side as the save soul black christian brethren.... Rather, I've a wish to live on the amen side where I can enjoy as much material success as possible.<sup>44</sup>

In essence, then, most mainstream church members seem to envisage themselves as the 'many Methodist' who are 'middle-class' do, and whose 'children' Walton et al, believe,

have often achieved well in education and employment and the advantages of their upbringing have shielded them from some of the problems which other young blacks have experienced.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, because these persons may not be faced with all of the social and economic deprivations that 'other' black people experience, they are not obliged to 'seek solace and compensatory devices in the black churches', one of the members informed us. Much of the 'compensatory' incentive found in the black churches is related to the 'spiritual care' which they provide.

It is interesting to note that almost the identical principle holds true among black people in the United States of America, especially for those who are the middle-class. Kenneth Clarke in his book Dark Ghetto, showed remarkable parallels when he wrote:

The interracial church outside the ghetto is a social instrument for the upwardly mobile and upper-middle-class Negro who uses the fact of his membership as additional evidence of his success. He therefore tends to demand of the church that it protect this image of himself above any other ideal. Any issue which would tend to remind the Negro of his racial identity would necessarily come into conflict with the basic needs which he sought to satisfy by joining. Even to discuss race may shatter the delusions of denial and the fantasies of acceptance which are part of his identification with the interracial church. Such Negroes are nonetheless able to derive satisfaction through their jobs and personal success and are less dependant upon the church for a more basic psychological support than are the Masses of Negroes.<sup>46</sup>

The social incentives to be derived by association with the historic church is of such importance to some Afro-Caribbean people in Britain that there are those whose movements are confined only to those churches. When, for example, it might become necessary to change membership, always, it seems to be the case with this middle-class group, to go from one historical church denomination to another. It is seldom to a black church. In this context, it is not surprising, therefore, to find black people who have left, say, for instance, the Church of England

becoming Roman Catholics, or Methodists and vice versa. They usually cite as reasons for having made the switch their basic dissatisfaction with what they see as "active discrimination" against them. That includes the lack of acceptance and appreciation of what they have to offer.

If, however, those factors were primarily the motives for leaving then, the relevant questions must be, why move to another comparable denomination within the established church tradition which is likely to respond to them in the same way? In essence, why is there not such a change to the black church movement, where acts of discrimination against them may not be similarly experienced and where they are much more likely to be accepted and their talents appreciated? One of the more obvious reasons which can be offered in response to, and as a way of explaining such actions is the supported conclusion that as far as those persons are concerned, what is envisaged to be most important for them has very little to do with feelings of discrimination or all of the other factors mentioned. As pastor Martin has averred, 'they do not seem to mind enduring those conditions or possible dissatisfaction caused by such factors', as long as their chances for personal status-enhancement remain open to them. Having that option available is a supremely essential requirement. Consequently, they maintain their relationship with one or the other of the historic churches as a possible guarantee towards that important end in view.

In reality then, they are prepared to change their membership if that is necessary. But, that is done only if it is to another denomination which provides them with the same opportunity for social status advancement. As far as they seem to be able to see things through, the black church movement cannot offer them such goals.

ii. Specific Example. An additional aspect of our interpretation concerning the similarities in expectations and social behaviour-pattern of black middle-class Americans' choice of church, which has precise parallel relevance to Afro-Caribbean people in Britain, can be discerned. This is consistent with the way in which they perceive and react to any form of experimentation in church life and practice. That is so particularly if it might affect the way things have always been for them. A very good example of this comes from a mainstream church congregation in Leeds.

In spite of the fact that the membership of that church is over 85% black, yet the leadership is not black. Nevertheless, there is hardly any desire or conscious effort on the part of the membership for a change. One member explained the position in this way:



As far as I can see it, everybody is satisfied with the situation as it presently is. Because every time the question of a change of leadership comes up the majority of the members become very upset....They then complain that any such change would only bring conflicts about race into the church. They say it would split up the membership and divide the church. They think it's much better to leave things as they are for the good of the church and for everybody concerned.<sup>47</sup>

And another member had this to say:

There's nothing to be achieved by changing a system that works. Over all these years we've grown accustomed to have it this way.... I think if there's a change to a black minister you'd soon be left with an empty church.<sup>48</sup>

What is implicitly at stake here, however, is not only the fact that any question relating to a change in the leadership-structure would of necessity generate and invoke aspects of 'racial identity,' which they would prefer not to face up to, or that there might be an appreciable decrease in the membership of the church. There is also the caution to guard against any other conflicting issues which may serve to endanger or to shatter the hope which they so dearly entertain about their social position with the church. In other words, as far as the majority is able to devise the situation, if there is no white minister as the leader - but rather, there is a black one instead - then such a reality would go contrary to their much cherished expectations about membership. There would be a simultaneous reduction on the social premium and the potential in value to be derived by remaining in and maintaining a continued identification with the church.

In that context, therefore, having a black minister as the leader would defeat the very purpose for which they belong to that particular denomination. Consequently, anything which would appear to have the potential to deflect from that original meaning regarding why they are members of the church, ought to be avoided. A change in the ethnic composition of the leadership is one such danger to be avoided. Out of a total of 23 persons who were asked whether they would like to have a black minister appointed to the Church, as many as 19, or over 82% responded in the negative: a factor which might very well be indicative of the popularity of, and the affection which, those people have for their minister.

The reaction of a member from the same church who attended a traditional church service in the London area of Wandsworth, lends additional support to our findings. Having visited a sister congregation

on that particular Lord's Day, the preacher was a black person. The Leeds visitor poignantly expressed her apparent surprise by saying to a member of the London-based congregation. 'I can't believe it's a black minister you've got here. I'd thought he was white like the one we've got'.<sup>49</sup> A possible interpretation which might be given concerning the relevant remark is that it does not appear to have been a reflection of solidarity at the prospect that a black person could actually be the pastor of one of the historic church congregations. Rather, it seems to have reflected a conscious internalisation into her own particular situation. It is one which was expressed with mixed-feelings. Here she seemed to have attempted to conjure up, to speculate, and to determine what it would have been like, if the pastor were to be appointed at her own church. That was a possibility which, for her, would have had disastrous consequences. That is primarily so, because, the 'basic needs' which she seeks to satisfy through her membership of an historic church stand a better chance of being fulfilled when the pastor is not black.

It is worthwhile to note also, that during the time that this particular portion of my research was being conducted (Jan. 1987 - 1988), there was a vacancy for a pastor at another sister church of the same denomination: the Halsden congregation in London where the membership is over 80% black. One of the persons who applied for the position was an Afro-Caribbean minister who lives in Brixton. He had the necessary qualification and experience for the job. However, he did not get the position on the grounds that among other things, his presence at the church would be 'divisive', and his contribution would be minimal and counter-productive. The successful applicant was a white minister. Reverend Joseph, the unsuccessful candidate was of the opinion that the church had acted for 'continuation of what had always been'. In that context, it could also be said that like the Leeds congregation, they might have 'acted' to maintain the ethnic composition of the leadership, and with it, the social values which such leadership may provide.

iii. Non-Acceptance. What constitutes by far some of the most pertinent assumptions which can be arrived at within the purview of our discussion thus far are the beliefs that any black leader who may be appointed at the Leeds Church, would be confronted with the almost impossible task of receiving any meaningful degree of support, acceptance and respect from one's own people. And, with the absence of the necessary 'acceptance', his ministry there would be hopelessly futile. There would be a major limitation placed, not only on the extent of the caring which

he would be able to offer in such a situation, but also, in relation to the degree of care he would receive from the membership in return.

When that reality is interpreted and extended to any of the black churches, and a comparison is made, a completely different picture presents itself. There, the people accept their black leaders, and consequently, much more caring is possible both in terms of what is offered and what is received.

It is very evident therefore, how the fact of acceptance as a caring process is one which is quintessentially governed by the principle of a genuine 'giving and receiving - criteria', without which, its effectiveness becomes greatly impaired. By that assumption we are suggesting that caring is effectively given and received, depending upon the extent to which acceptance is given or withheld.

However, whereas acceptance is something which some Afro-Caribbean people who are in the historic churches have complained about not 'receiving fully' from others, there seems to be a basic unpreparedness and an accompanying reluctance on their part, to offer it to persons of their own ethnic background, especially to any would-be leader.

On the other hand, in the black churches, acceptance is 'freely received' and 'freely given' by all. In that context, we have another indication of the fundamental difference in caring which is available to black people within the two traditions.

iv. Hope Animated. There are black people who retain membership with the historic churches precisely because of what any severing of it might portray to relatives, friends and acquaintances in the Caribbean. Closely related to that motive is what such membership means to them from a psychological perspective as well.

We have established the fact that most of the people who migrated to Britain from the Caribbean formerly belonged to one or the other of the historic churches. One of the views which is still held by a majority of people in the Caribbean is that to be a member of an historic church, is to belong to the church for 'rich people'.<sup>50</sup> In other words, those are the religious denominations which are perceived to be the church of the upper class, the successful, privileged and the powerful. Synonymous with that notion was the added belief that those persons who had been in the fortunate position to have migrated to Britain - the land of opportunity, membership of an historic church here was an open door to success. They would not only be better able to improve upon their social standing, but also, become financially



more successful too.

There are people here in Britain and in the Caribbean, therefore, who still cherish the view (though unrealistic, and highly romanticised a notion it may be) that the two sets of factors go together. That is, membership of an historic church, and living in Britain, are a combination for success.

However, in reality, for the greater number of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain their expectations, the hope and the dream of social and financial success, have not materialised. As a result, some people here are of the opinion that if they were to go to a black church, for example, then such a move would be a way of suggesting to friends and relatives 'back home' that they have truly failed. Once it has become known in the Caribbean, they reason, that a person who had previously held membership with one of the traditional churches, has subsequently become attached to a 'sideways',<sup>51</sup> or black church, then, the probability that such a move could be interpreted as an indication of failure, is a real one to guard against.

Membership in this context therefore, functions as a psychological prop. It serves as a means whereby some people can at least deal with their failure. That is the case even if it serves to prevent them from positively addressing themselves to the stark reality of their true situation. Membership in this context helps them to compensate for having failed to realise the success which they had envisaged. In other words, it is a means whereby they can put their failure into a context. It is a context which can provide meaning and give confirmation to the effect that it allows them to be able to say: 'after all, our hope is not dead yet. A flicker of light keeping alive the possibility of success is still visible in the reality of membership to an historic church'.

For the most part such thinking may be nothing more than mere illusions. Yet, it fills a need. That is so irrespective of how ambiguous and self-defeating it is. There is a usefulness in the form of caring that is obtained in membership as it is thus envisaged. In that way, the historic churches offer a relevant option to some black people. The churches are conceived to be institutions that can help to provide the success and respect which those black people sincerely seek in Britain, even after so many years of achieving very little.

The role of acceptance in this context is very crucial. That is because it offers such people a very essential and appropriate standard

by which they might measure the extent of their success or failure in Britain today. Since an indication of what they would like to achieve through membership of a mainstream church is related to the kind of success which those who have always belonged to them seem to commend, then, their relationship with such people is crucial. If they are accepted fully by those native members, it is a manifestation of how far they have arrived and how much they have achieved socially.

An element of their original hope and purpose for having come to Britain is kept alive, therefore, not only by means of membership of a mainstream church, but also, according to the level of acceptance which they are able to receive from others in it. To be in such a position is of extreme importance for such people, because, to have some purpose left in life, particularly when all else may appear to be lost, is one reason for hoping and wanting to go on. There are black people who still retain membership of an historic church, if only for those reasons.

The Afro-Caribbean people who have made the transition by going over to the black church movement, on the other hand, may have accepted the reality of how circumstances have developed for them in a different way. As we have alluded to earlier in this chapter, they seem to be less concerned with material and social success per se. Rather, success for them is given a more spiritual interpretation. It is something which is informed by a different motive for membership. Consequently, they have a different set of purposes towards which they must work now, in order to inherit ultimate 'success' in the life hereafter.

v. Individual Faith. The devotion to religious duty and the strength and tenacity of faith which some black people have in their churches provide powerful incentives for retaining membership in them. Some of those incentives are characterised by, and are expressed in their ability to hold on to what they refer to as 'things cherished', and which are actualised in such concepts as tradition, allegiance, beliefs and practices. For example, most of all the Afro-Caribbean people who are members of the Roman Catholic Church hold an affinity to, and are so very well acquainted with the Parish Mass, the Rosary and the Hail Mary, that those religious symbols are inseparable from any other aspect of their religious beliefs and practices. In other words, much of what is religious for them, together with what it means to be a Roman Catholic, are affirmed by those symbols.

Similarly, the devoted black Anglican is motivated by attachments to the 'national character' of the Church of the State, and to the peculiar liturgies of that tradition, in ways which authentically identify them, as far as they are concerned, to be, in every respect, genuinely Anglicans.

Those black christians would not want to give up the particular forms and practices which are unique to those and other traditional churches in exchange for any other. They are fully 'at home', in their churches.

Acceptance and caring, therefore, as these are being conceived of and articulated within the confines of their particular contexts here, are not a matter of what those black people may receive from or offer to others only. Rather, to a much greater degree, there is caring which they receive by means of their identification with, faith in, the use of, and the meaning which the religious symbols of the churches to which they belong hold for them. That is so to the extent where some of the members seem to have adopted a stance which may be akin to what pastor Joseph referred to as, 'a high level of religious prejudice against us'. Examples of some of the remarks which are being made are firstly, this one by a lady who said,

Me, I can never join any Jamaican clap-hand Church. It's too noisy. I prefer the quiet and decent way of worship. I'll never change over to that noise.... I just couldn't relate. I was born a Catholic, I<sup>52</sup> was baptised a Catholic, and I'll die a Catholic.

and,

I'd been an Anglican back in the West Indies. When I came to England naturally, I've attended the same church....It was different but I couldn't change my church. I've difficulty relating to Pentecostal churches. I guess it's all part of my religious upbringing really.<sup>53</sup>

As far as members of the black churches are concerned, however, their faith in, attachment to, preference for, and affinity with their own set of religious symbols and ways of worship such as the testimony, feet washing, musical rhythm, freedom of expression and individual participation, are in no way of less importance to them. In a true sense they relate to their religious symbols and worshipping styles in ways that identify them as black church members. Consequently, what others may not be able to 'relate' to, or what may not appear to be 'decent' ways of church life and practice, are nevertheless, expressed with such meaning, Pentecostal fervour and enthusiasm, that they function equally as well-tested examples of caring in those churches.



## VI DUAL ALLEGIANCE

There is now a very sizeable and growing percentage of Afro-Caribbean christians who receive pastoral care through the method and observation of what might appropriately be termed 'plural allegiance' in religious practice. That is, to adhere to one of the traditional churches and to the black church movement at the same time. In other words, they retain their membership in an historic church, benefiting from the psychological and social status - factors which might be provided - and attend functions as often as they can in one of the black churches.

Such people endeavour to divide their time and their support between the two different religious groupings. The pattern, however, is for members of the traditional churches to interact in this way with the black churches. Seldom has it been the other way around. That is, where a black christian who is a member of one of the black churches, participates in, and identifies so completely with what may be taking place in the traditional churches. They may visit occasionally at the traditional churches, but their commitment to the functions are never as complete as it seems the case with some who hold formal membership in an historic church.

A major part of the reason for this might be due to the fact that some of the people who are in the black churches have severed their relationship with the mainstream churches because of unpleasant experiences that they would not like to remember. Going to them again may serve to bring back such experiences.

For others, the reason is because they believe that what some of the mainstream churches stand for falls 'short' of their idea of christianity. That particular belief can aptly be interpreted, however, to be the reverse form of the very 'religious prejudice' which pastor Joseph seems to be complaining about.

A very appropriate example which helps us to see more clearly how the process of plural allegiance works, is now presented.

### An Example

Mrs. Thompson and about four other ladies are members of a mainstream church denomination which this researcher visited between January 1987 and February 1989, observing many of its religious activities. At the conclusion of one of the services, Mrs. Thompson spoke to and extended an invitation to me to speak at one of their women's fellowship meetings. She did so in her capacity as the current president.

Having left the church building, I immediately proceeded to the bottom of the street to observe the religious functions at a nearby black church. The seat which I occupied was located at the right hand corner of the sanctuary, adjacent to the main entrance door. This position allowed an adequate view of what was taking place - including any entrances or exits of members.

About 5 minutes after my arrival, Mrs. Thompson, accompanied by the other ladies entered the building and sat on benches directly in front of where I was seated. Soon they became deeply involved in singing, clapping, dancing and in testifying. They were participating fully in the same way in which the regular members had been doing. That is, they immediately got into the 'spirit' of the proceedings and were caught up in the mood of the worship experience.

The warm acceptance of the testimonies which the visitors eventually gave, together with the genuinely open and fervent response, and the appreciation of them by the congregation were no different from that of any of the regular members. They had become totally integrated as legitimate parts of the whole intensely-religious experience.

When an opportunity presented itself, the following brief conversation between Mrs. Thompson and the researcher took place.  
(R = Researcher, T = Mrs. Thompson)

R: (speaking as if surprised, both at her presence and also at the full extent of her involvement) Mrs. Thompson you seem to be very much at home in this church.

T: (speaking on behalf of the group) Yes, we take an active part in most of their activities during the week. On Sundays when our own service is over we come here....They are more spiritual here you know. They have more to offer.

R: What do you mean?

T: Well, you see, they involve you here, they are more caring, you get something here that you can't get in the Methodist Church.

R: Will you leave the Methodist church?

T: No. I'm a Methodist.

#### An Interpretation

This example is one which is consistent with a general practice among a number of Afro-Caribbean Christians. They remain attached to the mainstream churches but 'find a home' equally among the black church movement. For that reason, this example is not one which is akin only to a small isolated incidence. Nor is it one that is insignificant so as to be confined to that small group alone. On the contrary, it

is representative of an increasingly developing and burgeoning number of black people. They include members from all the major Christian denominations who are utilising a plural allegiance process to supplement and to maximise the caring which they receive from the traditional churches. The practice is endemic of a very interesting means by which they are able to receive acceptance and caring from two traditions each of which is distinctively different.

For instance, Mrs. Thompson is an office bearer in a mainstream church. And she admits being able to obtain 'something' in the black church which is not available to her in that denomination. However, she will not consider the possibility of severing relationship with the mainstream church tradition to enter into full membership with the black church movement.

One possible interpretation which can be put forward to explain such behaviour is to say that: where such people are concerned, their motivating philosophy is, 'the more the merrier'. Their need for religious caring is so great that they fare better when there is a two-fold contribution of caring from two supplying sources. Consequently, adhering to some tenets of both religious traditions, is fully conducive to, and consistent with their need for pastoral care. It is an indication of the extent to which satisfying their pastoral care needs can be taken.

To give up one group entirely would of necessity involve attributing their full allegiance to a single religious entity. However, that too would mean the possibility of less care and a reduced range of opportunity for acceptance. As they have reasoned it out, such possibilities are not attractive alternatives to them. So then, it can be affirmed and explicated here that, informed by such essential motivations, as long as those people are able to, they will continue to combine and share their form of religious allegiance equally between the black church movement and the traditional churches.

But while they do so, they will always be particular to ensure that their 'official membership' remain intact with a mainline church, because, by so doing, they are provided with the advantages of better chances for acceptance as a means towards the advancement of their spiritual needs, together with that of their social status as well. The fact that all of that can be gained through plural allegiance serves to endear the practice to them.

The same principle is applicable in many of the areas in Britain where black church groups actually use the buildings of mainstream



churches. After the worship services of the host congregations are over, for example, some of the black members often remain behind to attend the services of the black groups who share their buildings. Although this particular practice is not in evidence in the case of Leeds where none of the black religious groups presently use church buildings belonging to any of the mainstream churches, the reason for attending the services of the black churches, is also to be able to get that 'something', which Mrs. Thompson referred to, or to obtain a 'double portion' of religious caring in worship.

### Supporting Evidence

There are additional aspects about what Mrs. Thompson has revealed to us which need to be developed and interpreted more fully in order to obtain a broader picture of what they might suggest concerning acceptance as caring in the black churches.

It must be remembered, then, that she is the president of a legitimate organisation in her church. In that context, therefore, it must be further remembered that she undertook to speak on behalf of the other persons represented in the group. Those two relevant factors imply, to a certain extent, that she does possess some leadership qualities. Consequently, we may safely extrapolate from such evidence that she must have enjoyed a degree of acceptability and involvement in the ongoing life and activities of the church where she maintains her membership.

However, it is precisely in the light of those very observations that we are obliged to ask: how is it possible to justify and to link them with the pertinent revelations purporting that, 'they involve you', and 'we take an active part', in reference to their level of participation in the black church?

One of the more persuasive features of her statements, is the concomitantly-powerful testimony contained in them about the caring roles of the black churches. They offer sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that for many Afro-Caribbean people, those churches provide the natural forum which functions as a most suitable, perfectly conducive and appropriate atmosphere, in the process of fulfilling what black people desire for religious acceptance, social expression, worshipping style, and the satisfaction of needs.

An equally important part of what is revealed, too, is that the opposite may also be true as well for black people in the traditional church movement. In other words, even when they are legitimately - genuine members exercising leadership roles, there are certain historical,

structural and organisational impediments - the whole gamut of which feature to influence and to prevent full involvement of black people in those churches.<sup>54</sup>

Those hindrances in turn, serve to curtail the level of acceptance which black people feel is appropriate and necessary to be present in order for them to 'truly belong' to those institutions. As a natural consequence, there is an appreciable reduction in, and a limitation of the scope, together with the meaning, quality and content of the pastoral caring which is attainable.

The 'something' about which Mrs. Thompson made reference is symptomatic of, and synonymous with the 'care' through the means of acceptance which the group receives from the black church and which may not be readily available to them in their own church. Hence, her intimation specifying that the black churches are 'more caring' on account of what they get as a result of visiting the one which they do regularly.

## VII CREATING

A very primary and essential attribute of acceptance as a caring endeavour in the black churches is manifested in the act of 'creating'. This is not a reference implicit of creating in the absolute understanding of the term, such as, for example, how God created ex nihilo out of nothing. The concept of creating in this sense is not even meant to be perceived within the confines of a secondary meaning. That is, the meaning which would become applicable under the circumstances whereby, given the optimum-ideal conditions for acceptance and caring to take place, the end result would of necessity be the eventual emergence of persons who were 'basically new'.

Specific examples of this may be obtained by comparing what happens when an egg changes into a chicken, or a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. What takes place in the sense in which we are using the term, however, is not related to such a complete change. It is more akin to an example of bricks and stones which have been used to build a wall. While the wall might be something which has been created, the bricks and stones - as building materials, have not changed. It is only that they may have been shaped differently. So too, in the black churches acceptance and caring only serve to shape people into new ways of being themselves. They are actually the same people. They are not synonymous with the caterpillar and butterfly concept of change. However, the new 'way of existence' is a kind of creation that has

taken place.

So then, creating as a product of acceptance and caring in the black churches is used within the scope of, and is confined to, the more limited boundary involving the third aspect of its tripartite meaning. This third and relevant aspect of creating, as it is being articulated here consists of what pertains in the black church movement after people are genuinely accepted and effectively cared for by others. That is, they eventually come to assume and to possess a 'new value system' as the index by which they assess themselves.

This form of appraising and evaluating themselves is a burgeoning development which most black church christians did not have before. Also, because those values serve to determine what they have now become and, as a consequence, will be in the future, then, many have been, while others are undergoing the process of 'being created' into new persons.

One of the most appropriate Biblical references which might serve to further enhance and to elucidate our interpretation of creating as a product of acceptance and caring in the black churches is that which is found in St. Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians. In Chapter 5 and verse 17, St. Paul informs his readers that, 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come'.

In like manner, it can be asserted that as people are accepted and cared for in the black churches, a similar process eventually occurs. They develop into 'new creations'. How they once valued themselves, their range of perceptions, and what they had been before, have been re-evaluated and become transformed. In a sense, their negative self-values, together with the old selves, have 'passed away'. What they have presently become, and how they see themselves now, are commensurate with their having been created into new personalities.

A specific example from the black churches will now be presented to show how that is possible.

#### A Case Study

Robert is 29 and was born in the United Kingdom. His parents who were never legally married, were Kititian immigrants. They had suffered the same fate of the majority of Afro-Caribbean peoples in Britain: lacking most of the advantages, and the means necessary to ensure that their children always obtained a good education and the accompanying social acceptance which goes with it.



The greater part of Robert's school days had been used up in a council flat where he was obliged to take care of his younger brothers and sisters, while his mother did double shift work. Her wages were low because of the lack of skills.

When Robert was 19, he began seeking employment but was unsuccessful because of his serious lack of any marketable skills. Like all youngsters his age, he needed a meaningful outlet for personal and youthful expression. Closely related to that was the need for the kind of social environment into which he could belong with a modicum of ease. He tried the pubs, the bars and blues in and around the Chapeltown periphery of Leeds, only to end up in serious fights with others, and in trouble with the police: all in a relentless endeavour to draw attention to himself, and to be accepted in a way that would affirm his self worth.

Being a very shy person by nature, grossly uneducated and acutely lacking in self-confidence, he found it extremely difficult to cope with the many problems which he faced.

An additional source of the pressures which he encountered was the result of his 'blackness'.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, it was not long before he began to resign himself to the fact that most doors for personal, social and economic advancements seemed 'firmly and effectively closed' to him. At the age of 22 Robert suffered a mental breakdown.<sup>56</sup> During the next four years, he was in and out of a mental institution: depending on his condition at any given time.

Despite the very adverse circumstances under which Robert's mother lived then, she had tried in the best way she could to instil in him a love for God and a sense of respect for God's Church. She did not only attend the nearby Church of England as often as time allowed, but also encouraged Robert to do the same.

During the time that Robert attended the Anglican Church he had been unable to identify with or to derive much benefit from what was termed the 'cultural and social composition' of the congregation, and the 'intellectual content' which characterised most of the activities of the church. But equipped with something of a religious background to draw from, he did not find it too difficult to respond in the affirmative to an invitation which was extended to him to attend a black church. A concerned member had invited him, and having subsequently become a member, his situation was said to have, 'changed for the better', in ways which we will now attempt to assess and to show.

### An Analysis

Robert believes that possibly the only positive thing which he had going for him was the rudiment of a 'religious influence' which had been instilled in him by his mother. But it needed to be tapped and harnessed if he were to benefit from it. The black church seemed to have been able to meet that vital requirement through its caring ministry. However, when all the other contributing factors, pertaining to Robert's condition are given careful consideration, it is not too difficult to see why he said that his position seemed 'utterly hopeless'.

He appeared to be doomed to a dismal future. It was one in which not only the social stigma of having had a 'mental history' would probably continue to haunt him, but also, he did not have any of the advantages of either social and influential family connections, or the financial means to assist him. In essence, then, he seemed to have been destined to live a life of poverty, deprivation, want, dependency, misery, suffering and squalor, comparable to the very worst which was possible in the society.

A progressive series of changes in Robert's life began to take place after he had become a 'regular part' of the black church to which he had previously been invited. The concerned and caring lady who had invited him on the first occasion endeavoured, as further expression of her christian duty, to 'follow up' her action. In other words, she called for him every Lord's Day when it was possible for him to attend the church with her. Also, she had ensured, with the help of the congregation that Robert was given the necessary food, clothing and other material care so that he would be reasonably equipped to accompany her to the church.

Joan (as we will call her) acted in that way towards Robert not because she expected any reward. At least, not from Robert. He was never in any position to offer anything in return. What she did was in keeping with what she termed 'the ongoing ministry of the church' - to be equally and sincerely concerned about the holistic welfare of everyone. To 'accept' them, whosoever they may be - rich or poor, great or small. In so doing she believes that the church was effectively fulfilling 'Our Lord's injunction', implying that, 'to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to me' (Matt. 25:40).

During the initial stages of Robert's association with the church, he displayed many of the symptoms of a person who had a 'low self-image' about himself. He was withdrawn, stressful and acutely uncomfortable,

especially when in a group of people. He did not participate in anything, nor did he show the slightest interest in wanting to do so. He 'earnestly felt', he said, that he was 'incapable' of making any contribution whatsoever. But everyone was supportive. In a real sense, they made him feel that he was wanted, important to them, and accepted. He was made to feel that he had truly been a 'legitimate entity' within the group.

In time, therefore, he responded positively. Soon he was making his own contributions which were proving helpful to others. In other words, it was the belief that Robert's whole range of perceptions about himself changed. The church had not only said to him, 'You are somebody', they had also meaningfully demonstrated it in caring-christian action. Consequently, they had enabled him to undergo a process of 'personal transformation'. And, thereby, to become a new creation: 'a new person' from the old Robert, Joan informed us.

Robert is still an unemployed person. But his regular testimonies at the church about his life: who he was, where he had been and has now become serve as useful sources of inspiration from which others who may be having similar experiences, are able to draw. He helps to empower and to assist them to cope with many of life's difficulties.

Another interesting feature of the case under consideration is that which explicitly relates to the fundamental differences contained in the care given to and the continuous interest shown to Robert by the black church on the one hand, as compared with what he seemed to have received in the Anglican Church on the other hand.

Robert believes that when he attended the Church of England, he was there almost as a 'nonentity'. And, no real personal attention was given to him which would relate to his special needs.

In the light of that basic probability, a pertinent question which is raised, therefore, is this: 'In the event that the members of the Anglican Church had cared for Robert in the same way, offering to him an identical level of acceptance which he received from the black church: would there have been the kind of positive series of transformation which seemed to have beneficially occurred in his life?

While it is difficult to be precise in reaching any final conclusion about that specific query, there are some contributing elements which are germane to, and helpful in assisting us towards the quest for a more informed understanding of pastoral caring in the black churches based on acceptance.



In the first place it can be stated that what the black church had been able to achieve as far as the 'changes' in Robert's situation were concerned, became possible it seems, because there was the initial religious background and the consequent influence upon him, which his early relationship with the Anglican Church had provided. So that, minimal and supposedly inconsequential as that formal contribution might have been, it served some useful purpose in determining the final outcome. In other words, when the black church took Robert into its care, the membership was able to nurture what might appropriately be termed the 'religious seed' which had previously been planted in him by his mother, and germinated by the Church of England.

Secondly, it is equally useful to recall that Robert was unable to gain much benefit, either from the 'social' make-up of that particular congregation, or from the 'intellectual' ethos of its religious activities. For those basic reasons, it could be extrapolated, therefore, that given the relative scope of those known factors in the caring process, they contributed to prevent any meaningful change in Robert's situation from developing to any significant degree.

When the same factors and the identical considerations are applied to what the black church had to offer to Robert there are marked differences which become visibly obvious. Both the societal structure of the caring congregation, and the intellectual aspect of its religious activities, were more aptly conducive to Robert's range of social, psychological and intellectual experiences. In that way, therefore, he was able to benefit much more than what was possible in the Anglican Church.

Seen from another angle, it could be said that the whole gamut of the religious and social aspects of the two caring environments, together with what pertained in terms of their respective intellectual depths, contrasted too widely for Robert to have gained from the former. The particular nature of that contrast suggests the presence of a very wide difference between the two varying levels of acceptance and care which were available to Robert. One was useful to him while the other was not.

In fulfilling their respective roles as pastoral caring attributes, the societal make-up and the reflective and cognitive aspects contained in the more intellectual requirements demanded by the range of the religious activities employed by the Anglican Church do not appear to have been particularly geared towards, nor well suited for meeting the

pastoral care needs of Robert. He was unable to benefit much from them as a result.

However, he had been able to derive maximum benefits from those very activities in the black church, where, as far as it seems to us, there were no similar barriers to the quality of acceptance and care which they provided, and which he needed.

In expressing the presence of such simple 'approach' to religious activities in the black churches, as contrasted with what seems to be the more complicated approach employed by the mainstream churches, a theological student who is herself an Anglican, and who had gone to observe how the black churches care for their members said,

The approach to religion was enthusiastic and the teaching was simple with no theological complication. This I noticed particularly in the sermon too. The pastor expounded the story of Jacob and Esau, for example, simply by telling the story in a way that everyone could understand....In the Church of England, the sermon usually tends towards a more complex theological theme of the New Testament....except when there is need to stick to the time of the church calendar.<sup>57</sup>

The 'more complex theological' approach used by the Church of England, was unsuited for Robert. He was uncomfortable with it. It was aimed at a more educated audience. Therefore, it could have been in response to such a state of affairs that John Rex and Robert Moore wrote:

It is difficult to see how any immigrant(black) would feel 'at home' in such churches, anymore than an English man could feel at home in a West Indian sect meeting.<sup>58</sup>

The audience which 'such churches' cater for and the sermons that they preach are geared to reach, is the educated middle-class who comprise the majority of the congregations in the mainstream churches. And, it is that same 'middle-class community' about which the Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1987-1988 in a most succinct and pertinent reference stated how,

Most churches have a style of worship and a content of preaching, which quite unconsciously reflect white middle-class attitudes and concerns.<sup>59</sup>

It may very well be the barrier to effective pastoral care occasioned by that specific 'style of worship', the 'content of preaching', and how they are expressed in ways to suit middle-class, 'attitudes and concerns', which continue to prevent people like Robert, and indeed, so many other black members from being effectively cared for by most mainstream church congregations. Those factors are consistent with a mode of worship and constitute a form of caring which are unrelated

to what most black people need for spiritual growth, religious fulfilment and pastoral caring.

The extent to which those barriers also contribute to hinder effective and meaningful pastoral caring among Afro-Caribbean Christians, can be summed up in the words of those who speak of 'experiencing a feeling' which is similar to 'spiritual hunger in British Churches.<sup>60</sup> Such feelings are hardly present when there is full acceptance.

However, that 'hunger' is one which seems to be satisfied spiritually, socially, psychologically and culturally by the black churches in Britain as they care for their members, offering them acceptance and understanding at a level which cannot be surpassed by any other institution.



NOTES

1. For more about this model see Paul Tillich, The New Being, Charles Scribner's and Sons, New York, 1955, P. 12., also The Courage To Be, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. 1952, PP. 152 - 179. A comprehensive description of Paul Tillich's contribution to Pastoral Care and Counselling is to be found in William and Mirion Pauck, Paul Tillich: His Life and Thoughts, 2 Vols. Harper and Row Pub. New York, 1976, PP. 1 - 219 and 245 - 285.
2. See Faith in the City, op. cit., P.43, also, With You in Spirit?: The Report of Cardinal Hume's Advisory Group on The Catholic Church's Commitment To The Black Community, The Print Business Ltd. 1986, P.13.
3. See John Cavanagh, Fundamental Pastoral Counselling: Technique and Psychology, The Bruce Pub. Milwaukee, 1962, PP. 67 - 68.
4. Eden McDonald, The Call to Communicate, The Saint Andrew Press, Eninburgh 1975, P.119.
5. See Paul Tillich, 'The Theology of Pastoral Care', P. 4 and also, The Courage To Be, op. cit., PP. 155 ff.
6. Thomas Oden, Kerygma And Counselling, Harper & Row, Pub. New York, 1978, P.22.
7. For more about this see Howard Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counselling, Abingdon Press, New York, 1966, PP. 294 - 295 and Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, Boston Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1961, PP. 47 - 51.
8. For an indication of the kind of impact which this had on most Afro-Caribbean people, see Robert Miles and Annie Phizacklea, White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics, Pluto Press, 1984, P. 168 and Fryer, op. cit., P.374.
9. See Cavanagh, op. cit., PP. 45 - 68.
10. Patton, op. cit., P.193.
11. This is intended to include all Afro-Caribbean Christians: those who are members of the black Churches and those who are members of the historic-mainstream churches. This distinction is necessary so as to compare black christians with those Afro-Caribbean people who are not regarded as christians, especially by members of the black churches precisely because they visit the pubs and do not claim to have had a 'born again' experience with Jesus Christ.
12. Three of the pubs which were visited are: The Newlands, Hayfield and The Fforde Greene.
13. This was part of the conclusion which I came to after the visits. It suggests that the black church members may not have been in error about their claim.
14. There is a sense in which persons who belong to the pub community sometimes develop relationships which eventually lead to marriage. In such cases it could be said that there is a future which begins for some people in the pubs. The same is true for members of the black churches. Prospective husbands and wives meet each other in those churches. However, what the church members had in mind was life beyond death.

15. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
16. One example of this is St. Anne's Church, North Street, Keighley.
17. A member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Leeds.
18. The Church of God of Prophecy.
19. How this is done will be assessed in greater detail in the chapter dealing with 'The Black Family and Pastoral Care in the Black Churches'.
20. See John 2 : 3 - 10. Also, in Matt. 9 : 17 Jesus spoke about the folly of putting 'new wine into old wineskins'. Any wine which is capable of bursting its container may be said to have an amount of alcohol in it.
21. See Church Hymnal: New Testament Church of God. No. 405 Belmont Press, North Hampton, P.111.
22. See Karl Marx 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', Introduction, David McLellan (ed.), Karl Marx, Selected Writings, Oxford, O.U.P., 1977 and also, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, On Religion, Schocken Books, New York, 1964, P.42.
23. See Karl Kautsky, Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation, Transl. by J. L. and E. G. Mulliken, London Unwin, 1897, PP. 155 - 298.
24. Paul Tillich, The New Being, op. cit., P.12. See Holifield, op. cit., P. 331.
25. William Glasser, Mental Health OR Mental Illness?, Harper and Row Pub. New York, 1960, P.13.
26. See Gal. 2 : 20.
27. The Church of God, Seventh Day.
28. See Tony Holden, People, Churches and Multi-Racial Projects, The Methodist Church, 1984, P.33.
29. Rex and Moore, Race, Community and Conflict, Oxford University Press, 1967, P.182.
30. Glasser, op. cit., P.14.
31. For more about this see Yasmin Alibhai: 'The Child Racists', New Society, December, 1987 and John Sweeney, 'The End of the Bronze Age', Observer Magazine, June 5, 1988, PP.40 - 44 'The urge to be paler', the writer suggested, 'causes black people to risk disfigurement and danger to their skin'. P.44.
32. See With you in Spirit, op. cit., PP. 17 - 18.
33. This term relates also to the category of black people whom we called 'pub goers'. Since we have already looked at those persons, what remains necessary to be said here is that we have 4 groupings of Afro-Caribbean people whom we are considering. They are (a)

Members of the black churches, (b) members of the traditional churches including (c) those who observe plural allegiance and (d) those who are not regular church goers and pub patrons. There are no hard and fast reasons which preclude any movements between groups. People move from the pubs to the mainstream or to the black churches. There are those, for example, who may become 'converted' from the pubs to become legitimate members of any black church. Also, some people who frequent the pubs may attend one of the mainstream churches from time to time without having to be converted or to be committed in any way.

34. See Faith in the City, op. cit., pp. 361 - 362.
35. See With You in Spirit, op. cit., pp. 10 - 11.
36. See Church Times, Feb. 10, 1989.
37. Member of a mainstream church - Methodist.
38. A Tree God Planted: Black People in British Methodism The Methodist Church, 1985, p.59.
39. See David Sutcliffe and Ansel Wong (eds.), The Language of the Black Experience: Cultural Expression Through Word and Sound in the Caribbean and Britain, Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp. 21 - 31.
40. A Tree God Planted, op. cit., p.59.
41. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
42. See D. Pearson, 'Race, Religiosity and Political Activism', British Journal of Sociology, xxix, 3 : 340 - 357, 1978.
43. A Tree God Planted, op. cit., p.6. A Central Hall is the term given to the largest of the Methodist properties located in any of the urban or city areas in Britain. They are usually multi-purpose buildings used for worship, but also as centres for social, cultural and community purposes.
44. Black person from a mainstream church - Anglican.
45. See A Tree God Planted, op. cit., p.36.
46. Kenneth Clarke, Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Power, Harper & Row Pub. New York, 1965, pp. 177 - 178. N.B. Where Clarke uses the word 'Negro' we prefer to use the term Afro-Caribbean or simply black people.
47. From a mainstream church - Methodist.
48. From a mainstream church - Methodist.
49. This incident is one which occurred in June 1987. The minister was one among 5 others in the whole of the British Conference of a major denomination which has over 16,000 registered black members. The statement may be seen to contain an element of pathos informed by a tone of disappointment. However, it is an example of the way in which many black people feel about their leaders. In August 1987 the same minister was forced to leave the church congregation. He had failed to get the support of the members - the majority of



whom are black. They voted for him to leave. He was replaced by a white minister from the United States of America.

50. For more about this factor see Walton et al., op. cit., PP. 18 - 19.
51. This is the term used in the Caribbean to describe churches that are not among the historic denominational groups.
52. Member of a mainstream church denomination.
53. Ibid.
54. For an informative interpretation of this see Leech, op. cit., PP. 21 - 22, and Wilkinson, et al., (eds) op. cit., PP. 6 - 12.
55. For a lucid and informed discussion of some of the 'effects' which this has on people like Robert see Ellis Cashmore, The Logic of Racism, Allen and Unwin, London, 1987, PP. 111 - 129. On those pages the writer suggested among other things that, 'set against this background....the job that people tell (the black youth) to chase is never there. The prejudice they tell him does not exist confronts him like a brick wall at every turn; and the affinity he is meant to share with white members of his class never seems to materialize....they can never fully appreciate the effects it has on blacks'. P. 118.
56. Such illnesses among black people seem to be the result of some of the direct consequences which the experiences mentioned here have on black people. For evidence of that in the form of published results of recent studies on the mental state of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain, see The Guardian, Wed. 30 Sept. 1987, and The Observer, Sun. 1 Nov. 1987. Among the findings published in those papers are that:
  - (a) Afro-Caribbean parents are 12 times more likely to be diagnosed as schizophrenic than white native parents.
  - (b) British born black women are some 13 times more likely to suffer from mental illness than their white counterparts, and
  - (c) Afro-Caribbean black are 25 times more likely to be placed under psychiatric care by the courts than white people.
57. Theological Student, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Leeds University.
58. See Rex and Moore, op. cit., P.185.
59. See Crockford's Clerical Directory 1987 - 88: A Directory of the Serving and Retired Clergy of The Church of England, The Church in Wales, The Scottish Episcopal Church, The Church of Ireland, Church House Pub. 1987, PP. 69 - 76. Also, for a detailed and comprehensive treatment of the middle-class composition of the mainstream churches, see B. C. Plowright, Are We Blind Also?, James Nisbet & Co. Ltd., London, 1954, PP. 186 - 190.
60. See A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.28.

CHAPTER 2

U N D E R S T A N D I N G   A S   P A S T O R A L   C A R E   I N  
T H E   B L A C K   C H U R C H E S

INTRODUCTION

The primary feature of the argument which formed the basis of the preceding chapter developed around the core concept purporting that there was an acute lack of adequate pastoral care received by a majority of Afro-Caribbean christians when they arrived and settled down in Britain. A substantial part of the reason for that lack was due to the non-acceptance of them by the historic churches.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, we have been able to show how the black churches made appropriate amends to care: in the sense that their members found mutual acceptance in them.

This chapter will undertake to focus upon and to provide in a similar way, an objective analysis of understanding as another of the major caring endeavours of the black churches. That will be done by showing how Afro-Caribbean christians are being cared for by those churches because there is 'understanding' about their particular set of problems and how best to meet their specific caring needs.

In that context, therefore, we will be seeking to justify whether that same manifest quality of understanding (contrary to how it was with acceptance) is equally present in and similarly applied by the mainstream churches. That is, to be sufficiently beneficial to the caring requirements of their black members as it is evident in the black churches. In other words, to what extent can it be determined that Afro-Caribbean christians in the mainstream churches are being adequately cared for or not, based on understanding? How has the basis for understanding of each other continued to be hampered by the motivating consequences implicit upon the role of the adverse historical and cultural factors which informed the centuries of relationships between the different peoples?

What is suggested here at this point is that, until and unless there is the genuine willingness to truly understand, no real pastoral care and counselling is possible between the different ethnic christian groups in the mainstream churches in particular, and also, the wider community in general. That is so because without understanding, no meaningful help can 'be given' in pastoral caring.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter will conclude with some critical insights of an example of direct pastoral care in the black churches based on understanding - that is, understanding between those who belong culturally and historically.

## I UNDERSTANDING EVALUATED

The special role of understanding in the field of pastoral care and counselling is a very exceptional one. As a consequence, the term has assumed a predominant pride of place in its assessment by pastoral theologians. Understanding was formally conceived to be one of the three 'faculties' of the human soul. The two others were the 'will' and the 'affections'. However, within that three-fold grouping, the understanding was singled out as the 'directive and leading faculty of the soul'. In that pre-eminent capacity, it served as the guiding immanence influencing both the 'will and the affections'.<sup>3</sup>

It can be suggested, then, that among the three named faculties, the understanding was the primary one. The understanding directed and informed the two others. And, since a possible definition of the noun 'soul' is interpreted to mean the 'spiritual-principle' embodied in the human being, or a person's 'moral and emotional nature',<sup>4</sup> therefore, a reasonable conclusion which might be extrapolated from that definition is that to a very considerable degree the understanding determined how individuals behaved both in relation to themselves and with others. In emphasising that spiritual principle as it is associated with the soul in the context of its relationship to the possible primacy of the understanding to be the most important component, Nathanael Appleton suggested that a person's salvation was related to the influence of the understanding upon the soul. In that way, 'the spirit began its saving work' by means of 'informing the understanding and convincing it of the soul's sinfulness'.<sup>5</sup>

So then, when the soul is thus convinced of any sinful deeds done, the process of conversion is likely to begin because,

In conversion....the understanding now savingly enlightened, beholds Jesus Christ, in order of Nature before the Will and the Affections are drawn to close with Him.<sup>6</sup>

In the same context, Thomas Shepard said that,

When God truly illumined the understanding of the godly their affection flowed forth  
unerringly in hope and love towards Christ.<sup>7</sup>

However, not every theologian agreed that the understanding was the leading and most essential of the soul's faculties. Thomas Hooper,



for example, contended that the will superseded the understanding in rank. He argued that the will was the 'Prince', whereas the understanding was subservient to it because it was 'merely a grave counsellor'.<sup>8</sup> That interpretation differed from Johnathan Edwards' view which stated that both the understanding and the will were of equal importance. They were equal especially in relation to what he called 'sensible' as opposed to 'speculative' knowing.<sup>9</sup> Where the two factors were concerned, the understanding and the will had the same parity in terms of value and the extent to which they contributed to enable the individual to be able to come to terms with one's own sinful nature.

Other leading theologians believed that human sinful deeds and practices came about because of what they termed a 'disordered will'. Nevertheless, they maintained that any disorder of the will emanated from what constituted a 'prior darkness of the understanding'.<sup>10</sup> In which case, whether it was associated with, or conceived towards the promotion of beneficial aspirations on the one hand, or engendered in the production of harmful and deviant deeds on the other hand, the understanding appeared to have had the greatest impact when it was compared with both the will and the affections, rather than vice versa.

It is possible then, to ascertain from our discussion so far, how much the debate about the understanding, the will and the affections contained paramount implications for the practice of pastoral care. There was not only the very valuable link which had been forged with those factors and the soul of the individual, but also, there was the adroit correlation which was established with the concept of christian conversion as well. Hence, the important relationship with pastoral care becomes apparent and explicit. When that relationship is further elucidated from the advantage of such a lucidly-illuminating and relevant point of view, it is seen not only how the understanding is appropriately likened to a 'counsellor', but it also manifestly suggests that pastoral care and counselling, when usefully applied, does become a means of bringing about conversion or the liberating aspirations of individuals.

When it is viewed, therefore, within the context of the contemporary practice and usefulness of pastoral care, understanding is deemed to be absolutely essential to the proper offer of adequate health care needs. So very vital and essentially germane is understanding to the effective and successful delivery of pastoral care, we truly affirm that in the absence of understanding no relationship can be said to be positive,

valuable and meaningful in modern pastoral caring terms.

In that sense understanding entails the 'willingness to understand'. It embraces the 'fact' of understanding, and consists of the capacity to put forward the relevant facts to someone who may seek help from another. Understanding ensures that those facts are presented not only as the prospective helper sees them, but more so as they are true to how the person who is being helped feels and consequently 'knows them to be so'. Failure to respond accordingly and to act within the ambit of those pertinent confines, norms and codes of the caring relationship is not to understand. And nothing 'constructive can occur' between helper and those needing pastoral help where there is no understanding.<sup>11</sup> That is even more so especially when the helping-relationship is of a counselling nature.

For those pungent reasons, understanding has become, in the estimation of Carl Wennerstrom, 'the corner stone of the modern pastoral care movement'. In that position an increasing 'knowledge', he suggested, 'about how to understand particular persons with particular needs', continue to be developed into what he termed a 'kind of diagnosis'.<sup>12</sup> It is from the perspective of those essentially prominent and hegemonic contributions to effective pastoral caring that the term is used in the black churches.

#### A Way of Procedure

We have attempted to establish and to underline the ultimate necessity for understanding in pastoral caring. However, what is equally true for our discussion is the concomitant fact that a considerable number of persons who have responsibility for, and consequently, who are in positions to offer care to black people are representatives of the dominant population. That factor is particularly true both within the Social Services Sector, as well as in the mainstream churches where Afro-Caribbean people are in membership.<sup>13</sup> So then, the pertinent question which presents itself here is: to what extent can those persons really understand the black people whom they care for?

In our endeavour to respond to the question which has been raised we will attempt to analyse and interpret (among other supporting factors), examples of caring from the perspective of understanding - as such caring relates to black people and how they see themselves within the context of what they have described as 'standing under', both as a position in society, and also, the persons who take care of them. Then, we will examine similar aspects of care as these are evident in the mainstream churches. It we will show how such caring relates to or

differs from, pastoral caring in the black churches.

By utilising that type of approach we hope to provide what might justifiably be a fairly systematic and accurate indication of how effectively pastoral caring appears to take place in those black churches where there seems to be genuine understanding about each other and their problems.

## II STANDING UNDER

No useful pastoral caring is possible on the basis of a paternalistic relationship which is so structured that the person who is offering care either assumes, or is seen to take a 'father figure', superior and all-knowing partner role in the caring process, while the person who may be receiving care is perceived to have an inferior and subordinate partner role. Rather, the most effective form of pastoral caring takes place between parties who act on the basic principle of 'equality' and mutual respect for each other. That is the pastoral caring which happens when both the carer and the cared for become 'companions' and allies together in caring.<sup>14</sup> It is the caring which is devoid of 'any implication that we are dealing with....stupid'<sup>15</sup> people, who are lesser than ourselves in any way.

Yet, the general pattern is that black people who receive care under the aegis of the Social Services Sector, for example (whether it is in the probation service, the prisons, mental hospitals or wherever else the care might be given) seem to feel that they are 'looked down upon' by people from the native population, especially those who care for them through those services. The caring relationship is seldom structured on the basis of equal partners in caring, but on the paternalistic model. That is a relationship in which the carer stands 'over', and the cared for always stands 'under'.

One of the best ways to illustrate how those black people perceive themselves, how the caring is structured, and how such caring as it is received is manifested, it is necessary to produce a representative picture of the whole.



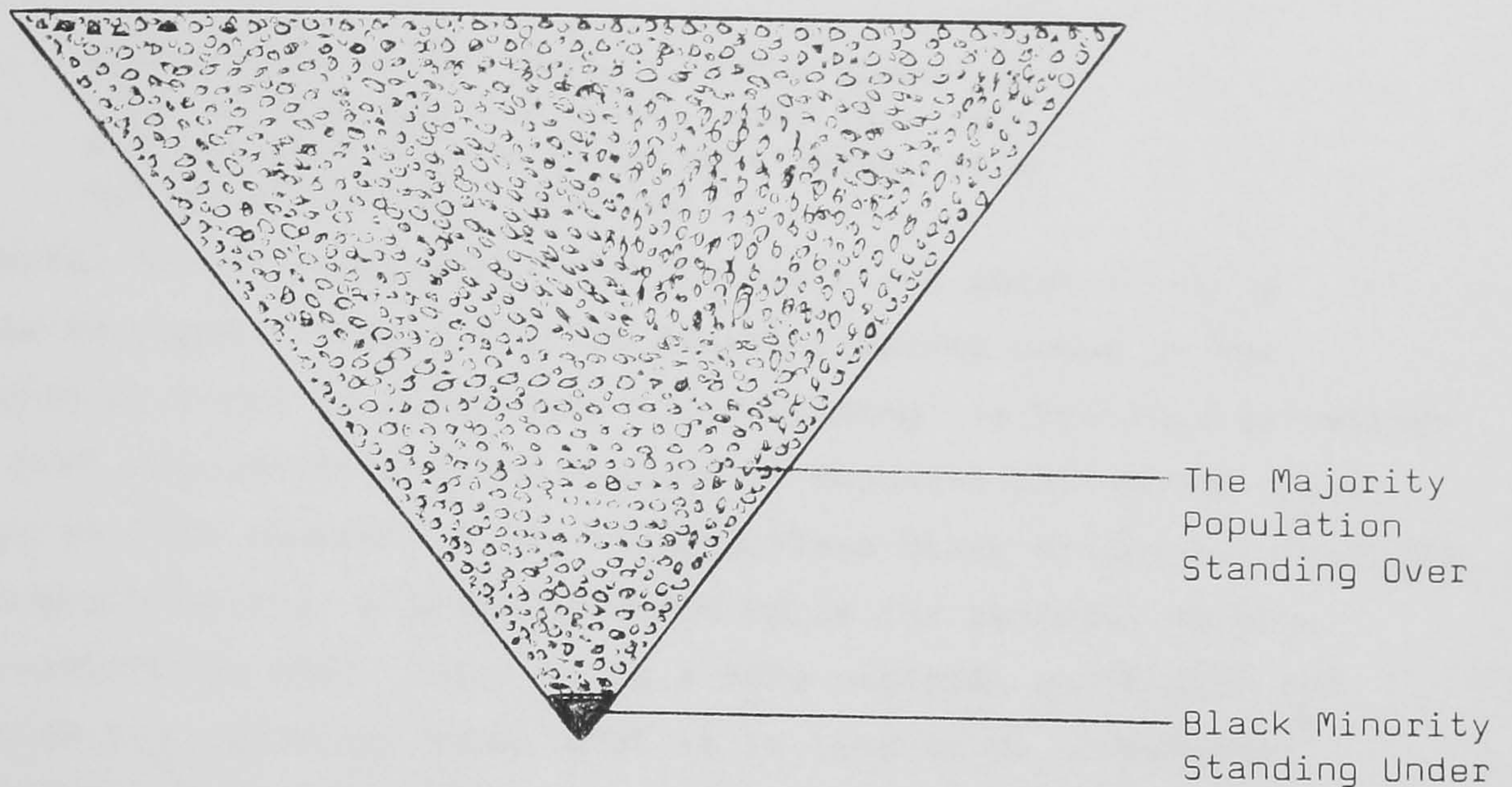


Fig. 1. The Inverted Pyramid of Non-Influence, Powerlessness and Lacking in Prestige of Black People Standing Under as a Permanent Under-Class.

The above figure, drawn in the shape of an inverted pyramid, demonstrates how those who are in a position to care for black people are the very people with power, prestige and influence. They remain at the top of the social pyramid even if it is inverted, so that, in the caring process, power and influence remains at the top and absolute powerlessness is at the base. That is the position which a black man referred to when he said, 'all the forms of social, cultural, political and economic advantages' of those at the top are maintained, while the corresponding 'disadvantages' of those who are situated at the bottom and receiving end of the social pyramid are also guaranteed as well. In that position, all the weight of disadvantage emanating from the top can be 'felt by us', he concluded.

With regards to that type of caring structured on the basis of standing over and standing under: as a mirror reflecting the society, another person said,

We are at the bottom, those who are responsible for our welfare are above....they can't understand what we experience from underneath<sup>16</sup>.

And, another one had this to say :



When you're at the bottom, those above you keep looking up, not below, what they see and understand is what happens above, it's not about us who are below<sup>17</sup>.

In response to the references from the two black persons, it is possible to suggest that as far as pastoral caring based on the paternalistic model is concerned, 'overstanding' is for representatives of the host population who are engaged in pastoral caring and understanding in that context is for the powerless black minority. They are the 'understanders': a position which calls for pastoral caring.

Overstanding then, seems to be a safe position which does not have to be too concerned about what it is like to be underneath.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, could it be that the caring which is given in this context is too structured in terms of that overstanding ethos to be effective and meaningful to those who are the receivers from below?

It appears that it is precisely in relation to those upper and nether existing situations and circumstances in which pastoral caring for black people takes place under the aegis of the Social Services Sector, as well as in the mainstream churches, that there is too much overstanding for effective caring to be forthcoming. In other words, pastoral care which embraces such paternalistic inverted-pyramid context of overstanding and standing under, produces results which are negative. It is the kind of result which only serves to continue to re-enforce traditional social positions, and thereby, maintain the status quo. That kind of result is not geared to assist in improving or to uplift either the consciousness, or the servile condition of black people who see themselves as having been placed 'underneath' in pastoral caring terms, as well as in every other sphere of life in Britain with the exception of black institutions like the black church movement.

Part of the outcome of the type of caring which we are interpreting as a replica of that which pertains in the society at large - can best be equated to, and compared favourably with what was suggested by Ann Phoenix. In her article entitled 'The Afro-Caribbean Myth', New Society, 4 March, 1988, she referred to such an outcome as that from which it is 'possible to identify a specific cause' in terms of aspects which,

relate to the ways in which race, class and gender intersect in British society to ensure that black people are maintained in positions of relative powerlessness<sup>19</sup>.

Phoenix's reference as cited here and interpreted within the context

of what is 'possible' as a result of caring relationships in the Social Services Sector which are based on the standing over principle, serves to further highlight what she calls 'racial discrimination' and 'policing tactics' in respect to black people. Pastoral caring structured on the standing under principle is akin to, and reflects most of the negative elements synonymous with racial discrimination. Those are consistent with some of the factors which influence how 'policing tactics', for example, like that kind of pastoral caring concept, effectively contribute to maintaining the position of powerlessness of black people at the bottom of the social pyramid.<sup>20</sup>

An indication of the way the system is structured so that caring in the social services sector can be said to be very well placed to maintain the powerlessness of black people might be obtained in the following examples.

Liam Donnellan in an article entitled 'The Inequality That Courts Disaster For Blacks' - The Guardian, 11 February, 1988, informed us that as late as 1987 in 'North East London', for instance, where one of the largest concentrations of black people in Britain live, only 8% of the Probation Service Staff for that area were black. In other words, 92% of the staff were members of the native population.<sup>21</sup> Also, Kirsty Milne, in another article found in New Society, 29 January 1988, cited the fact that The West Midlands ought to have a 'target of 14%' of its Probation Service Staff who are black in order to reflect the population ratio of black people, but only between 6-7% were actually black.<sup>22</sup> And, in The Enemy Within it is mentioned that,

The leadership of the Social Services of one Metropolitan Borough consists of a Director and Deputy Director and 29 senior officials. All of these are white. At the next level below there are 30 Organisers of the work of the Department, only one of whom is black. At the senior levels, therefore, there is only one black person out of a total of 61, or 1.6%. Lower down in the Department there are 150 social workers of whom three are black, and 73 officers in charge of local activities of whom six are black. Black representation at this level is therefore nine to 214, or 4.2%. In the Borough itself 20% of the population is black<sup>23</sup>.

However, some efforts seem to be in progress in an attempt to redress the existing imbalance between the number of native people who are in positions to care for black people, and the number of black people who are in need of caring, thereby allowing more qualified blacks the opportunity to do the job. In an article under the caption 'Employment and Recruitment of Black Staff', which appeared in Community Care,



Dudley Roach wrote:

The recruitment of black staff in the S.S.D's is increasingly perceived as a necessary strategy to eliminate racial inequality in employment and enhance delivery to black clients....There is a great deal of work to be done on the recruitment and equal opportunity issues of black staff and strenuous efforts need to be made to ensure staff groups reflect the multi-racial society in which we live without resorting to tokenism.<sup>24</sup>

### Difficulty Realised

One of the major problems which serve to prevent the attainment of adequate pastoral care within the specific focus therefore, has to do with the difficulty of truly understanding those who are powerless at the bottom. As James Adams put this, 'In simplest terms' those persons, he said,

must be understood in relation to social class, occupation, local community integration or disintegration....economic power and powerlessness, and in majority group or minority-group status.<sup>25</sup>

So then, it appears that unless persons are understood within the constraints of those social positions, it is not possible to care adequately for them. That belief appears to correctly reflect the essence of what the two black persons referred to previously suggested.<sup>26</sup> And, who could possibly understand better those affirmations about themselves but the people who live them?

As a means of further enhancing the position of the two black persons, we will proceed by looking at a relevant and appropriate case study to show how much the difficulty to truly understand from the perspective of different class, occupation, economic and cultural situations and backgrounds is indeed a real one.<sup>27</sup>

### Case Presentation

A black man who was a skilled motor mechanic had been employed by a small local engineering firm. He had been paid at the rate of fifty pounds per week in wages. That was an amount which fell well below the basic wage commensurate with his mechanical abilities, and the financial contribution which his work generated for the benefit of the firm. The man whom we will call Prince, was given the money without there being any record about the actual transaction or evidence of payment. Also, the company did not make any of the required 'legal' deductions and the necessary contributions on his behalf to the National Insurance Scheme.

Having continued to work in that capacity without any change in pay structure or employment status for a period of 3 years, Prince eventually fell ill. However, during the time of his sickness he was laid off by his employers. The dismissed worker then made a claim for invalidity benefits, a bid to be reinstated, and compensation for wrongful dismissal. The company refused to meet any of those conditions and the case was taken before a tribunal.

Prince was represented at the hearing of the tribunal by a black pastor who has some experience in providing representation in such employment related cases. 'Since this was a straightforward case of unfairness, wrongful dismissal and economic exploitation of a worker,' the pastor said, they appeared to have been winning their arguments. That was so until the chairman of the tribunal (all white) asked the petitioning litigant why he thought that fifty pounds per week was sufficient for his wages. Having made the reply that he had accepted that amount because all he wanted was 'sufficient money to pay for my food and the rent and to give something for my church dues, and fifty pounds was enough to do all of that...I'd been satisfied and lived happily with it', Prince had 'effectively sealed his fate from that point of the proceedings', the pastor informed us.

#### A Reflection

The inquiry which was made by the tribunal chairman, and the subsequent answer which Prince gave in reply had been a decisive turning point in the entire case. What the dismissed worker said was the truth. He had been very honest with his answer, but it 'caused him to lose the case outright', the pastor believed.

The members of the tribunal could not understand how it was that Prince could have been 'satisfied' with such a low wage, claiming to live 'happily on it', the pastor mentioned further. However, they had been seeing things from their own perspective and from the position of 'standing over'. They found it difficult to bring themselves to see things in the eyes and experience of Prince where he was, from 'underneath' in the social pyramid. That is, from his set of cultural circumstances. In other words, there was difficulty in comprehending the limited horizon and the frugal economic means endemic of Prince's world and particular set of 'social situations', the pastor suggested.

But that is an example of the life lived by and conditioned according to the limited social scope which continuous disadvantage and deprivation have carved out for most Afro-Caribbean people as they stand under in the social order.

Because that essential factor seemed not to have been taken into consideration as a basis for assessing and evaluating what the petitioner said in response to the chairman's question, everything which Prince said in evidence afterwards was not taken seriously by the court. They could no longer accept his testimony. They had misunderstood him. 'No amount of explanation by me could change their minds', the pastor continued,

My belief is that if it was a black person who headed the tribunal, or if there were other Afro-Caribbean people represented on the tribunal, they would have been able to understand and the outcome would have been different?<sup>28</sup>

In which case, 'those black representatives', he went on to say,

would definitely have known that where Prince was concerned, what he lived for was not the attainment of material satisfaction but his future heavenly reward....they wouldn't have dismissed what he said so lightly.<sup>29</sup>

Like many other Afro-Caribbean people in the black churches, Prince's major interest was one of 'waiting for the rapture'. That is conceived to be the time when their Master will come to take them from 'underneath' to a higher social and spiritual place. In the meantime, once Prince had been able to pay his church dues in preparation for that great 'lifting-up' event, then, he was satisfied with the wages he received and content with the level of life-style which it made possible. Keeping such aspirations and hope for a future heavenly reward alive in their people is a major part of what it means to understand and to care in the black church movement. And, for a people who throughout their entire history have been conditioned to perceive themselves in the subordinate role of standing under, that hope can hardly be an exaggerated or a misplaced hope.

Having said that, what additional factors can be usefully discerned from, and interpreted in connection with the case which we are presenting? One such factor is how very remarkable it seems that anyone should have lost a case of that nature as outright as Prince did. So, while the sitting of a tribunal may not necessarily be constituted as a pastoral caring situation, nevertheless, it does seem to offer invaluable insights that are relevant, helpful and conducive to the pastoral caring process. It assists us in an endeavour to ascertain more clearly some of the basic criteria that ought to be avoided for an improved caring.

For example, the case seems to underline in a most pertinent way the extent to which a relationship - caring or otherwise, between



people from different cultural, economic and religious backgrounds is full of potential areas for possible misunderstandings. Also, it emphasises how essential and vitally necessary it is that any caring situation between such persons should take those primary factors into consideration if the caring is to be of much benefit.

Another way of stating the same thing is: in order that such caring can meaningfully take place, there ought to be a proper basis for viewing and equating the relationship. In this instance that basis was the 'consciousness world', or the difference in life chances and set of expectations between members of the tribunal and Prince. Since that primary combination of factors did not appear to have been given due regard, Prince was the loser. The same would have been true in a pastoral caring relationship. He would not have been cared for or helped, if they were similarly ignored.

### III CARING IN THE MAINSTREAM CHURCHES

A very appropriate example of what pastoral care for black people in the mainstream church congregations is like, was indelibly imprinted upon the consciousness of this writer as it relates to my own experience. Having taken the opportunity to spend part of the Summer of 1987, that of 1988, and also, Easter 1989 in London, I was able to observe first hand some precise aspects of the difficulties posed to the caring for Afro-Caribbean Christians when there is insufficient understanding.

There were three mainstream church congregations which I attended for a number of worship services. Some church activities which are held during week-days were also observed and studied. All the congregations were comprised of mixed memberships - both black and white.

#### Leadership and Worship Forms

The leadership roles in those churches, however, are held mostly by members of the dominant ethnic group. For example, there are only a few black persons among a total leadership of fifty-six people. Numbered amongst those leaders are the church stewards, class leaders, auxiliary preachers, Sunday School teachers, the organists, the choir directors, church secretaries, treasurers and pastoral care visitors. Together with the ministers, everything which takes place in the life of those mixed congregations of about 480 members, is determined by those leaders.

During worship, for example, some people who belong to the dominant ethnic group prefer to sit quietly and to follow a written and set pattern of worship referred to as, 'The Order of worship', or The Order of Service - Morning and Evening. The high points in

those orders are: the liturgical prayers and the intellectual stimulation of the ministers' sermons. On the other hand, members of the black ethnic group seem to react in a more emotional and less-cognitive way during the worship services. For instance, many would prefer very much to be able to clap their hands while singing, to say loud and spontaneous 'amens' when appropriate, to testify verbally, and even to dance sometimes, if the spirit leads them to dance.

However, the leadership objected to those practices taking place in worship. They cannot understand why it is necessary for some people to clap their hands, nor to do any of the other informal endeavours which a majority of black people find useful as practical, spontaneous and enriching additions to worship. In that context, as John Wilkinson noted about a mainstream church congregation in Birmingham:

It took only a little reflection to reveal how the church had failed to understand the distinctive identity of its new black members. At every level resources and conceptual understanding were lacking. For example appropriate junior church material did not exist. Musicians able to co-ordinate and lead the yearning of many black youngsters to praise God in a black musical tradition could not be found.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, Walton et al, vividly observed that other multi-racial mainstream church congregations in Britain had,

no positive sense of vocation or understanding of black culture they....find the presence of black people a burden and a worry. One such minister wrote.... 'In this church we not only have the ethnic minorities, we have the unemployed and the mentally ill' - all seen as 'problem groups', with which (they) had to cope.<sup>31</sup>

In the mainstream churches which I looked at, it was not a question that black people could not be found to 'lead' and to provide music in black worship forms. Rather, it was because they were neither encouraged or given the chance to do so.

The dominant group argued that their theological understanding and interpretation of what worship entails calls for order. They could allow some additional musical instruments in the light of the fact that it is 'acceptable' for people to praise God with trumpet sound, the harp, lyre and such forms of instrumentation as mentioned in the Book of Psalms. What they see as unacceptable, however, is the high lilting tunes and the 'loud rhythmic and swinging-beat', that the black members seem to favour.

Some of the native members, especially the Methodists, may have been unable to recall that many of their own hymns were sung with tunes which, as Joseph Ritson suggested in his book The Romance of

Primitive Methodism, 'originated a new musical impulse among the people',<sup>32</sup>  
With lines like,

Hark, listen to the trumpeters,  
They sound for volunteers.

and,

O for a trumpet voice  
On all the world to call  
To bid their hearts rejoice,  
In him who died for all.

or,

Grace is flowing like a river;  
Millions there have been supplied;  
Still it flows as fresh as ever  
From the Saviour's wounded side,  
None need perish;  
All may live for Christ hath died.

CHORUS

Come and taste along with me,  
Glory, glory, glory;  
Consolation flowing free,  
Praise Him halleluia!

Also,

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine:  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchased of God;  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

CHORUS

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

(M.H.B. 422)

It was the 'novelty of the tunes', says Ritson, that was the great attraction to the worshippers. They were tunes with a 'martial spirit', sung with 'tones of exultant gladness', which had 'never been heard in church or chapel before'.<sup>33</sup> Now they had become an important part of what it meant to praise God.

Such tunes were used in the street meetings, in the bars and by the social outcast. They played a role in the evangelistic thrust and the contribution which Methodism made to the social poor in Britain. Some of those very hymns, therefore, were sung with the rhythm which many contemporary mainstream church christians will not allow the black members to use in their services.

So then, when the leaders suggested that it was in keeping with their historical tradition to preserve continuity and to maintain a sense of 'ordered-propriety' in true worship, we are left to wonder to which part of their history they were referring. It certainly could not have been to the time of the religious and social ethos of early Methodism.



What those christians may be referring to is most probably an attitude and behaviour-pattern having very little to do with rhythm in music per se. It may be that it is the black members themselves whom they do not really appreciate. As we have seen, some are conceived to be a 'burden' and classified as 'problem groups'. In that context, Clifford Hill may have accurately interpreted that specific motive when he suggested that, 'while there are strong and valid socio-cultural reasons' why there are not many more black people in English Churches, it can be said that, 'the greatest single reason is that white christians do not want them'.<sup>34</sup>

It cannot be denied that there have been positive changes in the way most native christians see and relate to black people in their churches since Hill wrote those words. There are mainstream church congregations in which black people seem to be genuinely appreciated. However, there are still other congregations where they are not wanted. For example, as recently as 1981, Ikon Productions interviewed a number of black people in an attempt to get some indication about the existing 'state of race relations in Britain'. Much of the information which was compiled seems to substantiate the belief that Hill's conclusion remains relevant. For instance, one of the persons interviewed by Ikon Productions said,

One Sunday morning we were preparing to start the service and I saw four black people come to the door of the church and one of the church wardens spoke to them and they turned and went back out of the Church. He came to me and said, 'I told them that this is not the church they want. They want the church down the road'.<sup>35</sup>

Also, another person had this to say:

And the vicar said to me, 'I'm sorry, but it would be better if you go to another church because my congregation will leave if you continue here'.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps it is some of those christians who may not want black people in their churches who continue to say there is 'chaos' and a shift towards 'disorganization', when their worship service does not proceed along a plan. That degree of order is not possible to maintain when people behave in ways which some of the black members want to do during worship. 'There must be order at all times in the house of God', they claim.

Part of the argument put forward by those mainstream church persons, therefore, is reflected in the work of Albert Eaton. In his book, The Faith, History And Practice Of The Church Of England, Eaton asks his readers to notice that the word 'order' as used in the Book of Morning Prayer, for example,

implies something that must be done according to rule. This is why we are sometimes called a formal church, or, a Church of Order, titles of which I hope you will learn to be very proud; it is a truly Apostolic principle. Our Christian practice must be governed by ordered life and worship....I cannot over-emphasise the importance of this principle of worship according to rule; it sounds very hard, but I assure you that it is the right principle and spirit of true christian worship; and it is the basic principle of the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>37</sup>

As we have observed, much of the criticism levelled against black Pentecostal worship reflects a view that it is 'full of noises', and is devoid of a 'plan or rule'. It should not be too difficult, then, to determine the motive for the response of the leaders of the mainstream churches. To praise God in the black context can be seen as giving way to the 'proud' tradition of order. That is so especially when it is ascribed the role of maintaining a true Apostolic example of how worship might be observed.

In response, the black members could (just as their counterparts in the black churches) suggest that the way in which they would like to worship is equally according to 'Apostolic principle'. That is so because, on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles; it was in the form of a 'noise'. It was that kind of manifestation which characterised the Apostles movements and utterances afterwards. It is an interpretation of that Pentecostal event which enables them to maintain that, as black worshippers, when they are filled with the Holy Spirit, it becomes impossible to remain quiet in the way that 'order' in worship calls for.

In this specific context, therefore, part of the observation which was made about the mainstream church leaders who are Methodists in particular, might be extended here to the Anglican representatives as well. It could be said that they too had failed to recall what seems to have been an aspect of their religious past. Cyril Garbett in his book The Claims of the Church of England, expressed it this way:

In the minor matters of ceremonial the lay worshipper has almost complete freedom. In practice the note inserted in the 1549 Prayer Book is still operative 'as touching, kneeling, crossing, holding up of hands, and other gestures, they may be used or left, as every man's devotion serveth, without blame'.<sup>38</sup>

It can be argued that the kind of freedom which is advocated above is consistent with that which is not quite complete, and what the black worshipper needs is complete freedom to worship. Even so, it does

suggest, nevertheless, that some degree of self-expression is allowed. There is also the mention of 'other gestures', which indicates that in addition to the examples cited, the worshipper might innovate some forms of one's own determining. That, the reference stated, might be done 'without blame' and according to how every person's devotion may require.

It may very well be in keeping with an interpretation of the provision of the 'minor matters of ceremonial', that a charismatic style of worship is in evidence in some mainstream church congregations. One such congregation is the St. George's Anglican Church in Leeds. However, what seems to constitute charismatic worship in that and the other congregations appear to be more contemplative and structured in procedure, than what worship is in most black church congregations. For example, the music is different, the movements or gestures as well as the sounds and the traditions are all different. Having observed the two kinds of congregations in worship, one got the distinct feeling that any black person who attempted to 'let loose' or 'break free' in true black church worship style, from the confines of the formal and structured mainstream church charismatic worship, would be misunderstood.<sup>39</sup>

Basically, then, it might be the case whereby native members are 'at home' as it were, with respect to their own forms and styles of worship. Their ability to operate within the bounds of particular confines and restraints in worship-forms, is in keeping with a basic cultural norm. That is part of what it means to be native. The black members who are culturally conditioned in a different way are not so at home. They seem less inhibited in their worship in particular, and more open in their attitudes to life in general. Perhaps it was on the basis of those cultural traits about Afro-Caribbean people that a native Briton who attends a black church said,

I do think that West Indians on a whole are a lot freer in their expressions and find it a lot easier to feel that physical release (in worship). Many people think that it is a good service if people jumped around a lot ....As for me, I often find more blessing in moments of quieter deep consecration than when the whole place seems to be resounding with noise.<sup>40</sup>

However, because it is the dominant native group who define what worship-forms and expressions in their churches ought to be, and such definitions naturally reflect their cultural norms, then, the expectation is for the black members to conform and not vice versa.



The following response from another native person may help us to see more clearly how the situation is. Speaking at a mainstream church meeting the member said, 'I don't like how West Indians Worship. They're too disorganized and disorderly....If they want to worship so, let them meet together and worship. They can't be allowed to impose it on us'.<sup>41</sup> As might be expected in such situations, there is also much dissatisfaction expressed by many of the black members. The impression which was conveyed as a result of additional conversations with representatives from both groups is that the black christians remain spiritually unfulfilled after worshipping. Some of them complained about not 'getting very much' from the services. Also, they contended that there are too many 'prohibitions' which are being placed upon their actions, thereby preventing them from 'enjoying' their worship of God. One man articulated the situation in this way:

They look at you with suspicion and disbelief  
when you act differently from the normal way  
....and try to worship your God in another  
way.<sup>42</sup>

However, there are signs of a genuine willingness on the part of some, among the dominant group, to care for the black christians in the churches. Some of them maintain that theirs is a caring church. Representatives who belong to the visiting pastoral care bands, for example, speak about how much they are 'reaching out' to, and spending time in caring for the black members and their families. Such reaching out consists of occasional visits to the homes of black members. In that way some idea of how these members live may be possible to arrive at. But many of these endeavours and the apparent willingness to care are undermined. They are made ineffectual by the prohibiting and defeating presence of not truly understanding.

For instance, some of the black members have said that there were times when individual visiting persons had tried to tell them what to do and how they ought to conduct their affairs. At such times they had often felt 'dominated and controlled'. It can be said then, that there are controlling and controlled ethnic groups in the mainstream churches because of misunderstandings that are historically conceived and culturally and racially sustained. Worship and Caring, and the forms which they sometimes take, are examples of the ways that such misunderstandings are executed and become apparent.

The failure to understand and its direct consequence, the inability to care effectively, can be further substantiated. Evidence of such support is consistent with the belief that any pastorally caring church which seriously caters for the spiritual and social needs of all its members, ought to recognise that by allowing the powerless ethnic minority group to worship in ways which may be natural to them, is one way to enable them to satisfy their spiritual and social needs. In other words, to care for that minority group through the process of the encouragement of self-expression in worship, is not a concession which should have been denied to them. Rather, it is a right that should have been allowed and promoted. Kenneth Leech in his work Struggles in Babylon put it this way:

In worship it is important that the tradition and gifts of the gathered people are used and expressed....Many white-led churches pay no attention to the black christian heritage even though a sizeable minority or even a majority of their members may be black<sup>43</sup>

By suppressing the self-expression of the traditions and 'christian heritage' of the black members, what the churches defined as pastoral caring, therefore, might be described as a one-sided public relations exercise aimed specifically at preserving one tradition at the expense of another. It is pastoral care that upholds the status quo, together with satisfying any individual sentiments and vested interest hinging upon the present which appear to be personally appealing to the powerful. In the meantime, any opportunity to care for the entire membership is lost.

To improve upon such a situation the churches should, as Plowright put it, strive to 'really care for men as men'.<sup>44</sup> By so doing, they would begin to understand how to meet the caring needs of all their members: not just a few.

That selected group of churches and so many others like them in Britain with Afro-Caribbean people in membership, may not have clearly understood how, so often, those black people react in such ways when they are in church because that is part of the means by which some of them are able to keep their sanity in struggle. They are thereby enabled to rid themselves of much pent up emotion and other difficulties in life. Those are among the emotional problems which cannot be dealt with adequately in over-crowded council flats, or on the job (for those who are fortunate enough to have a job). The Church provides the opportunity and serves as a powerful medium by which those black people can free

themselves from the limitation imposed upon them by their status position of 'standing under' in the society.

In the light of the factors which have been revealed, it can be concluded that some of the mainstream churches are failing to meet the caring needs of a number of Afro-Caribbean members, because, in all probability, it appears that they can only see their own needs as viewed from the tunnel vision engendered by their own cultural norms and class values. The way in which everything is structured in those churches to suit one group only, negates from their ability to give the needs of others an equal and sufficient consideration. In that context, the mainstream churches seem unable to provide the necessary all-inclusive offer of pastoral caring to their black members.

### Leadership and Change

The combined membership of the three congregations which were studied included as many as 288 or 60% who were black. The question which we are faced with then is this: Why didn't the churches elect more black leaders to care for the Afro-Caribbean members, especially in the general capacity of pastoral care visitors? Caring churches it seems might have seen this as a priority and allow for the commissioning of such ethnic minority leaders to care more effectively for themselves within the system. There are three relevant sets of factors which can readily be identified and developed to provide a plausible answer in response to the query.

One of the factors has already been dealt with in the previous chapter. That was in relation to the pertinent discovery that some black people who are members of the mainstream churches want things to remain as they are. They are not interested in change because it threatens the value which they place on 'class and status-attainment'.

The second aspect deals with the fact that most members of the dominant native group also want the established structures of church leadership to remain 'just as they are' in their congregations. That is the case equally in intensity of desire as it is with the black members, but for different reasons.

Some of the reasons for such predilection are based upon the fact that traditionally the procedures now existing have always been the norm. They have been that way for so long that there are those who still cannot even begin to envisage the reality whereby some black people may actually be 'capable' of serving as leaders. Numbered among this group of people are those for whom any change, whether it relates to leadership position



in the mainstream churches in particular or the wider society in general, is considered to be undesirable.

Stating the position of this group, a mainstream church minister had this to say about his community and congregation:

Most of the folk living in (this) area are related, and to have a person from the ethnic minorities living in the area would cause a great deal of consternation among the present residents who are a close-knit community quite self-supportive and happy to remain so.<sup>45</sup>

Another minister said,

I wouldn't like to have a coloured man to be the society steward or the treasurer of this church, even if I could get one with the right qualifications.<sup>46</sup>

The 'right qualifications' as this person sees it, may reflect that which is available from among the many professional people who are members of the mainstream churches. Because of that there are very few openings left to be filled by black members who are less qualified in many ways. Hence, the minister might truly be unable to find a black member with the required qualification. But, it might be precisely because of that very situation why little effort seems to be made to change things so as to create space for black input. It is consistent with those factors also, why there has been a lack of a sufficient degree of openness that is necessary for understanding. And that could also be a crucial addition to account for the reasons why there seems to be so little pastoral caring received by black people who are presently in the mainstream churches.

Included too among the people who want things to remain as they have always been are those for whom such situations allow them the opportunity to apply patrician standards in dealing with black people. The ethos of that type of nobility and genteel-behaviour, however, is geared towards reminding the black minority who they are and where they truly stand in the social structure.

Another relational advantage of christian patrician values for some people among the majority group, but which works at a considerable disadvantage for the receiving black minority, is to be always in a position to use such roles as caring ones. In other words, to be able to have a reference point from which it can be said, 'we know what is good for the black members of our church. For example, we are doing what is necessary to show them how they can elevate themselves to our standing in the social order.' That is the case even when in reality,

such social status-attainment may not be possible to achieve. And even if such prospective social value positions were attainable by the ethnic minority members, the fact remains that such concepts are being advocated because the persons who propose them are the very persons who have not truly understood the black minority. Consequently, they may not be aware of the fact that what they perceive to be 'good' for those minority people, might actually be detrimental to their best interest. That indeed had been the specific attitude which was demonstrated by the members of the pastoral care visitors when they said that they were 'caring' for the Afro-Caribbean persons in the congregations.

The wider presence and implication of that type of patrician behaviour in the mainstream churches was observed by the Commissioners who write Faith in the City: The Popular Version. 'Many black christians' they pointed out,

said that they have felt frozen out of the Church of England by patrician attitudes. The Church must make a clear response.... to the alienation, hurt and rejection experienced by many black people in relation to the Church of England.<sup>47</sup>

It is evident that in most cases the spirit of intent, and the level of concern through which those motives and efforts relating to 'patrician attitudes' are generated, come about with very good intentions. But the fact remains that without the necessary required understanding, more problems are often caused in the name of pastoral care, than those which are being resolved. Such inappropriate approaches and attitudes are not conducive to the promotion and offer of meaningful pastoral caring. The position, therefore, is that despite the motive behind one's approach to pastoral care, or the method used, there is the vital need for understanding in order to have any positive result. And, the optimum quality of understanding which is necessary to achieve such an end is almost impossible to arrive at, it would seem, especially when those who are involved have very little in common that reflects the perceptions, thoughts, feelings and desires of each other.

The third factor which we have promised to look at has to do with the 'standard' that is expected of black people in order to become leaders in mainstream churches. One man put it succinctly when he said,

Here in this church you've got to prove yourself to be considered fit for leadership, and in the estimation of many....most black people are not so fit.<sup>48</sup>

In some of the churches it is possible to find one or two black people in some types of lay-leadership positions. But those positions are very much the marginal ones. A report entitled 'Faithful and Equal' which was presented to the Methodist Conference in 1987, expressed the general situation most apply as it pertains to all the mainstream churches. 'For example', states the report,

black members are in some cases seen to be communion stewards and to a lesser extent church stewards, but to be a secretary of a church committee, a treasurer or even a circuit steward seems in many places a long way off....black people are not given the opportunity to hold office in positions of real power in the church.<sup>49</sup>

The few black people who hold even the marginal positions, like church stewards, for instance, seem to be seldom taken seriously. A man who is a property steward in one of the churches revealed how the priest would sometimes say to him: 'What do you think about this idea John?' Having given his opinion the priest might then say, 'That's a very good idea John, we'll consider it', or 'We'll take it up'. However, the idea is never taken up or put into effect. Most of the times John is told, 'What you've said was true but....we looked at it, but....' There is always a 'but' why the opinion could not be used. 'The church doesn't listen to what I've got to say', John concluded.<sup>50</sup>

In the black churches on the other hand, all members are taken seriously. For example, the existence of the requirement to have 'to prove' themselves to show that their opinions mean something or, that they are 'good enough' to merit the exercise of meaningful leadership functions, are not so evident in the black church movement. Rather, each person is considered to be a potential leader. They are respected for who they are. And whatever level of talent or the form of individual gifts they may have, are valued in a way that is not so often the case for black people in the mainstream churches.

One of the major factors of the difference in approach in the two church traditions as far as black talent is concerned is that there has been a steady growth and proliferation of leadership in the black churches which is not to be found in the same proportion among black members in the mainstream churches. It was in that same context, therefore, that Heather Walton and company observed how very much 'there appears to be an abundance of lay talents and energy'<sup>51</sup> in the black churches. A substantial part of the reason for that presence of talents is the result of the churches' pastoral capacity to care by means of the process of understanding on the basis of the similarity in cultural experi-



### Difference in Life Experience

A very relevant example of the inability to care properly which is evident when there are differences in life chances and in cultural background between people, and hence, the problem posed by not understanding in pastoral caring, has been cited by Michael Taylor. There appears to be, however, an apparent need to look at the validity of some of the assumptions which are posited and which, in turn, justify some reflection on the accuracy of the conclusions which he makes. For those reasons, we will state the example, and then offer a critical reflection on the contents in the context of pastoral caring in the mainstream churches based on understanding of the black members.

In his book Learning To Care, Taylor wrote about a black man named Joseph whose parents emigrated to Britain from the Caribbean. After working for a short time, Joseph became an unemployed person. Added to his misfortune was the fact that even during the limited period when he had had a job, there were constant stereotypical remarks made by his co-workers. Among those contentious remarks was one which alleged that Afro-Caribbean people 'were not very reliable workers'. Such comments, together with having lost his means of livelihood through no fault on his part, or for any factor that he could reasonably justify, made it easier for Joseph to feel that he was never truly 'wanted in this society', the author informed us.

However, there is Joseph's friend whose name is Gordon. He is a 'white professional' man who worships in the same congregation in which Joseph is a member. Gordon is 'friendly and sympathetic' to Joseph's plight. But, Joseph cannot 'imagine' that Gordon could even begin to 'understand', the writer stated. The other black people at the church know how Joseph feels. They can understand. Some of them have had similar experiences. One of the major sources of Joseph's other problems is his son: a teenager called Daniel. He has already found himself 'in the hands of the police'. It is most likely that he will soon be having a criminal record attached to his name. Gordon wants very much to be of help to Joseph and Daniel by caring for them pastorally. But to do so, Taylor continues,

Gordon will need a lesson in social history and social dynamics if he is to understand Joseph and Daniel's sense of alienation, and another in politics and community development if he is to improve their lot.<sup>52</sup>

### A Reflection

Taylor is well aware of how very hard it must be for Gordon to offer any

meaningful pastoral care to Joseph given the reality of different cultural backgrounds. Because of that realisation, the writer has outlined several requirements which he claimed ought first to be pursued before such caring could be forthcoming. Those requirements entail lessons in social history, social dynamics, politics and community development. However, this writer postulates the view here which maintains that, even if Gordon had been able to take and successfully complete all the lessons which were mentioned by Taylor, he still would not have been in a position to really understand Daniel's or Joseph's predicament sufficiently enough to care adequately for them. The reason for that is because their life chances are totally different.

This very important feature involving differences in life chances to the pastoral caring endeavour will be developed more fully in this chapter when we come to deal with the appropriate sub-heading of 'understanding and care in the black churches'. In the meantime, however, suffice it to be said here: it is not without some significance to our argument that it was Joseph himself who poignantly remarked how Gordon could not even begin to understand what he had been going through.

And, also, it was implicitly stated by the author that the other black people in the congregation could understand. Such an appropriate comparison is valid because the mutuality of experiences which they shared, together with the sense of historical affinity which they possessed, were totally different from those of Gordon's. Consequently, in order for Gordon to have truly understood, he would have had to experience what it means to be historically linked to those minority people, to be racially stereotyped as being 'unreliable', and to have to encounter some of the deep despair which comes about with a feeling of being truly 'unwanted' in the society. In other words, to be really 'underneath' as a black person. But such a major personal, ideological and cultural transformation which was necessary was impossible for Gordon to make.

As a 'white professional' person in relation to Joseph's minority, non-skilled status and unemployed predicament, Gordon's pastoral caring relationship both to Joseph as well as to Daniel, contains the seeds of its own built-in-limitations and ineffectiveness. That is so because there are more factors which divide them culturally than unite them by means of the personal experiences which are necessary for effective pastoral caring.

Walton, Ward and Johnson affirm that conception, when, after having stated how it is that the majority of the people who are 'appointed to care' for the black members in a particular mainstream church are not

black, went on to say,

it is difficult to model oneself upon someone who seems to represent a different way of life. However good a white youth worker or minister might be, s/he cannot say, 'I came from where you come from, I know how you feel, I see the world through your eyes'.<sup>53</sup>

In other words that person cannot say 'I understand'. The inability of Gordon to be able to express that sense of identity through experience, and to claim such degree of 'belongingness', had reduced considerably the value and effectiveness of his caring efforts. In that context, therefore, the other black members were much more equipped to offer pastoral care to Joseph and Daniel than Gordon could ever hope to be in a position to do.

Pastoral caring, we have observed, is based on the ability to understand. And true understanding within the ambit of this specific context, comes about by means of having similar life experiences which serve as a fountain from which to draw and a basis upon which caring might proceed. Another way of stating that fact is to say: the best and most valuable form of pastoral caring is possible through relationships which involve people whose experiences, history and life chances are identical. That could not have been the case between Daniel, Joseph and Gordon. And it is certainly not the kind of situation which presently exists in the other mainstream churches with black membership.

A parish priest in Leeds who has pastoral responsibilities for a mixed congregation has aptly and succinctly stated the problem which he faces in respect to his Afro-Caribbean parishioners based on the difficulty to care for them because of differences in life experiences. 'I think I have a long way to go', he said,

to even begin to understand my Afro-Caribbean members. I'm honest about it. I'm trying to do so but conscious of my handicap here. In any form of direct one-to-one caring relationship, I treat them as anybody else, but then, I know their problems are different from those of the other native members of my congregation....I do my best.<sup>54</sup>

In like manner, another priest had this to say:

I can't claim to understand what it means to be black in Britain....I think I have some idea because of listening to youngsters who have had the experience, but that's due to my priestly privilege among the tiny group of white people who can claim such experiences.<sup>55</sup>

Tony Holden in his book People, Churches and Multi-Racial Projects, has expressed some of those very sentiments when he wrote:

The experiences of the members of the ethnic minority communities and of the white community are very different in Britain today.<sup>56</sup>



Such differences in experience do have tremendous effect upon the degree to which pastoral caring can become helpful or otherwise. For example, to be allowed the opportunity to 'listen' to those who have unrelated problems from our own, is an honourable human gesture akin to christian neighbourliness. However, that factor in itself cannot be a way of gaining 'understanding' of another person's problems, especially when the person whom we are listening to comes from a different cultural background from our own. So, too, the act of treating them as 'anybody else', is one way of accepting them, and consequently, demonstrating that such persons have merit and worth as human beings. It is a way of caring for them. But doing that alone in the name of caring which is based on a one to one relationship, cannot in itself claim to be sufficient for providing adequate pastoral care in this specific sense. Rather, the problems of each ethnic group ought to be considered according to the symptoms, which, in this particular context, have to do with cultural variants. Those are the ones which can best be ascertained and be dealt with when there is homogeneity of life experiences between carer and cared for.

In the light of our discussion thus far, it is not to be assumed that there is no actual pastoral caring taking place among the several ethnic groupings - whether it is with reference to the society at large, or in the mainstream churches in particular. To make that kind of conclusion would not be in keeping with the truth as it exists.

What we are suggesting, however, is the fact that the presence of such caring is of a limited nature only. It is one which is much below what is potentially possible when pastoral caring is done on the basis of having the ideal combination of participants involved in the caring relationship. That is, those persons who 'belong' through oneness of culture, and in familiarity and likeness of experiences. Or those who 'know' what may have generated a need for pastoral caring because they are part of it.

This ideal and most effective form of pastoral caring, therefore, is best given and received when there is understanding. That is, understanding which consists of, and is akin to the affinity of shared experiences which support, authenticate and validate the caring.

#### Understanding, Sympathy and Caring

When the case involving Gordon, Joseph and Daniel is reflected upon from the perspective of an additional point of view, it can be said that one of the other small ways by which Gordon could have been

helpful in his offer of a rudimentary form of pastoral care to the two other persons, was by means of sympathy. And, according to Taylor, that was exactly what Gordon seemed to have succeeded in doing. He had been 'friendly and sympathetic'. However, to be sympathetic to another person is not the same as having cared for them in any strict pastoral caring context. The writer does not appear to have indicated that Gordon's sympathetic gesture was pastoral caring. That is because he went on instead to suggest how, in order for Gordon to have been placed in a position to 'understand' Joseph's and Daniel's circumstances, and consequently, to care for them by improving their lot, it would necessitate his having to pursue the several lessons in the relevant areas of the social sciences and human endeavour which he named.

There is, therefore, a marked difference between sympathy and pastoral caring. The difference is a distinctive one despite the fact that one of the ways by which the term understanding can be further defined is 'to have a sympathetic attitude' towards others.<sup>57</sup> Such a definition does suggest that it might also relate implicitly to a caring endeavour as well. If that is the case, then, the place of sympathy in the pastoral caring process ought not to be dismissed altogether. Sympathy can sometimes serve as an aid to the pastoral caring objective. However, sympathy is not pastoral care. It is essentially an act of the expression of 'sorrow for another's loss or grief'.<sup>58</sup>

In his book, A Guide To Pastoral Care, White has suggested that,

Simply to share bewilderment and frustration can be an expression of sympathy and friendship, but it is not the care of souls.<sup>59</sup>

Sympathy requires much more involvement between carer and cared for than an expression of having recognised one's loss or grief entails, in order to become pastoral caring. Rather there is the need for what has been called 'Empathic understanding',<sup>60</sup> which constitutes a much deeper level of human interaction on the part of those who offer care and those who receive pastoral caring. This characterises a closer sense of affinity and the identification of selves, than a show of sympathy implies.

It was to a very large extent that same position which was expressed by a black church pastor when he stated what pastoral caring meant for him. 'Pastoral caring for me', he said,

is the complete giving and the full empathic involvement of myself with my brothers and sisters, so that, every joy of theirs becomes my joy, every pain my pain, every sorrow, my sorrow, every wound by wound....that means<sup>61</sup>  
to be sympathetic with them.

The author R. S. Lee has recognised, however, the manifestly arduous difficulty there is in being able to accomplish such empathic caring. 'It is easy enough,' he maintains,

to feel sympathy for someone in trouble, to desire to help them, to share and to relieve them of their anxieties and fears. To get inside them and live in them, to feel the tension tearing them apart, to experience the reality of their fears, that is, to have empathy with them is much more difficult. It requires understanding and it demands an identification with them which enables the (carer)....to think and feel with the..... (cared for).<sup>62</sup>

The offer of sympathy to black members who are facing problems appears to be what actually qualifies as the form of pastoral care which they receive in some of the mainstream churches. 'When our mother died', a black person informed us,

all we received from our minister was a word of sympathy on the telephone. He didn't even come to our home to pray with us.<sup>63</sup>

There seem to be occasions when some black people fail to get as much as a word of sympathy in their times of need. An example of this is given by Sybil Phoenix. 'A member of an Anglican church in my area died, dropped dead', she said,

the daughter, myself and another friend - all of us black women, supported them, went to the hospital in the morning and then....we went to the undertakers about the funeral. She said, 'We have to clear it with the Minister because sometimes he can't do it on that day'. I said, 'All right, we have to pass there on our way home, we'll stop'. 'Stopping, the gate cracked as we were trying to open it. (You know sometimes you open the door and you rub the side of the gate), a lady looked out and said, 'What do you want?'. 'We're looking for the vicar' we said. 'Have you an appointment? Who are you? Does he know you?' she asked. 'Well, if he doesn't know us, he should, because these two persons are members of his church', we said. 'Do you really have an appointment?' she said. I said, 'No, we haven't got an appointment because we just wanted to see him. As a matter of fact, could we come in the gate, instead of being interrogated in the street?'. 'All right you could come in' she said. But by the time we get in the gate she is standing outside of her door. She is just holding the door and standing on the outside. So that says 'I'm not letting you in'. So I said 'Is it alright?. But we don't really want to come into your house, we're only three women. I'd like to find out if the vicar is able to do a funeral service for one of his parishioners'.<sup>64</sup>

In this case, the parishioners did not succeed even to get as far as



the pastor's study where a word of sympathy may have been given in their distress. It may very well be an articulation of the whole range of such experiences as faced by black people, that Cardinal Hume's Advisory Group on the Catholic Church's commitment to The Black Community wrote:

We feel strongly that the frustrations, bitterness and anger of Caribbean (Christians) have not been dealt with sympathetically and constructively by the Church<sup>65</sup>.

To a very large extent, then, it would seem that wherever sympathy is given to black people, that is what pastoral care ought to mean in the majority of caring situations in which they are involved.

Such a position is a plausible one to take when it is remembered how difficult it is for those who are from another culture, and who are placed in positions of responsibility to care for black members to do so effectively. That is because, to truly get 'inside' them empathically, and thereby to live in them, so that they might know what is 'tearing them apart,' which empathic understanding requires in order for sympathy to be replaced by genuine pastoral caring, is really hard to achieve. And, since that level of shared experiences does not appear to exist between the different ethnic groups in the mainstream churches, the difficulty is increased even more.

It is certainly true that the offer of sympathy is also a common practice in the black churches. For that reason, it is considered to be an aspect of pastoral caring as well. Nevertheless, there is a reduced necessity to have cause to substitute sympathy in the place of true pastoral caring in the black churches. The primary reason for this is because it is the black people themselves who have the responsibility for pastoral care in their churches. In that context, caring is enhanced because the ability to 'feel the tensions,' and to really experience the true fears of black people — in other words, to understand — is present in the black church movement.

In the black churches the people are all part and parcel of the same experiences. They possess a knowledgeable awareness about one another's problems, which serves as a means of removing the hindrances and the barriers to effective caring for black people, in a way that is not possible for them in the mainstream churches. Therefore, there is scarcely any need to have to 'enter into' the other person's world, and then retreat back into one's own familiar world, which is what empathic understanding implies so as to fully identify with one another's anxieties and pains, for pastoral care to take place in

reason for this is due to the fact that the

'world' of the majority of black church members, is the same world.

A deacon put it this way:

We are a people who know what trouble is....  
trouble is part of the experience that created  
us and moulded us into what we've become....  
the world of all black church people is the same  
world, one made so through shared experiences  
that are common to all.<sup>66</sup>

#### IV CARING IN THE BLACK CHURCHES

Understanding as pastoral care in the black churches is based on what is called formal knowing or 'foreknowledge'. Caring in this sense relates to the fact that in a real way, both the carer and the cared for share a common quality of life. It is one in which the person who may be offering care is most often in a position to say, 'I know, I have been there too. It is part of my own experience', or, 'it is part of our common experience as a people'. That crucial element of common or formal experience in the pastoral caring endeavour is not possible at such a meaningful level when the relationship is between a member of the dominant ethnic group and a black person.

#### Empathic Understanding

One of the most cogent ways by which that belief can appropriately be demonstrated is to look at the role of empathic understanding in pastoral care in the black churches. The focus of our argument in this context, therefore, will be that while on the one hand, empathic understanding is limited in scope in examples of caring relationships like those between a native-born minister and a black parishioner, on the other hand, empathic understanding is not only already assumed in the black churches, also, pastoral caring goes beyond the limitations of its requirements in those churches.

In his book Psychiatry in Pastoral Practice, W. L. Northridge refers to empathy in conventional pastoral care as the ability to put 'oneself in the position of another and trying to experience his feelings'.<sup>67</sup> Thomas Oden in the work Kerygma and Counselling, suggests that empathy is the 'act of placing oneself in the frame of reference of another'.<sup>68</sup> Also, R. S. Lee in Principles of Pastoral Counselling says that empathy is the 'act' in respect of which a pastor is able to 'think and feel with his client'.<sup>69</sup> According to Frank Wright in his Pastoral Care for Lay People, empathy involves the principle of 'entering into' the world of those whom we are caring for so as to be in a position of,

seeing things with their background and set of values rather than our own, or a preconceived Christian set of values, understanding from within, as if it were our world, without losing our own identity.<sup>70</sup>

Carl Rogers in his work Client Centered Therapy, interprets empathy as being able to discover what he calls the 'internal frame of reference' of others. This includes being able to 'perceive the world as the client sees it', and 'to perceive the client himself as he is seen by himself'.<sup>71</sup> And, Kenneth Mitchell and Herbert Anderson put it this way:

Empathy involves getting outside of our own feelings enough to attend to another's experience, to feel another's anguish....Empathy requires us to hear and receive what another human being is feeling and saying. It is a crucial response because it links understanding with acceptance.<sup>72</sup>

Each of the references above indicates what is necessary for empathic understanding to take place in traditional pastoral care terms. So too, each consists of the explicit requirement for movement. That is, for the carer to put one's self in the place of the cared for. It entails leaving one's separate and distinct position or one's 'world', so as to go into that of the other person. And, having done so, to undertake a retreat, as it were, returning back to one's real world once more. However, the basic impracticability evident in being able to achieve such goals, is an intricate one to contend with. It seems to be a well-nigh impossibility.

But while it is essential for those who offer pastoral care to black people in the mainstream churches to undertake such empathic movement for the caring to have any real meaning; in the black churches there is hardly any such need. That kind of movement is not required in order to understand. That basic factor is already present. It is present in the sense of oneness and mutuality of shared-world, which enables the carer to have a pre-knowledge or to know formerly what the world of the cared for is like beforehand. It is this precondition: the implicitly inclusive sense of shared 'pre-knowledge-experience', which makes pastoral caring in the black churches the valuable asset which it is to the members. It is caring based on the predisposition of common affinity and 'belongness' as that vital factor containing the intrinsic and crucial ingredient for enhancing a meaningful caring relationship.

#### Common Features

The presence of a shared ability to 'know' about each other through



common experiences, is not a caring asset which is confined to the laity of the black churches only. It is also a component of care common to both members and pastors alike. Because of that, the pastors can care for their members without having to encounter some of the complexities evident in pastoral caring when experiences differ. For example, since they all share the same 'life-styles', and set of values, there is no category which distinguishes them as, 'our set of values' for pastors, and 'their set of values' for the members. There is an absence of lines of class-demarcation between the pastors and those whom they care for in the black churches.

In his booklet Encountering West Indian Pentecostalism, John Root expressed part of that truth when he wrote:

They (the pastors) share not....just the social and educational backgrounds of their members, but also their life-styles, aspirations and pressures. There is no sense of 'them' and 'us' between ministers and congregation, or with the community in which the minister operates, rather his experiences, his attitudes, his hopes and fears, even his accent resonate with those of his hearers. The contrast with the traditional churches is obvious, where a college-training is the primary requirement for congregational leadership, yet which can be all-too-likely to put an end to any cultural solidarity that may have existed. The results of much closer identification between minister and congregation (in the black churches) are various. Ministers often show a striking empathetic awareness of the emotional needs of their members, so that.... people who need particular support or counselling will be attended to.<sup>73</sup>

The potential for caring which is evident because of that close 'identification' between pastors and members in the black churches, is of significant importance. It does enable the pastors to know how best to care for their members. Also, since such close relationships are enacted within the context of the religious congregational ethos, then, the potential for healing becomes enormous. That is why 'supportive therapy is so very effective in the black churches', a pastor said.

Some of the ways by which black pastors maintain that sense of supportive togetherness between themselves and their congregations, can be cited. Included among these is what a pastor referred to as his 'whole approach' to ministry. This is evidenced in the serious way in which he takes his ministry, and the extent of his 'involvement' with all activities of the membership. That is so especially when there is congregational 'outreach' to assist with a project in the community, or to promote the church's witnessing ministry. For another

pastor, it consists of the 'amount of time' which is given to them so that he is always available because there is no 'aloofness' about his ministry. Rather, it is 'our ministry together.... There is no discrimination, everyone is treated equally', he suggested.

Those examples may seem to be trivial and insignificant approaches which are not germane to the enhancement of a vibrant pastoral ministry. However, they seem to work very well for the pastors concerned. That is because, as a result of such approaches the members are very 'open', and are always 'willing to talk to us' about any problems. 'We relate on a sharing level'. In these ways they manage to 'stay together', the pastors claimed.

In the same context another pastor put it succinctly:

We provide an openhouse-ministry based on brotherly needs and the desire to live the simple religious faith of Our Fathers as a model for life, healing and care.<sup>74</sup>

What further can our observation concerning how some black pastors maintain togetherness with their people tell us about their ministry? Can any of the factors which we have cited reveal anything about the nature of the training which they receive for ministry? How does any training relate to, and contrast with what Root had to say about a 'college training' for ministers in the traditional churches? What can such training tell us about pastoral caring in the black churches?

### Training

We will reflect on those questions in four ways. Firstly, it can be said in the affirmative that despite the apparent simplicity of the approaches, they enable the black pastors to maintain the basic reality of 'oneness' with their people as an invaluable dimension of effective pastoral caring.

Secondly, it can be accepted that a college education is an essential asset to ministry. However, in the black churches where such training is not a major criteria for ordained ministry, the likelihood that if it had been the case, then, most of the common aspirations which define pastors and congregations might be lost, is a real possibility. This suggests, therefore, that there is a sense in which education can function as a real limitation in caring for those without education.

Thirdly, the weight of the evidence which has assisted us in arriving at our conclusions is based, to a large extent, on what seems to be the position in the case of the mainstream churches. In those

churches according to Root, a college training is a pre-requisite for ordained pastoral ministry. However, while it is possible on the one hand, for that training to become a means of severing the presence of 'cultural solidarity' between ministers and those whom they serve, on the other hand, in the black churches, that is not the case. The absence of such requirements and standard of training does seem to contribute to the solidifying of cultural-togetherness. Therefore, it enhances pastoral caring in those churches.

It is not to be assumed that pastors in the black churches are not given any training. Some of the groups have their own training institutions. For example, there is Overstone College which is located in Northampton. Another is the Ebenezer Bible Institute with branches based in Birmingham, London and Huddersfield. However, as one pastor put it, 'even with the presence of a college our emphasis is not on educational attainment....it is based on calling'. It is not a condition that anyone who is given pastoral responsibility in the black churches 'must have a college education'. A deacon who was with his pastor during this conversation said,

We may be criticised for that but it is not the training we value. It is the call. Whom God calls he equips. We have pastors in our churches who can barely read. They may ask others to read the text for them, but what they say moves people. Those who hear them have to say, 'something has happened to these men. They are called by God. They preach the gospel with Pentecostal fire....They have the Spirit'.<sup>75</sup>

Most of the training necessary for the pastoral ministry in the black churches is done 'in the field'. There is where many begin their training by means of the opportunity to testify, to read the Scriptures, to lead the church in prayer and in worship. The majority of black church pastors have been trained in this way.

The caring environment which pertains in the black churches then, characterises a training ground for ministry. That is so because, as people are accepted, it enhances participation. As their various contributions are appreciated, they gain in confidence and ability. They are being created. With the passing of time, some of these people eventually become pastors, deacons and other categories of black leaders.

In the fourth place, it is true to say that one of the benefits of a college education for ministry is the intellectual ability which it gives to prospective pastors. Skills in sermon preparation, content and delivery, for example, are some of the gifts and graces which may be obtained as a result. But, as we have seen so clearly during the previous chapter in the case of John, it was partly due to the 'intellectual barrier' and the 'cultural barrier' to understanding



which greatly reduced the pastoral caring which he received from the mainstream church.

So then, what we have discovered is that in some cases, the attainment of training can bring about cultural divisions between ministers and their congregations. And such achievements can reduce the extent of the pastoral caring received by members of the majority group in their churches, as well as the caring received by the black members. In other words, it is not only the black members of the mainstream churches who may not be cared for adequately because of cultural and educational differences. The fact is that, if any such differences between ministers and their congregations who have the same cultural background serve to reduce the caring which is possible, it only serves to highlight even more pungently how much it must be so for the ethnic minority members. Hence, the immense value which understanding and the common-bonding factors of similar cultural and educational background between everyone in the black churches have for pastoral care.

#### A Critique

We have argued thus far in support of the collective experiences and the similarity of aspirations which constitute shared objectives in respect of pastors and their congregations. And, we have concluded that the whole gamut of those shared objectives is akin to understanding as a paradigm of pastoral care in the black churches.

In a similar vein W. L. Northridge has suggested that, 'the sharing of experience' with others,

who have suffered in the same way will prove much more satisfying and curative than membership in a fellowship of those who know nothing from personal experience of the intensity of....the utter hopelessness<sup>76</sup> of the situation in which (some people) find themselves.

But Alastair Campbell in his book Rediscovering Pastoral Care, believes that having the 'same experience' with those of the people whom we are caring for, is not the 'only' way to care for them. He has expressed it this way:

This does not imply that we can help another person only if we ourselves have had precisely the same experience....'I know how you feel'.<sup>77</sup>

There is a basis of truth in what each writer has stated. In the case of the latter, it is certainly true that people can offer pastoral care to others apart from the need to have had a similar ordeal. However, when we relate what the two writers have said to what understanding

as pastoral care in the black churches is based upon, then, one writer comes closer to the black caring model than the other has. Those who have 'suffered in the same way' are in a much superior position to understand what others are going through and, as a consequence, be better able to care for them.

In like manner, those who do not have 'precisely' the same knowledge are limited in the contribution which they can make in such situations. That is, the help which they can give in the pastoral care of others is reduced considerably. The sharing of ordeal may not be the only way to care for others. However, it is the most meaningful and empathetically-effective way. That is so to the extent where, any other way must be insignificant enough to be almost meaningless in certain cases.

Another way in which what we are affirming can be stated is like this: Those who have not shared in the same experience with the persons whom they may be trying to help in pastoral caring terms, can only imagine what they have gone through. That is because the helper is in the position of a detached-outsider looking in who has not gone the whole way. In that sense, he/she can only see in a limited way what the entire picture is like. Help is, therefore, restricted both in terms of the extent to which the helper can meaningfully and empathetically identify with the one being helped, and also by means of the assistance which can be provided.

#### Evidence in Support

A Case Study. Jack was very ill. He had recently undergone major surgery to replace a diseased organ. But unfortunately for him, it became absolutely necessary for the doctors to do a second transplant operation. Jack was devastated. He gave up hope, became very depressed and refused to consent to a second round of surgery. Members of his family, his pastor, together with representatives from a team of medical specialists took turns to try and persuade him to allow the operation to take place. He refused. After all such efforts had been futile, the family decided to invite another man who himself had had three different organ transplant operations to 'counsel' with Jack. Having done so, Jack willingly gave his consent for the operation.

A Reflection.

In this particular instance, there are many ways in which those who were caring for Jack could have helped him. One such way was to apply the skills which advances in medical technology have made possible. But such a tangible way of helping him was conditional. It depended upon his consent and willingness to allow an operation to take place. That consent was not forthcoming even if the experts who tried to get it included a psychologist, a psychiatrist and a professional social worker.

Rather, it took the intervention of a lay person - one who could make no claim to professional knowledge to succeed where the experts had failed. The only claim which the man could make was the knowledge that he too had a similar experience as Jack. He could say to him, 'I know, I understand, I have been there as well'. That sense of personal confirmation emanating from the fact of having really understood, and consequently, to be in a position to state it positively to Jack, was the kind of affirmation which he needed to remove his fear and to restore his confidence. The professionals who had tried could not have made such claim to know. They were under the 'handicap of not being able to speak from personal experience'.<sup>78</sup>

Because of that, the help which Jack subsequently received from the doctors may not have been possible. It would have been of no use if it were not for the care which the man who had had similar problems gave him first. That he was able to do because, he could positively identify with Jack in the way that truly mattered.

Understanding as pastoral care in the black churches based on similar experience may not be able to produce the concrete results in the delivery of health care which are possible with the medical model. But, as the evidences which we have cited show, it does possess much potential as an effective means of caring. It takes precedence over any other type of pastoral care which cannot make use of 'precisely the same experience' as those which are common to the persons we may be caring for.

There are two additional and related dimensions about understanding which must be looked at in order to get a fuller picture of its role as pastoral care in the black churches. The first one suggests that while such caring takes priority over any other type of pastoral care it cannot be constituted in terms of what is referred to in the black churches as, 'God's standard of understanding'.

The second factor maintains that despite the fact that it cannot



be so construed it is precisely because it 'includes God' as a major component of the caring relationship, which gives it primacy over other kinds of care which involves counselling of a purely professional and secular nature.

### God's Standard

In the Book of Psalms, God's understanding is described as being 'infinite' (Ps. 147:5). In the prophecy of Isaiah it is said to be 'inscrutable' (Is. 40:28). And, Job suggests that it is 'hidden from the eyes of all living'. Yet, in order that one might 'depart from evil', for example, it is required above all else that it be done through God's understanding (Job 28: 20-28). It is such understanding too, that 'will watch over' individuals, 'deliver' and keep them from evil ways, Prov. 2 : 11-12 inform us.

God's understanding is 'more precious than Jewels'. Those who are blessed with it, days of 'long life', ways of peace and pleasantness are some of the rewards which come with such blessings (Pr. 3 : 13 - 19, 4 : 7 - 18 and 12 : 13). Having first 'established' understanding (Job: 28 : 27), God subsequently used it also to establish the 'heavens' and to stretch it out (Prov. 3 : 19, Jer. 10 : 12 and 51 : 15).

In the black churches God's understanding is associated with 'long life', and it is what brings about any form of happiness which the members may experience as they endeavour to love God with all their heart, all their 'understanding', and to love their neighbours as themselves (see Mk. 12 : 13).

As the members are cared for, and as they endeavour to love, to support, to edify and to sustain each other, then, such actions are conceived of as possessing 'health giving qualities'. They are likened to signs indicating that the people are at peace with one another in God, assured of the peace He gives which is beyond their 'utmost understanding' (Phil. 4 : 7).

However, members of the black churches affirm that such acts of care and signs of understanding as they perceive them to be, are not 'infinite'. They are limited both in terms of what they can accomplish and in the context of God's standard of understanding which is attributable to God alone. Human persons are not capable of 'sharing such understanding with God', the members contend.

### Including God

God holds a very central place in the lives of Afro-Caribbean Christians. The central factor, pastoral care and counselling in

the black church movement differs from other 'methods of caring'. Among such differences is the fact that whereas in the case of other types of caring of a counselling nature, for example, there is the strict adherence to a 'counsellor counsellee' relationship, the same is not true with pastoral care and counselling in the black churches.<sup>79</sup>

Instead of an approach structured on a more 'one to one relationship', between someone who is considered to be professionally skilled in counselling, and the person who is being cared for, pastoral care in the black churches is done, to a large extent, by the entire church. And, they bring God into the caring activity. Here God is an involved and active third party.

The third-party dimension which comes about because of the inclusion of God into the caring process, provides a supremely powerful and ultimate - extra factor in the relationship. This is one which may be unique to all pastoral care and counselling. However, while such caring may be the same as what takes place for example in the mainstream churches, it is the special understanding about God as the 'most important factor' in their lives - historically, culturally, religiously, and in terms of the similarity of experiences of black christians, which make it more potentially curative for black people in the black church context.

In making that kind of distinction, the members will readily accept the fact that both in the black and in the traditional churches, in the final analysis, it is God's power which brings about any resolution to crises. It is through God's power and understanding that wholeness is restored to broken lives in all caring. But, having stated that, they proffer also that for black christians as a group, the degree of understanding which characterises pastoral caring provides an additional ingredient with respect to the caring which they receive. In other words, with God as a meaningful third-factor together with their understanding both about God and about each other, possess the combination to bring about a much more positive and curative form of healing than is available to them in many other areas of caring. It brings about what a pastor calls 'functional wholeness' out of shattered lives. That is so in ways which can hardly be as meaningful to black people in the mainstream churches. The same is true for many of them with respect to any type of secular care and counselling. That is, secular caring which does not include God in the relationship.

#### A Case Presentation

Brother Thomas is visiting the home of one of the families of his church. Sister Sandra was not out at church last Sunday. There is

the need to find out why she was absent. During the conversation which followed, Sister Sandra explained how over the past three weeks, it was becoming increasingly more difficult for her to cope. She felt inadequate in being able to handle some of the new developments in her life. Because she was now unemployed, she did not know what would happen to her daughter Jane, who had recently left school. Jane too needed a job. With time on her daughter's hands, she was beginning to be idle and to get into 'bad company'. Since her (Sandra) husband's death was so sudden, there are times when she doubted God. Some of the questions which come to her mind seem to make her faith get weaker instead of growing stronger in the Lord. She is worried and very anxious about that as well.

#### Caring Approach

Brother Thomas could understand. He too had been out of a job. He had two sons who were unemployed. Therefore, he knew that Sandra's anxiety was based partly on her concern for Jane, and partly on her own personal struggles and uncertainties. Consequently, before he could help Sandra so that, she in turn may help Jane to help herself, he must first of all care for Sandra by attempting to calm her fears, and to restore her confidence in God. He wants to encourage and to remind her of the need to 'trust God', and to depend on Him as being always reliable.

Brother Thomas knows how much God means to his sister. Also, he knows that because she is very well-versed in the Scriptures, she can benefit from the use of some appropriate Biblical insights which might have particular relevance to her own immediate situation. She could be helped by being enabled to 'identify' with some of the Biblical characters. That is because in many ways, some of the 'struggles' which we read about in the Bible have striking similarities with those which many Christians face today. Such identification could be 'therapeutic' for her, he reasoned.

As a consequence, Brother Thomas invited Sister Sandra to select certain passages from the Bible, which they read together. The passages which had been chosen were: Psalm 130; Luke 10 : 38 - 42 and Luke 12 : 22 - 32. After the reading of each passage, there was a discussion.

Using Ps. 130 as the basis for the first discussion, it was seen how the Psalmist appeared to be 'down in the doldrums' as it were. His life seemed to have been at a singularly low ebb. He was in the 'depths'. But it was from that position that he cried to God for help. 'Out of the



depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord' (VI), the Psalmist said.

It was because the Psalmist believed that there is 'forgiveness' in God that he cried out to Him, the two black church members affirmed. Therefore, his 'soul' waited for the Lord in whose word he has placed his 'hope' (vv. 4 - 6). That was the necessary approach for anyone who was sincerely burdened to take, because, God is the One who 'redeems' us from our positions of hopelessness, whatever those may be. 'For with the Lord there is loving kindness, and with him is abundant redemption'(Psalm 130 : 7).

Brother Thomas then summarised the discussion. He said in part that 'the God whom the Psalmist cried out to when he was experiencing a hopeless situation' like the one which Sandra faced, is the same God who shows loving kindness and who redeems His children who call upon Him. It is the same God who is 'utterly dependable and steadfastly-reliable'. Therefore, since she too is 'one of God's children', she must continue to trust Him. By so doing, she would discover once more, how 'truly dependable, and completely reliable God really is'.

In dealing more directly with the anxiety which was evidently a part of Sandra's problems, the discussion then centred upon what they termed 'some aspects of Jesus' teaching about anxiety'. For example, according to their interpretation of Luke 10 : 38 - 42, they accepted that it was a natural 'human reaction' to be anxious sometimes. And, there was nothing uncharacteristic or unusual about Martha's actions. There was an important guest at the home. Therefore, she wanted to ensure that everything would work out perfectly well. However, by pursuing such an endeavour, she became 'overly anxious'. In a sense she had been trying to promote relationship with Jesus by means of activity. But in response Jesus said to her,

Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about so many things, but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10 : 41 - 42).

Here Jesus was showing how, sometimes, a closer relationship with Him was a better pursuit than concern for activity. Consequently, the 'good part'(v.42) which Jesus was referring to was akin to the necessity for a closer relationship with Him. That was the vital one which Martha had been missing because of her concern for activity.

Brother Thomas then suggested how, in like manner, it could have been the same with Sandra. Her motherly concern for Jane, her unemployment situation and the fact of her husband's death were issues over which she had so many anxieties that they prevented her from seeking the closer

relationship with God which she needed. So, one way in which she might be able to come to terms with those factors would be to 'seek God's help' as the Psalmist had done. By so doing, the God whom she trusts, the One who is reliable, is the same God in Jesus Christ who can 'relieve her anxiety'. It is through such closer relationship with Jesus that the 'better part can be obtained', he said.

Having been satisfied with what had been discussed thus far, Sister Sandra and Brother Thomas moved on to consider Luke 12 : 22 - 32. Looking firstly at v.22, what is stated there enabled them to make a relevant connection with the preceding passage in Luke. There is a relationship with the two specific points which they had raised previously, namely:

- (a) the stated belief that it might have been because Jesus knew the disciples - like everyone else would be anxious why he instructed them saying, 'do not be anxious', and
- (b) the concern for activity which perpetrated Sandra's own anxiety could be likened to those aspects which were mentioned by Jesus.

Therefore, concerning those activities Jesus said to His disciples that they should not be 'anxious' about their lives as to what they should eat, nor for their bodies as to what they should 'put on' (Luke 12:22).

Anyone who becomes too pre-occupied about food, clothing or about life in general, is likely to become anxious over those things. And, like Martha, they may be prevented from seeking the true kind of relationship with Jesus that really matters. Consequently, there is very little that is positive and constructive to be gained by being anxious. It is not only that those who are anxious cannot succeed in adding a 'single cubit' to one's life span (v.25). Rather, on the contrary, there is also the possibility that anxiety may contribute to the reduction in the length of one's life.<sup>80</sup> In the light of those reasons, there is no need for the christian to be anxious about anything. Because, your Heavenly Father knows what you need (v.30).

In his commentary on The Gospel of St. Luke, G. B. Caird expressed the same idea in this way:

It is pointless to worry....anxiety cannot postpone for one hour the approach of death, nor is it any more effective in other matters. It is pagan to worry: it implies that we do not really believe that God is our Father. But the real cure for worry is to put first things first, to care more about God's Kingdom than about personal needs. Those who do so, find that God provides for his servants, but they also find that the necessities

of life are fewer and simpler than selfishness  
supposes.<sup>81</sup>

At this point Brother Thomas suggested to Sister Sandra that instead of being worried and neglectful of the opportunity to worship, it might be helpful if she continued to seek God's Kingdom by attending the church. That is one additional way to strive to create a more positive and meaningful relationship with Jesus, not only as a means of getting rid of her anxieties, but also, as a way of 'gaining entry into God's Kingdom'. It is through such acts of 'searching' for Jesus by worshipping Him that things will be added unto her (v.31). Again, that is an example of what it means to receive the 'best part' (Luke 10 : 42), which Jesus offers to those who seek fellowship with Him in His Church.

### Prayers

Sister Sandra was then invited to pray. After she had done so, Brother Thomas prayed as follows;

Our Father and Our God we remember your promise never to leave us nor forsake us. We are grateful that you are always with us and every problem that we face you know about it. Your grace is always sufficient for all our needs. It is capable of taking care of our problems as well. I present our Sandra and Jane to you Lord. Bless them at this time of special need. You are aware of the difficulties that they experience. There are anxious and stressful situations in Sister Sandra's life. There is her unemployment problem, the recent passing of her husband, and what looks like a bleak future for Jane. Those problems appear to be causing Sandra to doubt the extent of your love for her, and to think that you have forsaken her. Your way of showing us that you care and that you are with us sometimes come through the taking of initiatives for ourselves....We were told by you that we must knock and we will find, to seek and the door will be opened to us....Some of those initiatives are that we trust you, be patient, believing and endeavouring to foster closer relationships with you. Whatever your way forward for Sister Sandra is, give her the vision to recognise it, and the will to know what you would have her to do. Give Sister Sandra the strength to cope, and the resolve to persevere. Help her never to doubt you but always to wait upon you in faith remembering that without faith it is impossible to please You. Help her to remember that those who wait upon you shall renew their strength.... And, some day they will see you face to face. Let your will be done Lord. Amen.

That prayer, extemporary in nature and presented in part, seems to have three primary characteristics. They are:



- (a) it is addressed to God
- (b) it remained fully consistent with the facts throughout its entirety
- (c) it presented those facts before God as essential spiritual, social and psychological needs as recognised and understood both by Sister Sandra and Brother Thomas himself.<sup>82</sup>

The prayer marked the end of this example of a direct pastoral caring approach in the black churches. However, such examples are not without their basic strengths and manifest weaknesses. As a consequence, despite the mention of the 'great help' which Sandra specifically attested to having received from that pastoral caring experience, it is necessary to attempt a critical analysis in order to cite some aspects of those strengths and weaknesses.

#### Strength and Weakness

This example of pastoral caring in the black churches shows that Mr. Thomas was able to care for his church sister because he was very well equipped with the necessary positive insights and knowledge about her problems. He understood them since his own experiences were similar in many respects. For example, he had been unemployed and his two sons were undergoing the same predicament as Jane was. For those reasons Sandra's concern about her unemployment situation, the plight of her daughter, and the anxiety which they caused her, were similar to Mr. Thomas' concerns about himself and about his sons.

However, the fact that in spite of what Mr. Thomas was going through, he was able to continue to 'trust' in God and did not despair, were the kinds of faithful responses and the positive approaches which Sandra needed to get from someone. That is, an approach which she could appreciate and identify with because it was part of her own experience. She was made to remember that she was not alone. There were others who were experiencing similar difficulties and therefore, if they were able to cope, she must try to do the same.

Mr. Thomas' use of appropriate Biblical characters also served to provide Sandra with what she could accept as being positive and helpful. The examples were relevant and aptly-instrumental in enabling Sandra to calm her fears. They provided what she needed to strengthen her resolve and to empower her to be able to take control of her situation. And, as a direct result, to be placed in a better position where she could then begin to help Jane in a more meaningful way.

Another way of stating that position is to suggest that what Mr. Thomas was able to bring to the caring relationship was the vital

factor of understanding through shared experience. It was the experience that Sandra could readily relate to because it was her own as well. That became clear to her as he used it to make the discussion which they had together helpful and meaningful, informed throughout by their simple, trusting faith in God.

As a result Mr. Thomas gave renewed hope to his sister. He gave her something which was timely, vital and constructive to hold on to. He helped her to ease the burden of life and its realities, replacing them with some renewed insights into God's steadfastness, dependability, willingness and ability to help. She could then use some of those resources to assist her daughter.

They were resources which were not only spiritually empowering, but also religiously practical, tested and proven. For example, since God had heard the cry of the Psalmist when he was into the depths, and God in Jesus Christ gave Mary the good part, informing Martha what she ought to do to obtain it, Sandra was helped to see that God could respond to her particular situation in the same way. She too was included in God's plan, and was a potential recipient of God's promise to be a timely help to all his children whom he 'will never leave' or forsake (Ps. 46 : 1, Heb. 13 : 6). Like Brother Thomas, she could rely on God, trusting and depending on him to make good his promise, instead of losing her faith in God.

A weakness about such approach to pastoral caring in the black churches consists not only of what it promises, there is also what it cannot guarantee. The relevant question which it raises, therefore, is this: what is likely to be the result when promises which were given are not fulfilled - in which case, the 'better part' for example, mentioned by Brother Thomas never materialises? His confident affirmation that if Sandra sought a closer relationship with Jesus she would 'discover once more how truly dependable God is', and 'things would be added unto her', are evidences in point as well.

In the event that her situation did not change, so that she did not obtain the better part as promised, the chances that her anxieties could be made to increase more acutely instead of being alleviated, is a possibility which is inherent in, and constitutes another basic weakness of the caring approach. It is one with the potential to shatter a person's faith instead of increasing it.

However, experiences in the black church movement clearly show that it is precisely the fact of the simple trusting-faith of the people which is one of their most valuable assets. Instead of being shattered

as a result of the non-fulfilment of hopes and promises, they are often made to increase in God. With their simple faith they have learned to trust God in steadfast, genuine and in 'uncomplicated' new ways. Those are examples of non-cognitive ways of trust, faith and reliance upon God which work well for them. So that, if what they may hope for in God does not come to fruition, seldom is the response one of increased despair. Rather, it serves as an opportunity for continued trust in the goodness of God whom they believe will eventually make good their cause. In God's own time, there will be a 'positive response', they believe. There is need to wait on God. As one of the members put it: 'Him who waits and endures to the end will be rewarded' (see Ps. 37 : 34. Is. 40: 31 and James 5 : 11).

Sometimes, all that black church members need is the occasional timely reminder how truly 'reliable' God is. That was the case with Sandra. Therefore, in a most essential way, the presence, spiritual assurance and counsel of Mr. Thomas served to make that very pertinent reminder possible. As a result, he seemed to have been able to care for her in a way that was effective and highly rewarding.

The final area of manifest weakness which ought to be cited is what looks as if Mr. Thomas might have actually told his sister what to do. In which case, it seems that he may have failed to enter into the necessary dialogue with her that would have created alternatives from which she could make her own choices. So that, instead of being an enabler of self-reliance for his sister, he may very well have been bolstering and reinforcing the unhelpful tendency to be dependent on others for a way out of her difficulties.

That set of factors was not the case however. Rather, what Mr. Thomas did was to have engaged in the pastoral caring function known as 'guiding'. It is the form of pastoral caring which requires the carer to play an active role in the caring process which, as Hiltner put it, 'is not in any sense a director in a way that implies coercion'.<sup>83</sup> On the contrary, the term guiding interpreted from this perspective is, according to Fairchild, to allow persons to 'make confident choices', especially when those choices 'seem to affect both the present and future'.<sup>84</sup> concerns in the lives of individuals. That was what Mr. Thomas succeeded in doing. For example, Sandra did not know what to do in the light of the present situations which she faced. That inability affected her sufficiently enough to enable her to be worried about her faith in God, and to have been genuinely concerned about how such pressing crisis of faith affected her future relationship with God, being a deeply religious person. She needed help to clarify her situation and the



necessary freedom to proceed with her life in confidence that, at least she had been able to cross the relevant set of hurdles on the path of life.

Instead of telling Sandra what to do Mr. Thomas assisted his church sister in doing that by means of offering her the necessary spiritual guidance to choose an option of trust and confidence in God the heavenly Father who knew what she needed: the Father whose grace is sufficient for her (see Matt. 6 : 8 and 2 Cor. 12 : 9). The extent to which he succeeded in accomplishing that depended on the many common factors which he understood fully because they were equally a part of his life as much as they were peculiar to hers.

NOTES

1. See Rex and Moore, op. cit., P.157, also, Hill, op. cit., PP. 29 - 37.
2. For a developed interpretation of this see Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counselling: How Every Pastor Can Help People To Help Themselves, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1949, P.36.
3. Holifield, op. cit., P.75.
4. See The Merriam Webster Dictionary, G. K. Hall & Co. Boston, 1977, P. 858.
5. See Holifield, op. cit., P.74.
6. Ibid., P. 75.
7. See Thomas Shepard, 'The Parable Of The Ten Virgins Unfolded', in The Works of Thomas Shepard, Boston, 1853, PP. 112 - 130.
8. See Thomas Hooper, The Application Of Redemption, London, 1657, PP. 279 ff.
9. See Johnathan Edwards, The Great Concern Of a Watchman For Souls, Boston, 1743, PP. 9 - 10 and Johnathan Edwards, in The Philosophy Of Johnathan Edwards, (ed.) Harvey Townsend, University Of Oregon Press, 1955, PP. 113 - 126.
10. See Holifield, op. cit., P.96.
11. Hiltner, op. cit., P.130.
12. Luther Adams and Seward Hiltner, (eds.) Pastoral Care In The Liberal Churches, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1970, P.41.
13. For evidence of this see The Enemy Within: Statements by Black People On The State Of Race Relations In Britain, compiled and edited by Barbara Taylor, Race Relations Unit, British Council of Churches and The Catholic Commission For Racial Justice, 1981, PP. 18 - 21. And, A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.36.
14. See Faber Heije, Pastoral Care In the Modern Hospital, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1971, P.95 and R. S. Lee. Principles Of Pastoral Counselling, S. P. C. K. London, 1968, PP. 1 - 11, also Clinebell, op. cit., PP. 37,195.
15. Roy Fairchild, Finding Hope Again, Harper & Row Pub. 1980, P.47.
16. A member of the black community, Chapeltown.
17. A member of the black community, Harehills.
18. There are many professional pastoral care individuals who contend that their relationship with and commitment to black people are such that there are no differences between them and black people - socially, or in any other way.
19. Ann Phoenix, op. cit., P.13.

20. See Paul Harrison, Inside The Inner City: Life Under The Cutting Edge, Penguin Books Ltd. London, 1983, PP. 383 - 433.
21. See The Guardian, 11 February 1988.
22. See 'New Society', 29 January 1988, P.20.
23. The Enemy Within, op. cit., P.21.
24. Community Care: The Independent Voice of Social Work, 4 May 1989, No. 761. (supplement) P.1.
25. See Pastoral Care In The Liberal Churches, op. cit., PP. 209 - 210.
26. See PP. 78 and 79.
27. See Chris Curling, 'Two Nations Even At School'. The report of an experiment on two groups of British School Children showing that, despite the fact that they were of the same racial stock and ethnic composition, they apparently found it difficult to understand each other because of differences in class-status. The researcher concluded in part, 'We expected....there would be conflicts and misunderstandings', but not to the extent that there was 'no real meeting of minds'....There was 'little evidence of shared values or shared feelings....They are heirs to a common cultural tradition. But during the exchange they might have belonged to two different races'. The Sunday Observer, 7 February, 1988.
28. A pastor, The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
29. Ibid.
30. See Wilkinson et al, (eds.) P.18.
31. A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.50.
32. Joseph Ritson, The Romance Of Primitive Methodism, Edwin Dalton, London, Primitive Methodist Pub. 1909, P.263.
33. Ibid., PP. 263 - 270.
34. Clifford Hill, 'Black Churches: West Indian And African Sects In Britain', Community And Race Relations Unit of The British Council of Churches, 1971, PP. 14 - 15.
35. See The Enemy Within, op. cit., P.3.
36. Ibid.
37. Albert Eaton, The Faith, History and Practice of The Church of England, Hodder And Stoughton, London, 1957, PP. 96 - 97.
38. Cyril Garbett, The Claims Of The Church Of England, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1947, P.20.
39. There are very few black people who worship at this church. They do not appear to have any desire to worship like members of the black churches.
40. See Ira Brooks, Another Gentleman To The Ministry, Compeer Press, P.83.



41. A lay-leader in a Mainstream Church congregation.
42. An Afro-Caribbean christian in a mainstream church congregation.
43. Leech, op. cit., PP. 188 - 189.
44. See Plowright, op. cit., P.186.
45. See A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.53.
46. From a mainstream church denomination.
47. See Faith In The City: The Popular Version, P.9.
48. An Afro-Caribbean christian in a mainstream church.
49. See 'Faithful And Equal: The Report adopted at the Portsmouth Methodist Conference 1987', D.S.R. 1987, P.20.
50. An Afro-Caribbean member in a mainstream church congregation. The office which he holds is often described as a 'token position'. Also, the black people who are given such roles are sometimes called 'token blacks'.
51. See A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.42.
52. Taylor, op. cit., PP. 12 - 39.
53. See A Tree God Planted, op. cit., P.36.
54. A Priest from the mainstream churches.
55. A Priest from the mainstream churches.
56. Holden, op. cit., P.39.
57. See The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, op. cit., P.977.
58. Ibid., P.906.
59. White, R. D. A Guide To Pastoral Care, Pickering and Inglis Ltd. London, 1976, P.10.
60. For more about this concept see Oden, op. cit., P.48., David Stewart, Preface to Empathy, Philosophical Library, INC., 1956, PP. 12 ff. Carl Rogers, 'Empathic: An Unappreciated Way of Being'. The Counselling Psychologist, PP. 2 - 10, and Robert Katz, Empathy: It's Nature And Uses, Collier-Macmillan Ltd. London, 1963, P.157.
61. The New Testament Church of God.
62. R. S. Lee, op. cit., P.67.
63. A member of a mainstream church denomination.
64. Sybil Phoenix, see also, 'Faithful and Equal', op. cit., P.23.
65. See With You In Spirit? op. cit., P.11.
66. The Church of God of Prophecy.

67. Northridge, Psychiatry in Pastoral Practice, Epworth Press, London, 1968, P. 168.
68. Oden, op. cit., P.50.
69. Lee, op. cit., P.67.
70. Frank Wright, Pastoral Care For Lay People, S.C.M. Press, London, 1982, P.33.
71. See Rogers, 1951, op. cit., P.29.
72. Kenneth Mitchell and Herbert Anderson, All Our Losses All Our Grievs: Resources For Pastoral Care, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1983, P.119.
73. See John Root, Encountering West Indian Pentecostalism: It's Ministry And Worship, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts. 1979, P.9.
74. The Church of God of Prophecy.
75. The New Testament Church of God.
76. Northridge, op. cit., P.139.
77. Alastair Campbell, Rediscovering Pastoral Care, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1981, P.42.
78. See Norman Autton, The Pastoral Care of The Dying, S.P.C.K., London 1966, P. IX.
79. Included among the differences here is counselling of a secular nature.
80. For an informative discussion on this see Gary R. Collins, Overcoming Anxiety, Vision House Pub. California, 1973, especially PP. 11 - 28. For additional information see Leslie Weatherhead, Prescription For Anxiety, Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, PP. 1 - 109 and also, Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be, Collins, 1952, PP. 41 - 88.
81. See G. B. Caird, The Gospel of Luke, Penguin Books, 1963, P.163.
82. For an informative interpretation of what he calls the 'relevance of prayer in pastoral work and counselling', see Seward Hiltner, op. cit., PP. 189 - 202.
83. See Seward Hiltner, Preface To Pastoral Theology, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1958, P.145.
84. See Fairchild, op. cit., PP. 61 - 62.

CHAPTER 3

H O U S I N G ,   L O C A L I T Y   A N D   P A S T O R A L   C A R E  
I N   T H E   B L A C K   C H U R C H E S

INTRODUCTION

The factor of housing has always been of major importance to the black church movement in Britain. The extent of that importance is appropriately manifested not only in the fact that most of the black churches derived their genesis in the homes of certain enterprising and pioneering individuals, but also, the black churches came into being and have functioned to fulfil the caring needs of their people - some of which have been generated by poor housing and environmental conditions.

In this chapter we will endeavour to show how the availability of housing for black people primarily in the inner cities, has served to provide and to generate its own distinctive set of difficulties which require constant care from the black churches. We will show also, the extent to which the location of the housing which the people could obtain has by and large, determined some of the forms, content and character, and have produced the whole repertoire of pastoral caring approaches which the black churches have come to symbolize.

The chapter will conclude with some pertinent examples of the claims which the black churches have referred to as their 'pastoral care successes' in the midst of substandard housing and inadequate living conditions.

I PLACE OF RESIDENCE

The majority of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain live in the inner cities. There are a number of reasons for this. Two of the most dominant reasons are (a) the general lack of adequate financial means and (b) influences of settlement-patterns as a consequence of migration. The two factors are closely related. One is conditional upon the other. That is because the low incomes received by most black people who have jobs, and their general lack of financial means in particular, seem to limit their 'choice' over access to housing.<sup>1</sup> They can live only where the quality of housing which they can afford is located. And, that is in the inner cities. We will attempt to look at the concepts separately.



### Financial Reason

One of the motivating factors why most black people from the Caribbean came to Britain was the hope of improving their economic status. The general idea that Britain had been the ideal place to achieve that was part of the belief of Afro-Caribbean people as a result of their colonial experience. When, therefore, the invitation had been extended to the then British Caribbean islands for persons to migrate to Britain to help to rebuild the Mother Country after the last world war, many Afro-Caribbean workers accepted the call very readily. The invitation was seen as a way of gaining economic advantages which were not possible 'back home'. A Jamaican mother expressed the belief in this way:

I decided to come to Britain because in my country work was hard to get. I thought by coming here it would give me the influence and a better life for myself and my family.... My intention was to work, save and then return to enjoy my life but it didn't happen that way. I've become stuck in a council house with nothing of my own....<sup>2</sup>

And, a Barbadian man had this to say:

Everybody was going....I mean, all my friends. 'Life would be better', they all claimed. So I decided to come for 5 years, work and afterwards, return to reap the fruits of a better life. Now I'm no better off. I'd be a lot better off if I hadn't come....It was a mistake.<sup>3</sup>

The better life which those persons and many others like them envisaged would become a reality in Britain, did not come to fruition. And, part of the reason is because expectation and actual reality were not the same things. Expectations about economic success on the one hand, and the non-fulfillment of those expectations on the other, greatly increased the necessity for pastoral caring among some black people in Britain. Pastoral care was needed to absorb the 'shocks' which were experienced by most people. As some black persons encountered difficulties and frustrations by not achieving economically together with bad housing situations, there was need for pastoral caring assistance also. The black church movement functioned to offer them a place of refuge against the psychological damages caused by non-achievement and other related consequences such as the difficulties encountered in 'settling in' their new environments.

That was the case even if not all black people give the impression that they have not done better by coming to Britain. There are those, for example, who claim to have achieved a degree of 'economic success'.

More will be said about this in chapter four. In the meantime, however, it is the view of this person that,

I would say Britain is a good place....when the winter comes people moan and groan, but when the spring comes, they find it easier. I'll tell you something now: people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ don't moan and groan. For me there is nothing to complain about. We are fairly well off here. I'll retire in a fortnight's time from today, and I'll live comfortably on the little pension they'll give me.... Things are so bad in my country that I'm thankful to God for England....Well, as I always say, England is a wonderful place. I don't say they treat us as they should, and it's time that they accepted black people. Black people have done a lot for this country, showing them things they didn't know....but you have to be thankful for what you've got here.<sup>4</sup>

Many Afro-Caribbean people there are who are thankful to Britain. But as they arrived in the country to begin the employment activities that would eventually realise that thankfulness, black people as immigrants settled in the inner cities where their labour was in demand. And, because the quality of housing which was available to them related to their economic status, they were forced not only to live where those houses were located, but also, to accept those which were within range of their financial means.

So then, as far as many black people are concerned, it is not only that the majority live in the inner cities and their employment prospects are bleak, it is also that, as the authors of the book Britain's Black Population have suggested,

Because black people tend to be in the 'lower' socio-economic groups, which are also the least well paid, this explains to a certain extent their overall representation in poor quality housing.<sup>5</sup>

Added to those factors is that such people are sometimes referred to as 'scum' residents from 'stink' inner city estates.<sup>6</sup> Such labelling does go a long way to affect one's employment prospects as well as the quality of housing which one might be able to obtain.

### Migration Influence

Black people are concentrated in the inner cities because of family connections as well. It is possible to place the immigration pattern of Afro-Caribbean people to Britain into two major phases. They are: those who arrived during the years 1948 - 1955, and those who arrived between 1956 and 1962.

As the first group settled in the inner cities, those who followed them - representing the second phase, went in most cases, to live with

'relatives and friends' who had been here before.<sup>7</sup> 'My brother was in Leeds', an informant said,

so I came to Leeds. When you come to England, you always want to be where your relatives are....my brother was here, that's why I'm here<sup>8</sup>

Another put it this way;

When my Aunt who was here in Leeds wrote saying I could come to England, I just couldn't wait for my departure to England<sup>9</sup>.

This general pattern for relatives and friends from the Caribbean to 'be with' those whom they had been acquainted with on arrival in Britain as an initial aspect of the immigration settlement-pattern, has served to provide a very important developmental factor peculiar to Leeds. That factor is reflected in the context whereby, given the relative size of its native population (2.34 million in 1986 - the largest of the English speaking Caribbean islands),<sup>10</sup> Jamaicans are in the majority among the different islanders who comprise the Afro-Caribbean communities in Britain. However, there seems to be one possible exception to that general pattern. It is reflected in the case of Leeds. Islanders from St. Kitts-Nevis as a single group, appear to outnumber the other Afro-Caribbean residents in Leeds.

TABLE 1:

WARD	BLACK POPULATION		TOTAL POPULATION
	NO.	% OF TOTAL WARD POPULATION	
Chapel Allerton	8,690	37	23,663
Harehills	6,140	27	27,775
Headingley	3,100	21	16,114
University	2,580	15	17,707
Kirkstall	1,310	7	19,656
Moortown	1,200	6	20,113
Beeston	1,000	6	17,646
Roundhay	1,080	5	20,303
<hr/>			
TOTAL	25,100		162,977
<hr/>			
All other wards		5% or less	

Black population in Leeds according to ward for 1986.  
 Source: 1981 Census and Housing Dept. Estimate of black population, Leeds City Council. N.B. The term 'black population' as used here includes people whose origins are from India, Asia and North Africa.



Among the probable 15,200 Afro-Caribbean residents in Leeds<sup>11</sup>, it has been estimated that there are about 4,980 or 32.1% whose descendants are from St. Kitts-Nevis.<sup>12</sup> A major reason for this is because more immigrants from that particular federation of islands followed others who had settled here as a consequence of the relevant phases of black immigrant settlement in Britain, than was the case with other 'islanders' who make up the Leeds Afro-Caribbean community.

An aspect of the advantage of that settlement-pattern for the group who came later (1956 - 1962) was that the majority had a 'place to stay' upon their arrival in Leeds. Their predecessors (1948 - 1955), were not so fortunate. They had to establish their own residence 'without such help', a black pastor informed us. It is also the absence of that same kind of help which Claudia Jones interpreted as 'another disability' which was experienced by those pioneering black people 'in the field of housing accommodation'.<sup>13</sup>

## II AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING

It is helpful to note here too, that even where homes were available in the inner cities some were not always readily offered to the immigrants who needed them. There had been systematic rejections as part of the problems faced by Afro-Caribbean people as they attempted to form settlements in the various cities. Claudia Jones put it this way:

The West Indian immigrant and other coloured Commonwealth citizens (were) widely rejected as tenants of advertised flats and lodgings on the basis of a colour-bar, and (were) obliged to pay higher rents, even than white tenants. 'So sorry, No Coloured, No children', European Only', White Only', signs (dotted) the pages of advertised flats and lodgings.<sup>14</sup>

In the book Black British, White British, Dilip Hiro wrote:

No matter what the occupation or earning of a black (person) he found himself barred from 'respectable' white areas.<sup>15</sup>

And, the commissioners of Faith in the City have averred,

But every black person who has tried to find private rented accommodation knows how often the room that is available when they telephone,<sup>16</sup> has 'just gone' when they arrive at the house.

That was the general response irrespective of wherever the area in which the 'private rented accommodation' was located.

The evidence of many Afro-Caribbean people who were among the earliest black immigrant settlers in Britain testify to the truth of those affirmations. 'Yes there were problems in getting houses', one of the persons suggested,

some white English people didn't like black people living in their houses. They'd refuse to rent. But the Poles and Jews helped us out...We used to live three and four together in a single room....However, in the church the whites did assist us, the members, in finding rooms.<sup>17</sup>

Another person had this to say:

When we came here the Polish people were the ones who'd more easily give you a room when the English didn't. I couldn't say they were prejudice or not prejudice. But all I can tell you is the amount of coloured people who used to live in Polish people houses because the English refused us when we'd asked them for houses. The Polish people were immigrants too, and they could have been only interested in making some money. So, maybe it was for the money and for me to say they were not prejudice I don't know, but they were willing to let a coloured man have a room<sup>18</sup>.

And, this third informant said,

There was a beautiful sign on this house. It was an advertisement that the owner had rooms for rent, and as a single girl I needed a room very badly, so, obviously, I went up to the door and knocked on it. When the lady came to answer I immediately recognised her. She was one of the regular members of the church which I attended. So, I said, I remember seeing you at the church. She said, 'You did, but what can I do for you? So I replied, well mam, where I now live it's too overcrowded and I need another place to live in and the notice on the house said there are rooms here for rent. I'd like to have one please. The lady said no, she didn't have any rooms available. So I said, but mam, you have a sign saying there are rooms. She only replied, 'There are no rooms', and closed the door behind her. I really believed she didn't have any rooms, but, it so happened that the day after a girl from Canada got one of the rooms. And, two weeks after she told me there was none the sign was still up. I couldn't believe it because we attended the same church.... I just left that church and joined a Pentecostal group instead.<sup>19</sup>

The relevant churches which are referred to by the persons whom we have quoted are those belonging to the mainstream denominations. And, the specific information supplied by them suggests that while there were obvious all-round difficulties in getting houses, some representatives of the mainstream churches did assist the new-comers in their midst with their housing problems. 'I've never had any trouble to get a place to live', one man said,

Our minister had asked the members with rooms to let us, the coloured members have them, and some did....but for most other coloured people who'd

not been so fortunate when they came here,  
it was a up-hill struggle all the way<sup>20</sup>.

In the case of those who had been helped, that is evidence enough to be able to suggest that some pastoral caring was given by the host churches on behalf of their black brothers and sisters. Therefore, while some people among the host population may have shown indifference to the legitimate housing needs of the new immigrants, others who were genuine christians did demonstrate a caring concern.

#### Adjustments Needed

Both those for whom it had been an 'up-hill struggle', as well as those who were helped, some of the rooms which they succeeded in obtaining were rooms in which three and four persons lived at any one time. Consequently, they were obliged to undertake the arduous tasks of making the necessary adjustments in order to survive in such over-crowded accommodations. A considerable amount of adaptation had to be made because the present experiences of most of those black people had been in marked contrast from the norms of their previous life-styles.

We'd live an independent sort of way back in the  
Caribbean with our own homes, until we arrived  
here and found that we had to share rooms<sup>21</sup>,

one member remarked.

While that particular piece of information might be somewhat misleading since not every one who came here as an immigrant from the Caribbean was fortunate enough to have had his/her own home, it serves to highlight the extent of the problem faced by people who were 'strangers', away from home.

Included also as an aspect of that experience was the 'many wounds of rejection' (an example of which was the young woman seen above) to be allowed to heal, as those were being inflicted upon some black people.

That was the situation not only with respect to the problem of obtaining houses, but also, in the context of other areas of their daily lives as well. Those additional areas include the 'frequent bouts of depression' associated with and which had been a direct consequence of the relevant struggles which were mentioned by the respondents. So too, there was the 'emptiness' which is sometimes present especially in such over-crowded environments which are not conducive to any degree of comfortable living. Such were the examples of some of the developments and the situations which many black people said they were 'obliged to deal with' as best they could.



In that context, it is true to say that many already knew to some extent, how to 'trust' and to 'support' each other for mutual survival. Therefore, in response to the various pressures which were generated by their new circumstances, the contributing and satisfying sense of resourceful relationships about which they knew so very well 'back home', became part of the benefit of community. But such sense of community woven into the fabric of self-support systems (which was part of Afro-Caribbean peoples cultural creations for survival and handed down by their ancestors), would now be severely tested to the limits within a very different set of prevailing circumstances.

Here in Britain, for example, aspects of those well-formulated traditional and cultural survival norms needed re-adjustments and adaptation. The specific characteristics of their present set of experiences with housing difficulties in particular, and the other accompanying modes of instability of their lives in general, dictated that they obtained and generated the ideal type of caring assistance to deal adequately with what they had been going through. And, it was precisely at this poignant and opportune time that the caring therapy of the black churches was beginning to become so vital to the collective well-being and the salvation of the black people who were members of the black churches in Britain.

Those black church people were faced with what some have described as the 'numerous adverse situations' of which housing was a primary and pressing one. Because of those reasons they needed the vital assistance of each other as a priority. It was a priority which entailed the mutual benefits of neighbourly co-operation, and the functioning spirit of togetherness. Such intrinsic virtues were needed to be present as 'sustaining reservoirs to draw from as never before', a pastor suggested.

But it so happened that for the most part, even if some black people did actually reside in their 'four and five' occupants in a single dwelling unit, there was very little community involved. That type of housing arrangement though communal in nature and potential, did not necessarily serve to create enough community for effective caring. That is, sufficient pastoral caring outside of and apart from what they received from the functioning black church experience. On the contrary, there were hardly any peculiarities which were conducive to caring and which are typical of 'normal family' life-styles contained in the then living arrangements of the people concerned. In other words they occupied the various over-crowded and acute housing situations not so much because they wanted to do so, or because they were 'related' to each other.

The fact is, they had no other choice but to accept what was available to them and in the locality where it was made available. Consequently, it must continually be borne in mind that all the other difficult and critically-accompanying circumstances like the 'conflicting cultural barrier' which they encountered outside the immediate home environment, and in an unfamiliar and sometimes unfriendly societal structure, were present as well.

So then, all the negative contributing and supporting influences which were described by a member as 'ideally geared' for the purpose of,

creating conflicts, to sustain strained nerves, and to bring about the many irritants which so often became prevalent as we struggled outside the home, were also present in our relationships at home as well.<sup>22</sup>

As a result, many examples of bickering, dissensions, antagonism and misunderstandings did occur. There were examples of bitterness and deep hurt accompanied by much suffering, all of which had been incited and deliberately inflicted by those very black immigrant people upon one another.

Some of those serious and most often violent behavioural patterns were understandable. For it must be remembered too, that under the very testing conditions in which most black people lived it was not even the case whereby they were 'blood families'. The truth is, those pioneering immigrants were mostly men. Their genders did not comprise the ideal combination for a typical family make up.

Also, they did not always come from the same societies in the Caribbean. The majority had not met 'other islanders' before. So

a Jamaican national might have found himself residing with a total stranger from St. Kitts, Dominica, Nevis, Antigua, Barbados or St. Vincent. They were meeting each other for the first time. A Barbadian man expressed the situation in this way:

You'd leave for work and when you return at night time the landlord says to you he has arranged for you to share the high attic room where four of you already live. So, now, there's a fifth man whom you've never met before in your whole life to be in the little room....man it was tough.<sup>23</sup>

Another person from St. Kitts said,

Living conditions were very bad. You had to settle for a shared room which never had sufficient basic amenities to go around....You could hardly get a proper bath. There were those old electric meters in which you'd be required to put a shilling but by the time you're ready to bathe it already had run out, or someone else got in before you....

But things are different now. It's better today. I've a nice council house and living conditions have changed<sup>24</sup>.

When some people could no longer tolerate the continued series of stresses and strains together with the other burdens caused by their difficult housing conditions, they would attempt to move on (as was the case with the young woman referred to). Sometimes, such moves only resulted in making life more intolerable in the alternative environment, if the seeker had been fortunate enough to find one available. It was indeed a 'tough', trying and testing time in every way.

What can also be accurately inferred from the collective experiences which those black people had is the underlying sense of deep despair, characterised by an element of elusiveness. That was in keeping too, with what was described by a deacon as 'the general lack of any permanency evident in our lives'.

It was a combination of all those factors about housing which we have considered so far, together with the problems of alienation and ambivalence - symptomatic of them, which those immigrants said they had to 'deal with' as best they could, which constituted some of the most intensive conflicts of their situation experienced with inner city housing accommodation.

However, for some black people, in response to all of that there was 'another place' away from their homes where they could go for help. This was another type of environment which they could turn to for assistance. It was the one haven - the central focus, which was the caring and witnessing community of faith. Here, was the most effective source of solace and comfort which they could find. It was the black church movement. They, therefore, made the maximum use of the opportunities which it provided.

#### Attitude to Location

We have seen thus far that the black churches developed within the framework of specific localities where the people had been able to find housing accommodation. The quality of housing accommodation in which they now live seem to reflect both their attitudes toward their present localities and characterise the nature of the churches care for them. Therefore, it is possible to find many black people who have become by virtue of those reasons, 'very attached' to their inner city localities. That is because of the caring which they receive from the black churches in those areas. For example, there are those who would not want to move because they have come to develop 'strong personal



attachments' to the location in which they presently are. Others would not move because of what they have described as the 'fear of being isolated' from their church and community.

Those basic attitudes are being portrayed and expressed with much emotion. They consist of strongly held beliefs, with evidence of much civil pride and religious commitments to their communities. That is so to the extent which serves to reveal how deeply their sense of attachment to, and the personal sentiments which they hold for their church and community must be. Some evidence of this is amply stated in the words of the following black church members. 'I wouldn't want to go and live in an area', one said,

which is too removed from my church. I feel much happier here living in this neighbourhood. It's a mixed community where we're all equal and where it's easier to attend my church and relate with my brothers and sisters in the Lord.<sup>25</sup>

In almost the same vein another remarked,

Even if I could afford it, I wouldn't go and live in another place. I feel much more secure here. It would be spiritual, psychological, social and emotional suicide if I'd do that....I feel secure here because of the neighbours whom I know very well and the church members who'd come to look for me.<sup>26</sup>

Also, a third person had this to say:

I'd like a change of house but not to a location where there is fear of being attacked. Where I am here, there is peace of mind. If I moved, I fear that I won't be able to relate to the people in a more affluent neighbourhood.<sup>27</sup>

Part of the fear which has been expressed by the respondents that a change of locality might result in 'attacks', upon them, seems to be borne out by the Leeds City Council. In its Quarterly Review: Department of Housing and Environmental Health, the council stated that,

The number of cases of racial harassment investigated by the Unit to date is 72 compared with 97 this time last year. Although the reduction in numbers investigated is a welcome sight, it should be noted that other agencies such as the police, CAB and CRC are taking away some of the load. In a report on racial violence and harassment in housing, called 'Living in Terror', the former Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality wrote 'racial attacks on members of the ethnic minorities are increasing, not only in areas where they are well represented, but also in areas where their numbers are low'. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the problem of under-reporting continues and no-one knows the true scale of the problem.<sup>28</sup>

Probably a much closer and more representative picture of the 'true scale of the problem', has been presented by members of the Leeds Churches Community Involvement Project. In the June 1989 issue of their Information Sheet under the caption, 'Racial Harassment in Leeds Today', it is stated that,

The most recent report of the Housing Department's Race Unit records an increase of 157% cases of racial harassment reported between 1985/7....  
No formal prosecution or conviction has been tabled on grounds of racial harassment. This is partially the result of weakness and flaws in current legislation and partly the difficulty of getting admissable evidence ....In 50% of the cases reported to the police, no action was taken. The report highlights two major areas of concern:

- there are a number of areas/estates which are fast becoming 'no-go' areas for the ethnic minority community.
- racial harassment is not restricted to one or two areas - it is happening throughout the city, although Burley, Bramley, Gipton North and Lincoln Green account for 50% of the cases reported to the Race Unit of the Housing Department.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the fact that 'racial attacks' on the persons and property of individuals of ethnic minority origin seem to be increasing in number even in places like Chapeltown where black people are 'well represented', nevertheless there are those who speak very positively about the area. In what could be interpreted as evidence of 'local civic responses' in defence of their community, it is the view of the following persons that:

I like Chapeltown. It is a nice place to live in. I don't find any fault here....It's strangers from outside the area who give it a bad name. They claim that Chapeltown is a bad place but it is not different from anywhere else. Everywhere you go these days you find stealing, killing, raping, prostitution and drugs....black people experience racism and attacks anywhere. Others give here a bad name but it is people from outside that come here and do those kind of things.<sup>30</sup>

And, where this other man is concerned, 'what I've come up against in Chapeltown', he said,

I've come upon anywhere in England. I've no real bother in Chapeltown. It's no worse than any place else. In fact it is better than most places. I'll tell you something now: it is the safest place to live and I like it here. Don't you worry about all the bad things you hear. If you compare Leeds and anywhere else there is not more crime here than you'll find in other places. Those who commit crimes don't come from Chapeltown. They come here to do wrong deeds and give the place a name it don't deserve.<sup>31</sup>

In all of the examples of the responses from the black people which we have cited, there appear to be an explicit element of an ongoing sense of fellowship and neighbourly-attachment to one another. Together with that is an apparent desire to want to remain where they are. That too, might be seen as an expression of the relevance of neighbourliness and the extent of civic consciousness about their community which is evident.

Also, what seems to come across very explicitly is a common aspect of deep devotion to the local churches. It is a devotion which is manifested in the revelation that they 'get so much' from their church and neighbourhood in terms of christian commitments and civic activities which they benefit from. In that context, two modes of endeavours — christian and civil — function as 'shields' of protection from the world outside. They provide a place and serve as a means by which those black people feel secure and have 'peace of mind', they have informed us.

Such roles played by the church and community and the attitudes of the people to them have much relevance, therefore, for the caring process. That is so because it is not only what they get out of those places, there is also what they contribute which is of great significance to them. For example, there is the active exercise of a christian presence which is articulated and exemplified in what they conceived to be their 'christian duty' to defend their community from the 'negative' image which strangers give to it on the one hand, and what they believe 'outsiders' do in their community on the other hand. Therefore, those black church people want to 'give back' something to their community in the best way they can. Some of the ways by which that is done is to attempt to change the negative image which has been given to where they live: both by example and precept. And, to support any endeavour that may enhance the community.

### III TRANSPORTATION AND LOCALITY

Another vital aspect of the black churches' response to the care of their members is evident in the factor of church transportation. This factor does not only make visits possible, it is also provided for the members who live any distance away from the church buildings. Transportation reduces the effect of isolation, fosters connection with others and enhances movements between them. It is the mode of pastoral caring which is made possible as the churches take their members from their homes to the various buildings where they meet for worship and care in



continued fellowship. That is, continued fellowship and caring apart from those aspects which form part of the black churches witness outside the walls of the buildings and enacted in the christian neighbourly-community context during each day of the week.

As an aid towards getting from that wider community and into the buildings, the majority of black churches possess their own transportation facilities in the form of mini buses. Those buses sometimes make several trips to and from the churches when taking the members back home again.

The members who are the owners of private cars also complement the churches care. They accomplish this service by arranging to facilitate others by driving them to church. Some of the advantages which the churches claim that they derive as a result of this kind of pastoral caring are,

- (a) less time is spent in going to and from church. And, more time is possible for actual fellowship and worshipping the Lord.
- (b) there is a reduced element of being mugged, harassed, or attacked while walking to and from church especially at nights in the inner cities.

#### A Reaction to Transportation

The black churches have been criticised with respect to their use of transportation. That criticism has come especially from some members of the mainstream church congregations who have not adopted the practice of providing a regular system of transportation to take their members to and from church. The critics contend that what is being conceived to be an aspect of 'caring for people' by means of transporting them to and from church, is only an astute way of 'keeping' their members. In other words, if the members are provided with the means of access to their own churches, then, they may not be tempted to attend another church nearer to the vicinity where they live. In which case, the possibility of finding it more convenient to worship closer to their homes might not arise. Also, the chances that any such eventuality may serve to influence the members' decision to become 'affiliated' to that other christian denomination instead, are reduced as well. The main purpose of transportation, therefore, is to effectively remove those possibilities, and, with them, some of the chief reasons which people often use for not attending church or joining others.

The critics continue by stating that the practice of transporting people to and from their place of worship is not a test of 'faith and commitment'. In other words, if the members of the black churches were expected to get to their various churches unaided: which means that they had to rely on their own initiatives to do so, then, they probably would not be attending as regularly as they have been doing.

Part of the response which the black churches give in defence of their practice fall within the purview of the following set of arguments.

- (a) Unlike the black churches the majority of the members from those mainstream denominations have their own means of transportation. Others live within reasonable walking distance from the church buildings. And, those who do attend church regularly are few in numbers. Therefore, there is no pressing reason to provide similar services.
- (b) It is the all-round effectiveness of their pastoral caring that necessitates the use of transportation. That is so, not only as a legitimate contributory factor, but also, as a form of care in itself. It is a form of care in which transportation functions as an essential tool for the delivery of that care.
- (c) Transportation enhances the pastoral care which the members themselves provide for each other in the various communities where they live. That is made possible by means of visitations, which result in regular Bible study sessions, prayer meetings and fellowship encounters. All of those factors serve to generate a deep love for, and produce aspects of meaningful attachments to those communities. Consequently, their people do not wish to move. That is so even if such moves were to other localities within closer proximity to the churches where it would be possible for the majority to walk.
- (d) Also, the care which they provide in fellowship one with another in activities within the church buildings themselves, is very effective. Such caring attracts the members. They want to identify with that form of caring as well as those which are available in their wider communities. Therefore, transporting their members from the immediate localities where they live and are pleasantly happy to live, to the churches in which they seem even happier to be for a required time of fellowship is essential. It is akin to their way of meeting the specific caring needs of the members in a two-fold way.

### Choice of Location

The general trend and the ethos of our interpretation in the context of the particular location in which many black people live, must be reflected upon further. Such a reflection is necessary to assist us to see more clearly the extent of their sense of attachment to those communities. Also, since it is an attachment which is made possible as a result of the pastoral caring which they receive there from the black churches, the reflection will provide additional insights about that caring. And, with it, further indication of why they may or may not have any desire to move away from those localities. One of the most effective ways in which that can be accomplished is to consider what the following people have to say. It is the view of this person that,

Black people live where they want to live. They have choices. They can move if they care to but the majority don't want to move.<sup>32</sup>

Another person informs us that,

Difficulties in getting houses faced by blacks depend on where one is and where the houses are situated.... in Chapeltown it is relatively easy for black people to get available housing there.<sup>33</sup>

The opinion of this other person is that,

Black people themselves give the impression that they'd prefer to live in community close to each other and where it's easy for them to carry on with their church business inside their homes.<sup>34</sup>

Also, the view of this pastor is that,

The Leeds City Council deliberately put black people in housing in Chapeltown....They thought that by putting black people in that locality they'd be solving problems. But they've only created them. Recently I went with one member of my church to inspect a house given to her family by the council, but I couldn't believe my eyes, it was so badly in need of repairs: windows were broken, doors without hinges, paper needed to be put on damp walls. It wasn't fit for humans to live in.<sup>35</sup>

And, for this lady the belief is,

Many blacks live in houses which are not fit for them to live in. The problem is most serious with older generation blacks who did not take the opportunity or had the means to own their own homes. Now they must live in council flats that are damp....some need repairs or replacement of broken fittings, and getting those things done takes ages. The Council takes time to respond....people must wait an eternity.<sup>36</sup>

Additional evidence of the pastoral care which the black churches



offer in response to some of the problems mentioned above will be featured in the section of this chapter which considers 'self-help endeavours'. In the meantime, however, we will continue to interpret and to deal with the material by taking a critical look at the information from the relevant perspective of the 'stated preference' or choice, in respect of the location in which black people may or may not want to live. We will look at the reasons for such deliberate preference and how the people cope with the caring help of the black churches. In other words, how true it is to say that black people 'live where they want to live. They have choices?' How are we to define choice in relation to those people and the houses from which they may choose?

TABLE 2: AN INDICATION OF HOUSING TENURE IN LEEDS BY WARD: 1981.

Source: 1981 Census.

	Owner Occupancy	Council Rented	Private Rented
HIGH RATES	Halton (89%)	Hunslet (79%)	Headingley (44%)
	Roundhay (78%)	Seacroft (79%)	University (28%)
	Garforth (73%)	Burmantofts (65%)	City & Holbeck (21%)
	Armley (52%)	Middleton (65%)	Chapel Allerton (18%)
LOW RATES	Burmantofts (27%)	Moortown (18%)	Bramley (5%)
	Seacroft (19%)	Headingley (11%)	Garforth (5%)
	Hunslet (16%)	Halton (5%)	Whinmoor (4%)
	University (14%)	Roundhay (4%)	Seacroft (2%)
AVERAGES			
LEEDS MD	53.5%	35.3%	11.2%
U P A's	34.1%	50.2%	15.7%

The dwelling stock position 'within the authority's own area' on the 1st April 1988, according to the City Council estimates stood as follows: The Local Authority had ownership of 90,202 or 31% of the buildings. Housing Associations owned 8,320 or 3%, and the Private Sector had as many as 191,078 or 66%, making a grand total of 289,600. Of those buildings, the number deemed to be unfit were:-

Local Authority	7,792
Housing Associations	25
The Private Sector	24,000
TOTAL	<u>31,817</u>

That is, an estimated 11% of the stock were said to be unfit.

The dwellings which were fit but lacked certain items of basic amenities such as hot running water, inside bath rooms, inside water toilets, wash basins and one gas fire as the only source of heat, were as follows:-

Local Authority	450
Housing Associations	60
Private Sector	1,751
TOTAL	<u>2,261</u>

And, the number of non-substandard dwellings which were in need of renovation were:-

Local Authority	49,000
Housing Associations	400
Private Sector	56,400
TOTAL	<u>105,800</u>

It is possible to see that as far as the above figures indicate, the private sector is in possession of the largest number of buildings. And, as we have observed previously, very few of those buildings seem to be available to the majority of black people who need them. It would appear to be obvious, therefore, that their choice in that particular area is limited indeed. Such a factor is further made evident by the writers of the book Britain's Black Population when they suggested that,

Racial discrimination on the part of those selling houses and those organisations involved in their finance, such as mortgage companies, have undoubtedly had the effect of limiting the choice of housing available to black people in both location and quality.<sup>37</sup>

Faced with those restraints, it is to the Local Authorities, then, that most black people turn for help to ease their practical and acute housing needs. But it seems that even here their range of choices are steadily decreasing. For example, the Leeds City Council foresee what is described as, 'severe curtailments' to its financial ability to fund future 'housing

programmes affecting both public and private sector properties'.<sup>38</sup>  
And, from a national perspective, The Guardian of Wednesday 7th  
September 1988, aptly expressed the position in this way:

If the way out of this quandry is greater  
housing mobility....meaning greater choice,  
then all the time options are shrinking because  
of the economic strait-jacket in which most  
urban authorities find themselves....and large  
numbers of black families continue to be trapped  
in deteriorating stock alongside poor and  
resentful whites - the tensions mounting with  
the closing down of alternatives.<sup>39</sup>

If in spite of the above revelations it can still be accepted that  
there are black people who 'live where they want to live', and they  
can move, but the majority don't want to do so, then, that information  
might serve to confirm and to substantiate our previous notion suggesting  
that most black people who presently live in the inner cities are content  
to continue to live there. Also, that possible conclusion seems to lend  
ample support to our analysis purporting that one of the contributing  
reasons why they may have developed a 'love' for, and an attachment to  
their localities is due to the caring relevance of the black churches.  
It is a caring relevance which is manifested in the context that the  
churches are alive and active in those black communities. That is so  
especially on council housing estates where most black people live  
within close proximity to each other, and with easy access to each  
other's flats in which regular religious activities are held on a daily  
basis.

It is within the ambit of those indications, therefore, that we  
must view and understand the question of choice. In other words, it is  
not a matter of having the choice which is akin to the fact that they  
all have the financial ability to be able to purchase more adequate  
housing in other areas. The vast majority of black people have no  
such means. In a true sense, 'the economic position of Britain's black  
(Afro-Caribbean) population is reflected in the location of their  
housing',<sup>40</sup> and determines the choices which they can make.

So then, the question relative to choice in the sense in which  
the informants used it must be defined religiously. That is, there  
are some people who even if they had the means, would elect to stay  
where they are precisely because of what they receive from the black  
churches in terms of care. Also, it does not appear to be the case  
that all of them are totally and fully incarcerated where they are.  
There are indeed a few black people who could move from the inner city  
in the financial sense, but who have decided to remain because of



religious motivation. That is what they mean by choice. Evidence of that motivation in terms of caring is portrayed in the context of the numerous 'local community of prayer groups' which have been established and encouraged by the black churches. Those locally-based units of prayer and fellowship groups take turn to meet at different times during the week in the homes of the respective members. The activities consist of hymn singing, Bible study and discussions. During such encounters the participants endeavour to strengthen, support and to pray to God on behalf of each other. Consequently, they are able to maintain close contacts with one another in a way that some people believe it might not be possible to do if they moved to areas where there may not be many black neighbours. Living in close proximity to each other provides the opportunity for positive enactments of care, concern and mutual support in community.

It was in direct reference to those specific activities in community, therefore, that one of the persons who informed us earlier was referring. That was when he said, for example, that many prefer to remain in such communities like those in the inner cities - close to each other, because it provides them with the opportunity to undertake their 'church business' inside their homes, as conducive and convenient venues for such caring activities.

It is now appropriate at this point to reflect upon two additional pieces of similar evidence from the perspective of our interpretation of supporting material relevant to the reasons why some black people remain in the kind of housing and locality where they are. The evidences are (a) that 'difficulty experienced' in getting houses depends upon where a person intends to live, and (b) that the Leeds City Council 'deliberately' put black people to live in the Chapeltown area.

By way of procedure we will endeavour to reflect firstly on (a). Then, we will consider (b) with specific reference to the response of the Leeds City Council about the assertion. Following that we will endeavour to show how the black churches are caring within the context of the two pertinent factors.

It seems that the difficulty in getting houses does appear to increase for Afro-Caribbean people when their requests identify and include certain areas. Those are the areas which, for example, do not include Chapel Allerton, Harehills, Headingley and University being the four wards with the largest concentration of black people. The difficulty seems to increase even further with respect to wards such as Kirkstall, Wharfedale, Beeston and Roundhay, where only between

7 and 5% of the population is black (see table 1). The difficulty is most pronounced in other wards where less than 5% of the population is black. One such area is Methley, where at the present there are no Afro-Caribbean families residing. An Afro-Caribbean man who was enquiring about a property in that locality was told by the estate agent that it was not a 'proper' area for black people to live. On the other hand, however, when similar interests are expressed for properties in Chapeltown proper, the problem seems to become less difficult. Of all the areas, as far as Afro-Caribbean people are concerned, Chapeltown offers the best chance to obtain a property.

In order to get the official response of the Leeds City Council in respect of the allegation that they tend to locate Afro-Caribbean people intentionally in Chapeltown, I visited the Department of Housing and Environmental Health. The Housing Officer who spoke to me said that their policy was to 'allocate houses according to needs'. That was being done depending on the 'availability of property' and the area where people want to live. It has never been a consideration 'based' on ethnic grouping. As a way of ascertaining whether they are fair in the distribution of properties, the Council has recently introduced a system called 'Minority Monitoring'. The system functions to provide the council with the following information:-

- (a) who is applying
- (b) the type of accommodation in which minorities are located, and,
- (c) whether the distribution of properties is as impartial as they claim it is.

The officer then referred me to the Council's Housing Investment Programme Submission: 1989 - 1990 for further information concerning their policy. The relevant paragraph under the heading 'Promotion of Equal Opportunities' reads,

In recognition of the housing needs of the black community in Leeds, the Council has established a Race Unit within the Department of Housing and Environmental Health. The role of this unit is to ensure that the Department's strategy for racial equality is implemented....(by) establishing ethnic record-keeping and monitoring of housing services....<sup>41</sup>

Such positive action by the Leeds City Council seems to be in keeping with what a few other local authorities have been doing. An example of a similar 'approach towards ensuring that black people get a fair share of good quality council housing has been', the authors of the work Britain's Black Population informed us,

to set up a target for allocating more desirable properties to black families. In January 1979 Lambeth Council announced that a target proportion of 30% of the housing on new estates and modernised properties should go to black people on the waiting list.<sup>42</sup>

However, in spite of those apparently progressive moves by certain local authorities, it appears that the majority of black people are still disproportionately placed in council houses in inner cities.

Ellis Cashmore might have recognised that possibility as well. In his book The Logic of Racism he makes mention of racism in 'Newtown' and refers to a person named John who said,

I don't know whether it's a deliberate ploy by the council, but blacks seem to be all put together in council estates in cities.<sup>43</sup>

Also, Ron Phillips in almost the same vein, referred to similar developments in Moss Side, Manchester. He wrote:

Racial discrimination both in the allocation of council housing and in the granting of mortgage facilities, together with discrimination by estate agents, effectively prevented most blacks from seeking accommodation in other districts.<sup>44</sup>

And Kenneth Leech has interpreted it in terms of the national perspective. His belief is that,

Successive census data and other studies have shown the concentration of black communities in areas of high deprivation, while the evidence of racial inequality in employment, housing and other areas is indisputable.<sup>45</sup>

Much of the evidence which we have presented thus far seems to confirm the pastor's claim about the location of black people in Chapeltown. So too, there is possible confirmation on the national level about the particular response by the estate agent to the man's inquiry into the property in Methley. We will look more closely at some of the implications of such attitudes to black people by other estate agents and mortgage finance companies in respect of the caring response of the black churches to those problems, when we come to consider the subsection in this chapter entitled 'Financial Response to Housing Care'. In the meantime, however, it is necessary at this point to assess how the black churches continue to care in the context of the location in which the majority of black people live.

By way of procedure it is helpful to note that even if the Leeds City Council does not appear to accept the claim that there might have been discrimination against Afro-Caribbean people concerning where they are located, nevertheless, the council has admitted that



'Many ethnic minority households are severely disadvantaged, both in public and private sector housing'.<sup>46</sup>

In the light of those realities, therefore, there are three pertinent and related questions which immediately present themselves. The questions are:-

- (a) to what extent can it be said that because most black people are located in the inner cities, that factor creates opportunities for the black churches to care?
- (b) If one possible reason why black people are in the inner cities is because there might have been the belief that such an arrangement will 'solve problems', what are some of the problems which are created as a consequence instead of solving them? and,
- (c) Is it true that people who are poor, living in run-down, damp housing situations in the inner cities, have the tendency to become depressed, easily aggressive and to revert to crime?

Additional responses to those questions will be given when we are dealing with the section on 'Poor Housing and Crime'. Suffice it then to be said here that the churches caring take a variety of forms. Here are examples of some of those forms of caring in outline.

Representation. Pastors write letters to various local authorities or make representation in person on behalf of those who may have particular difficulties with housing. Such forms of representation may also include factors like unsatisfactory environmental conditions in which 'domestic waste', for instance, has been allowed to 'pile' up, a pastor informed us. 'We direct them to other sources of help apart from the local authorities which might be able to assist with housing needs', another pastor said.

Examples of some of the 'other sources' to which black people may be referred are, Unity Housing Association in Leeds, Handsworth Single in Birmingham, United Housing Association in Bristol, Odu-Dua Housing Association in Camden, The Imani Housing Co-op in Wandsworth, London, and First Stop in Leeds. Unity Housing, for instance, has been able to provide some black people with help in the following ways:

- (a) somewhere to live
- (b) advice about the type of housing benefits to which they are entitled,
- (c) regular visits by a housing officer to assess their needs.

Also, First Stop (Leeds) has informed us that in 1988 as many as 12% of those who were referred to them were black youngsters.<sup>47</sup>

Donations. Most churches have benevolent funding systems which are used to assist members in 'meeting small difficulties like paying gas and electricity bills'.

Offer of Thanksgiving. At the time of their first moving into any new housing facility and during other special occasions such as anniversaries, the churches do regular services of 'blessing and dedication' of their members homes. Those services usually take the form of offering thanks to God for the gift of a home and as evidence of His care for them.

Such religious activities are culturally conceived in that they are seen as means by which God is 'brought into the home' to dwell permanently. Consequently, even in run down council housing without windows and adequate facilities, for example, the people believe that God is there. They believe that God is in those houses with them to guide, comfort and to protect them from danger. Such divine presence is possible as long as the units have been blessed by the church. Those forms of beliefs by the faithful even when they hinge on the superstitious, contain much hope which have immense importance to those who live in conditions which greatly affect the quality of their lives.

#### Witnessing Opportunity

Another very effective way by which the churches care in the context of location relates to their understanding of witnessing. This aspect of their ministry serves to determine not only the extent of their concern for one another, but also has much relevance with respect to how they interpret their christian duty in relation to where they live. In other words, the relationship between housing in the context of where the houses are situated, the level of care which is offered there, and how they view any possibility of moving away which might in turn affect their ability to care, are regarded as very essential concerns to them.

We can obtain a relevant insight into those concerns and get a more vivid picture of the way in which they conceive witnessing, as a means of, and an opportunity to care where they live, if we focus once more upon the precise words of the members themselves. A secretary of one of the Churches expressed it this way:

I wouldn't want to leave this neighbourhood.  
I don't want to leave my people whom I wish  
to witness the Gospel to. The majority live

here, and my place is with them. It wouldn't be proper if I'd moved elsewhere and when I wished to witness move back....Other members of the community will not listen when you tell them about God. I need to remain here to witness in an effective way.<sup>48</sup>

In a somewhat similar way but having some contrasting implications for the witnessing process, another member said,

If it had no immediate bearing on my christian life I wouldn't mind leaving Chapeltown. But if by going it means losing the fellowship with my brethren who may say: 'see, he's gone to live in prosperous neighbourhood we don't want to listen to him', then I wouldn't want to move....But by going to live there, I can be a more effective witness for Christ. It offers a chance to witness in that other neighbourhood by the life I live, portraying Christ to them. They may see you as different and may wish to know why.<sup>49</sup>

A careful look at what the two black church members have said shows that there is much in common between them. Both recognise the importance of relating christian belief and teaching with actual practice. They are mutually aware of the need to connect example with precept for a relevant Christian witness. In other words, if they are going to witness to and consequently to be able to care for the spiritual well-being of others, they cannot do so effectively if they do not share with, and experience together the same struggles which those whom they may be caring for are also experiencing.

Another pertinent aspect of the similarity which can readily be identified is that both seem to imply that their christian duty informs and takes precedence over whether they may move or remain in their present housing locality. The concomitant need to maintain genuine 'fellowship' with the brethren as an aspect of the caring-christian concern for effective witness, are deeply essential factors in determining where they are prepared to live.

However, there is evidence of some differences with respect to the relevant information. One of the informants seems to feel that the opportunity to witness is limited by, and confined only to those whom he calls 'my people', and with whom his 'place' is. On the other hand, the latter, while recognising the importance to witness to his brethren as a duty, has also included a wider horizon for the arena of his caring and witnessing ministry. He understands that going to another neighbourhood presents an opportunity to 'portray Christ' there as well. Therefore, as far as he is concerned, effective witness for Christ can be enhanced if it is carried out and lived in a locality where there are 'others' who may not share his particular faith, but who, nevertheless, may see



the difference and might want to know more. So then, according to his way of assessing his witnessing potential: it contains the possibility of presenting an opportunity to explain 'why'. And, that is deemed to possess not only sufficient reason to justify why he could move away, it is also one for caring.

#### IV VISITING, WITNESSING AND EVANGELISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

For this section we will endeavour to look very briefly at certain features of a particular period of evangelism in Britain - the eighteenth century, to see the extent to which it can be ascertained that there are some parallels with the method of evangelism which we are highlighting in the black churches. Then we will assess those related features in terms of the following factors:

- (a) witnessing as evangelism in the black churches, and
- (b) fellowship and encouragement as evangelism in the black churches.

That will be done from the relevant perspective of an example of what is conceived of as 'visitation for caring' in black church parlance.

Mention has been made of the historical fact that many of the black churches in Britain had their first gathering in the homes of black people. Those homes served as the cradles in which black church evangelism was nurtured and went out to grow in various parts of the British Isles.

In the case of mainstream christianity, there seems to be scant evidence available as to how the Christian message first came to Britain. 'How the Gospel got here is not known', says Albert Eaton. In his book The Faith, History and Practice of the Church of England, the writer informs us that,

Some believe St. Paul reached Cornwall, others that Joseph of Arimathea settled in Glastonbury, but there is no official record of any Apostolic Mission arriving in those first four centuries. Yet, we have plenty of evidence of a virile Christian Community with Apostolic Bishops, teaching the Apostolic Creed, and ministering the Apostolic Sacraments.<sup>50</sup>

As far as England is concerned, however, Cyril Garbett believes that,

The Church came to England with the missionaries from Rome and from Scotland. St. Augustine with his missionaries converted the south-east of England and founded the Sees of Canterbury, Rochester and London. The missionaries from the north converted Northumbria and penetrated to the Midlands.<sup>51</sup>

Whatever the process by which the christian message was introduced into Britain, that message seems to have become an essential part

of the colonising ethos of Empire building. As Britain extended its empire overseas, the christian faith was part and parcel of that outreach. In that way the christian faith was propagated to the extent that the people who founded the black churches, for example, came here with a faith that was very much the result of the evangelistic endeavours of the Mother Church in the Caribbean. There are aspects of the evangelistic method of those black churches which seem to relate to certain specific features of evangelism in eighteenth century Britain. For instance, John Wesley who is widely believed to have been the evangelist par excellence in the eighteenth century, like members of the black churches, used the 'home' as a base for his evangelistic thrust.

'Throughout his evangelistic ministry, and more especially as the years passed', says Skevington Wood, the bulk of Wesley's preaching was done in 'private homes'. That method of evangelising was employed so much so that,

Many rooms are still indicated as having been the scene of one of Wesley's services. Sometimes it was a cottage....Sometimes it was a fashionable residence, like Lady Huntingdon's London home. Sometimes Wesley simply used the house as a pulpit for an open-air meeting speaking from the doorway, a window, or a balcony....Anyone with whom the evangelist stayed was liable to find his house turned into a chapel<sup>52</sup>

In the case of the black churches, it is also possible to find the homes of any of the members being 'turned into' chapels for evangelistic purposes. That is so as they meet regularly during any day of the week to witness, to pray and to meditate.

When Wesley did not use either the interior of a house or the external features such as the 'step' or a 'gallery', certain items of household furniture would be utilised. Those included tables, chairs and even benches (See Journal Vol. IV. P.442. 17 March, 1761: Vol. V. P.328, 13 July 1769 and Vol. VI P.200, 19 June, 1778).

A second feature of Wesley's evangelism which resembles that employed by the black churches is its emphasis on individual contacts. Wood put it this way: 'a further aspect of John Wesley's evangelism (was) in this person-to-person confrontation'.<sup>53</sup> It is in that particular aspect of evangelism in the black churches too, that we see 'the sparking-point of effective soul winning', as members visit the homes of other black people to confront them with the good news of salvation. Such method of evangelism as had been employed by Wesley, Wood continued to inform us,

was not the passive sort....which waits for unbelievers to come to church. His was essentially an outgoing ministry to take the gospel, as the Saviour did, to the man and woman in the street <sup>54</sup>,

as well as into their homes.

### Witnessing as Evangelism

When members of the black churches visit the homes of people, especially those whom they wish to convert, they do so with the belief that Christ expects them always to 'win over' others for the kingdom. The visit is, therefore, understood as an opportunity to bring about a conversion. Although different forms of interpretations are given concerning how they perceive the act of witness and evangelism ought always to proceed (differences which are doctrinally motivated and vary from group to group within the black church movement), they are all united about the result which should follow their visits. These must consistently be productive in the 'saving' of souls.

Many of the members employ certain chosen proof-texts to accomplish their intended mission. For example, Matthew 28: 19 - 20 which reads,

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you: and lo....the age,

and Acts 2 : 46 - 47,

And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house....with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved,

are two of the passages which they use frequently. Such scripture passages are supposed to possess both the 'spirit' which motivates them to visit, and have the 'content' which is necessary to be disseminated to achieve the desired result. The need for textual accuracy or scholarly precision with regards to the historical contexts and the true meaning concerning what Jesus might have meant his disciples to do, or what St. Paul intended to convey to his readers are not important considerations for some black church members on their witnessing-evangelistic missions. The texts are to be taken literally even if most often, it is only certain words from the proof-text itself which are used in many instances.



They are convinced, for example, that they are being 'faithful to Christ' by their attempt to convert others in response to Matthew 28 : 19 - 20. Whether the members who hold such conviction are those who belong to the 'Jesus Only' faith, or they are those who interpret baptism in the Trinitarian understanding or not, their duty is to 'make disciples' of those whom they visit. The precise 'name' in which any prospective or future baptism of those who may be converted might eventually be done is not the primary concern at this initial stage. Rather, what is more important is that they should 'teach' others the way to salvation according to their faith. And, to do so they must go 'from house to house' ensuring that the Lord is 'adding to their number day by day those who (are) being saved' (see Acts 2 : 47).

As we have already stated, whether the precise interpretation of the specific passages (Matt. 28 : 19 - 20 and Acts 2 : 46 - 47), are correct or not, the primary motive is to be obedient to the Lord and make disciples by winning others. Therefore, the overwhelmingly-zealous desire which is often seen on the part of many black church members to seek and to save the lost ' (Matthew 18 : 11), is a genuine act of caring concern which is Scripturally motivated.

They are committed to, and are honest and sincere about what they do. An elderly lady put it this way :

When a day goes by and I haven't witnessed to someone about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me and what he can do for them, I feel guilty....I feel that I've failed my Lord. The next day I go out to do my mission.<sup>55</sup>

Another person said,

My whole desire and determination is to witness for Christ. My entire life is dedicated to the task of winning others for my Lord.<sup>56</sup>

When those who are lost are 'found' and brought into the fold, that process and achievement is conceived to be a way of caring for them. So that, as a pastor put it, 'persons who were heading for damnation have been rescued', and are saved into the 'fold' of membership within his church group.

Any success in bringing others into the fold, however, does not mean that the act of caring which has accomplished that end is complete. Rather, the need to care for such persons continues. There are many pitfalls, snares and dangers to help them to overcome. Continued care by means of follow-up visits for 'fellowship and encouragement', will

be given. Those endeavours are needed so as to equip and strengthen the new converts to encounter any of the many 'obstacles which may await in their way as they grow into the faith', the pastor concluded.

### Recruitment

Witnessing under the aegis of evangelism as a form of care in the black church movement is also a way of 'recruiting' members for the churches. Many faithful members of the black churches testify to the fact that they were saved as a direct result of the home visits which they once received from a representative of their church. One such person presently serves as a secretary in the New Testament Church of God. Another is a deacon in the Church of God of Prophecy and two others are an evangelist and the president of one of the auxiliary groups in the First United Church of Jesus Christ.

Much criticism is being levelled at the black churches purporting that what they hide under the 'cloak' of caring through evangelism is only a disguise for gaining membership. That aspect of the criticism goes on to say that the churches are not interested in people as 'individual' christians, but rather as means towards their own denominational ends. Witnessing and evangelism should be aimed at enabling persons to make commitments for Christ, which ought to find relevance in service to Christ by serving others— hence a commitment to the wider christian community and not to a 'closed group' as the different black churches seem to require of their members. The primary aim of all evangelism should be to promote the christian faith through personal conversion with no 'denominational strings' attached.

It was with the specific intention to articulate, and to convey the essential ethos of such criticism that one man had this to say :

All the churches belonging to the denomination to which I belong they're active, not so much with church life and the saving of souls in particular, but more so in dealing with community affairs, meetings with young unemployed, the homeless, race relation matters and family counselling....The free churches do more for the community than the black churches. The number of meetings I attend on behalf of my church and community don't have black church representatives. Black church people tend to quote from the Bible but they ought to quote from experience in daily community involvement instead. For me, I relate the Bible to ordinary life and I speak from experience. I think I make more sense.

### Fellowship and Encouragement

In responding to the criticisms which have been made against the

black churches their apologists say they are in agreement with those who contend that their method of 'caring-evangelism' seeks to increase their numbers numerically. But it also seeks to bring 'quality' christians into being. They care deeply for people as individuals and as christians because, they help them to live 'a better quality of life'. Consequently, what they do is in the interest of christianity in general and not so much to denominationalism in particular. That is what they mean by the 'saving of souls'. It is to enable people to make individual commitments to Christ.

When persons are saved: that is, when they are enabled to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6 : 33) then they are on their way to become better citizens. And, that is one way in which the churches make individual contributions to the wider community. The aim has always been to seek to produce and to nurture a 'quality of citizenry for a better society', they believe.

As they visit from house to house with the faith, bringing and leaving the peace of God (Matt. 10: 12 - 13) in those homes and to the people whom they meet there, such persons are being helped to overcome fear, hopelessness and despair with news of the love of Jesus Christ. This personal presence in the Name of Christ, translated into 'homely-caring' and fellowship meetings, supply a number of individual needs. Persons who are burdened with housing problems, need reassurance, are faced with unemployment and financial matters, family disputes, or even race relations difficulties, for example, are enabled to cope more adequately.

The churches may not be able to offer much 'material' reward to their members but they are given 'hope in Jesus Christ', a pastor has informed us.

This hope serves to remind the members that God knows what they need. And, God has promised to supply all their needs according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ (see Matt. 6 : 8 and Phil. 4 : 19). The value of such hope is that it is very much a way of instilling a sense of christian understanding and approach as coping mechanisms to deal with the conditions in which many of the church members live.

To hope in the black churches is never seen as a process akin to any soporific of heavenly prospects to persuade the members to 'endure' the difficult conditions which they may be facing. In which case it may only be a form of deception which strives to inculcate optimism that cannot be realised. Rather, hoping is always based on the possibility that the things hoped for will happen. It is always positive hoping.



If, for example, the things hoped for do not come to fruition, there is hardly ever any disappointment. It is never cause for giving up hope. On the contrary, non-fulfilment of immediate hope serves as a spur for continued hoping. That is because the members know from experience that hoping is 'connected with patience and forbearance'. It involves waiting. One of the members put it this way:

Anything we ask God for God has them mapped out for us....and in his rightful time he will give them to us. We only have to wait on Him and He will deliver the desire of our hearts. Those<sup>58</sup> who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

For many black church members the prospect of not having their hope realised when they may have expected it to happen is interpreted as a way of being tested by God. They know that perseverance brings 'proven character; and proven character hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within their hearts through the Holy Spirit' who was given to them (see Rom. 5: 4 - 5). So, they keep hoping still.

To instill and to provide such a vitally essential christian ideal in a people is a positive way of caring for them. When that ideal is done in the Name of Christ, it is also a way of 'serving the wider community' spokespersons from the black church movement have suggested.

### The Servant Character

As members of the black churches visit the homes of people on behalf of their church, whether the purpose of the visit is to 'convert' the lost or to encourage fellow saints to keep going on, they do so motivated by the firm conviction that they are following the footsteps of Jesus. In that way they are obeying and faithfully carrying on with what they conceive to be the 'example' which Jesus has set for them by his 'coming into the world to visit his people'. So then, what they understand as the 'servant' role of Christ's ministry is taken very seriously during such visits. That is so, for example, not only by those who are the actual visitors but also by those who, although they may have already been saved and are members of the fold, receive a visit of encouragement. One of the individuals who was visited had this to say:

Being a member of this church I can never be lonely or depressed as I used to be....I receive constant care from my church. Everyone has time for each other: They'll visit your home, they'll pray with you, and discuss the Bible with you, they encourage you to carry on. There is all-round fellowship when they come here....I offer entertainment to them in the Name of the Lord. It's an

opportunity for me to play the servant role of Christ by serving them in that small way. I feel so happy to see people making do with the little I've got. It's so much joy to serve when people visit my home.<sup>59</sup>

It is in keeping with her belief about the servant character of Christ's ministry, that we can appreciate why it seems so important for that lady to serve her visitors in the way in which she has expressed her apparent delight to have been able to do. Another member has expressed it in this way :

Serving others in the Name of Jesus is to care for them. To do so in the humble place that we call our home is to make the joy of serving even more delightful and meaningful<sup>60</sup>.

### Those Who Visit

The people who are visitors in the black churches can be divided into two distinct groups. Those are the general and the particular visiting persons. The general category consists of all individuals who are members of the black church movement. It is incumbent upon all those who are members to assist in the overall task of evangelisation by endeavouring to visit from time to time.

Representatives of the particular group are those who have been specifically selected for their task as the 'official' visitors of the churches. They include Bandleaders, Men's Fellowship, Women's Missionary Band, Victory Band Leaders and Evangelists.

While it is the task of all visitors to attempt to convert the 'lost', it seems to be the primary responsibility of the elected and particular representatives to 'keep watch' over the flock so that, as it has been expressed in the work The Church of God of Prophecy:

### History and Policy,

if they move away it will be known at once and where they locate; or if they are sick, or become in needy circumstances they can be assured of the proper care.<sup>61</sup>

Some of the groups have even produced advertising leaflets intended for the attention of non-members to be made aware of the possibility of home visits. One such leaflet reads in part,

Prayer meetings, Bible Study in your own home may be arranged, evenings or daytime. <sup>62</sup>  
For further information please contact.....

The fact that such meetings are available 'Evenings or Daytime' may serve as a pointer to their frequency. The evidence also supports our earlier statement that the visits, and the meetings which they produce,

are indicative of the regularity of the caring out-reach endeavours of the black churches, particularly in the inner city communities.

There are a number of relevant scripture passages which are referred to as having the 'authentic' authority to validate the witnessing and outreach activities of the black churches. In other words, those passages are frequently used not only during actual Bible Study and fellowship sessions as an important feature of home visitation: they are also cited as motivation for their caring. The passages serve, for instance, as scriptural justification of the reason for, and the willingness to articulate their faith in active visitation.

We will cite and assess two of the most often used of those passages and then endeavour to interpret very briefly some of the more salient aspects which are stressed by the black churches as cogent motives for their actions towards the pastoral caring process. The passages are,

Blessed the Lord God of Israel for He  
has visited us and accomplished redemption  
for His people (Luke 1 : 68).

And,

This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of  
our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows  
in their distress and to keep oneself unstained  
by the world (James 1 : 27).

An abridged but actual example of a method of care as it took place during a home visit situation - within the ambit of the servant understanding and which utilised the two passages, is this one which we will now present. The example involves a visit for the purpose of converting a prospective member into the faith of a black church, and is basically 'confrontational' in character. We will be offering a critique of the method, reflecting also on the procedure and the result of the visit which was a group act.<sup>63</sup>

Introductory. At the start of this visit there was first of all a preliminary exercise during which the recognized leader and spokesperson of the group introduced the others and offered their 'greetings' and 'peace' to the household according to Matthew 10 : 12 - 13. That was followed by all the group members saying, 'Praise the Lord: Let us say Praise the Lord', and, 'Shall we say Praise His Holy Name?', uttered several times in loud refrain.

The Main Part. At this point one of the members gave a word of prayer after which the leader explained how it had been 'quite some time now'



since the Lord placed a 'heavy burden on our hearts for you John (the name of the person). Your soul is in mortal danger,' she claimed. And, the 'lost condition' in which he has continued to live prompted them to take immediate action on that occasion because of the 'pressing significance' of the burden and the increasing certainty that the Lord is coming soon. As 'servants' of God, she continued, 'we are under obligation to tell you brother John that it is past the time to get right with the Lord'.

As if to authenticate what was being said each member of the group, John included, was then asked to open their Bibles at the Gospel according to St. Luke. The first chapter, verses 67 - 80 were read in unison. During the discussion which followed many different opinions were elucidated and put forward concerning what they understood to be the meaning of the passage. Each contributor deliberately attempted to relate and to link that understanding to the reason why they had been at the particular house, and to show how that purpose was in the 'sole' interest of brother John. For example, an insight into what was said about verse 68 showed clearly that the motivation and the accompanying explanation entailed the belief that since Jesus 'visited' his people, and thereby 'accomplished' their redemption, so too, they were visiting to redeem brother John from his lost condition. It was of paramount importance, therefore, that he realised what Jesus had done for him, change his way of life and accept that redemption before it was too late.

Turning to James 1 : 27, they made a connection with what they had been saying about Luke 1 : 68. Here the group contended that what they were offering to brother John in lieu of the life which he was presently living was, 'the chance to get right with the Lord', and the opportunity to do what they were doing: to serve others in the spirit of 'pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God'. What they were giving to him also, was a chance to change his ways, to join them, and, as a consequence, keep himself 'unstained by the world' in preparation for the soon coming King.

All they had conveyed to him was nothing but the Lord's bidding that they had come to impart. It was the 'true message' which God had placed upon their heart.

The Conclusion. There was a closing prayer, additional blessings and peace given to the house, hand shakes, together with an invitation to attend church the following Sunday and the promise to call again at a subsequent time.

### A Critique.

This particular example of pastoral care by means of an actual visit to the home of someone was used because of three primary reasons. The first reason is because it includes, represents, and embraces the manifest format which almost all other examples of such caring takes. It is an accurate representation of how that aspect of pastoral caring within the purview of 'service' is done by all the churches, especially when the purpose of the visit is to win others to the faith.

The second reason for the use of that specific example hinges upon the fact that it provides us with a good opportunity to follow up the visit. That is, to be in a position to have some precise information about what appeared to have happened to John because of the visit.

The third reason for the choice is due to the fact that there seems to have been the distinct evidence of some success by the group. This is important since not all similar visits end in producing what may be interpreted as success in winning over others to the Lord.

We have come to ascribe the definitive notion of 'success' as attributed to the visit to John's home, informed by the evidence obtained from a pursuit of the 'follow-up' procedure mentioned above. Let us, therefore, form an appropriate picture to establish a basis for any mention of a possible success consequential upon the visit.

### Post Visitation Factor

The group had extended a distinct and forthrightly made invitation to John requesting that he should 'attend church' the following Sunday. He responded to the invitation, attended the particular church service and became 'saved', apparently in answer to an altar call on that day.

Having had the occasion to speak with John about his experiences, including both the effect of the visit on him and the fact of his conversion, I was left with the impression that each of the factors - the visit, and the altar call-response, were processes and stages which might have contributed towards the eventual outcome. Which of the two was the more influential is not quite a clear-cut position. However, John was of the opinion that the visit had put the 'fear of God' into him. Expressed in his words;

It made me suddenly realise the fallacy behind my own foolish ways. The whole experience really shook me up and as I sat there I suddenly became afraid. Then, as I listened on to what they were saying, I said to myself, 'that's the Gospel truth they're speaking to you'....I couldn't continue in the same way that I was going. There was a message which God placed on those sisters hearts directly for me.<sup>64</sup>

Even so, John informed us how going to the church was done very 'reluctantly'. That sense of possible reluctance serves to convey the impression that despite what was said with reference to the 'fear of God' which the words of the group-members had inculcated into him did not seem to have made his attendance at the church a spontaneous decision. Nevertheless, having attended the church, when the call to go to the altar was made, 'I took the opportunity and don't regret it now', he said. John subsequently received 'believers' baptism' and continues to attend the church as a regular member.

If John's conversion experience was motivated purely by the sudden 'fear' which the visit produced in him on the one hand, or if it was the result of a clear, deliberately-calculated and unrelated decision on his part on the other hand, cannot be fully established here. His case and many other examples like it, provide much scope for future follow-up research study. The results of which would certainly contain invaluable data to test the value and authenticity of this method of pastoral caring in the black churches more accurately.

In the absence of such long-term research results what seems to be reasonable to assume at this stage is that to a very appreciable degree, both the home visit and the subsequent altar call-response may have contributed towards bringing about a change in John's life. The validity which such a possible change has is that it helps us to see what is likely to result from an exercise undertaken on behalf of others. An exercise carried out by those who believe that what they do is done in the service of God, and in keeping with Jesus' example as the one who visited us and accomplished redemption for His people (Luke 1 : 68).

That understanding relates very closely with the interpretation of it by a black pastor. He had this to say:

No image is more central to describing our aim to care through house visitation than that of serving. It involves that aspect of the caring role to a vocation which identifies us in the context of the redemptive self-giving of the Servant Messiah who said, 'I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22 : 27).<sup>65</sup>

So then, as they see their role, it is on behalf of God's Son that the members of the black churches go out to visit and to share that same redemption in their own small ways of 'rendering service' to others.

There are several additional aspects about the particular method of the visit of care and how it was articulated to obtain a desired result which ought to be looked at. We will undertake to do so by proffering a selected summary of the more plausible of those aspects.



- (1) The members of the visiting group conveyed the distinct impression that John was 'lost' and consequently, they alone could do something about redressing the lost condition. That was so to the extent where they had the answer and the solution revealed to them by God as evidenced in the 'burden' which God placed upon their hearts.
- (2) There seemed to have been evidence of an element of 'pre-judging' of John relevant upon the 'state and nature' of his life.
- (3) The group appeared to have had very little doubt about their certainty concerning the fact of the Lord's imminent return. That immediacy was exemplified as the 'purpose' of, and the 'reason' for the visit.
- (4) The visit was in the sole interest of John. Yet, that interest could also be defined as part of their own desire to increase their church membership.
- (5) The reminder to John purporting that Jesus had completed and made possible our 'redemption' and as such, he was free to accept it as part of what Jesus had done for him, was in keeping with basic Scriptural interpretation and of sound christian doctrine (see Eph. 1 : 7 and Tit. 2 : 14).
- (6) The trite notion that they were offering John a 'chance to get right with the Lord', was also judgemental. However, the astute-linking of it with 'service to others' as a way of validating the relevance for accepting such a chance, could be accepted as consisting of an appropriate christian response.
- (7) There seemed to have been the belief that their group alone was the sole embodiment of 'pure and undefiled religion', and as a result one of the few ways by which John could keep himself 'unstained by the world', was to join their church. They did not say how it was possible for the individual to be stained by the world: only that, by being unstained one was preparing for the Lord's coming.
- (8) The invitation to attend the church was in keeping with the traditional practice observed by all christian denominations, as a way of expressing interest in the spiritual well-being of others.
- (9) There was the tendency to use a chosen verse of scripture, or a preferred portion of it in a number of ways. Among those

were: to give authority to what was being said, to convey the relevance of what was being said, as a motive for the visit, and to explain the purpose of the visit.

#### V FINANCIAL RESPONSE TO HOUSING CARE

One of the areas in which the black churches appear to be least effective in caring for their members relates to the question of finance. That is because the amount of financial contribution which they can make towards meeting housing needs is limited. Some of the churches would like to be able to make what they termed, 'substantial financial contributions' to persons for the purpose of purchasing their own homes. However, they are not in a position to do so because they are 'severely restricted' due to the unavailability of cash.

There are differences of opinion among the members about whether the churches should provide homes for people. Numbered among them are those who feel that the church should 'help deserving' members to buy their own homes, while others contend that it is not the 'responsibility' of the church to do any such thing. In support of the view that the churches should provide housing for deserving members one person said:

All the black-led churches could pool their resources together and champion the cause of a few people who are homeless or who live in poor housing....they could build at least two low-cost housing units every year and put needy members into them.<sup>66</sup>

As a reaction against such belief, another black member had this to say:

I really don't think the church should get into the business of economics. The Church's business is the saving of souls....it's duty is not to get homes for anyone. But, to dispel the idea that the churches are always taking and don't give anything back in return, where possible they ought to help them in getting loans as this is one area in which black people find it difficult to qualify for much needed funding. They can't get mortgages....the system doesn't allow them.<sup>67</sup>

That assertion about the inability of many black people to obtain mortgages seems to be substantiated by the experiences of persons like Sam King and others. For example, Sam King who was among the original group of black immigrants to Britain in 1948, said in an interview in the Evening Standard, Monday 25th April 1988 that,

When I applied to Camberwell Council with my brother for a mortgage they told me to go back to the West Indies....The seller was so shocked that they should treat an R.A.F. serviceman like that, he organised the mortgage for me himself.<sup>68</sup>

Such attitudes on the part of lending institutions towards black people have not changed very much. Joan who is a black church member informed

us that in March 1989, she applied to one of the building societies, for a mortgage. Her application was turned down because in the opinion of the institution, her 'earnings were not enough to sustain the mortgage'.

The following month, however, a white friend of Joan who works for the local authority where she is employed and who earns the identical salary, also applied to the same building society for a mortgage. The co-worker was successful even though the amount requested was more than that which the unsuccessful applicant had requested.

In an effort to assist their members who are faced with such problems, a number of the black churches are responding in the best way they can. They have, therefore, organised their own co-operative funding systems. An example of one such system is the 'Pentecostal Credit Union'. It was established in 1979 by the Rev. Carmel Jones, a Jamaican in his home at 88 Ramsden Road, Balham, London.

That Credit Union, like all the other funding co-operatives, is financed by the members. According to Pastor Samuel,

They take up shares at £1.00 each and you can have up to £2,000 shares. This will be doubled in the near future. The member can borrow up to 100% of his share and if you have collateral you can borrow much more at interest 2% on the balance. The fund is distributed in dividends, or the member uses his dividends to increase his share to give him a bigger borrowing power. In our Annual General Meeting each year we give authority to our directors to distribute funds to where it's needed.<sup>69</sup>

Such co-operative efforts by Afro-Caribbean people are part of an historical tradition. Another person informed us that,

Credit Union to Jamaicans goes back a long way. People or Communities would come together, in numbers of 6, 10, 12 or more and pool equal amounts of money and give it to one member so that that member could go and pay his/her bill or buy something needed. This exercise would continue every week until everyone has had their lump sum. This still goes on today.<sup>70</sup>

When some of those very Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Britain began to encounter difficulties in getting mortgages they seemed to have applied the tradition here, thereby assisting one another in meaningful ways. They were obliged to use such traditions because, as Sam King put it; 'mortgages were only possible by clubbing together with friends and relatives'.<sup>71</sup>

It appears that where mortgages are obtainable in the contemporary situation in Britain (apart from the efforts of the black people themselves), those are at extremely high rates of interest. An additional



function, therefore, of the co-operative funding systems of the black churches, is to endeavour to protect their members from being exploited financially. In that context the leader of one of the churches put it in this way: 'We also have our own Credit Union Loan Bank, to keep out the illegal sharks from our people'.<sup>72</sup>

Low interest rate loans to members from such funding co-operatives are sometimes added to other available amounts to make 'required down payments' on household furniture items, or to carry out necessary 'repairs' to their homes, the pastor concluded.

What seems to be clear about the churches financial response within the purview of housing care, is that they are playing a meaningful role in an area where the need is great. However, the available resources to do so more effectively are very scarce. Nevertheless, in anticipation of what they hope will become possible, some of the members speak about their vision of prospective 'housing schemes for senior citizens' which are now in the pipelines. Others make mention of 'homes for the elderly' and of 'day care centres' which they plan to build when the financial climate is right. But at the present there is no viable housing project which is being funded and built directly by any of the black churches in Leeds. The member who suggested, for example, that it is possible for the churches to 'pool' their resources together for the specific purpose of building a mentioned target of at least 'two low cost housing units' annually, does not appear to have been successful yet in selling his idea to the groups concerned.

In the meantime what might be interpreted as a lament about how some members view their church's present inability to care more fully by means of 'direct amounts' of financial contributions to the housing needs of persons, one lady said,

Our church has so far failed miserably as far as caring for such needs are concerned....  
We're just about waking up to those problems such as housing and unemployment for our people.<sup>73</sup>

The black churches may be unable to offer any substantial amounts of financial assistance to their members for the purpose of alleviating housing needs. However, they help out in many other ways. A young mother informed us that,

They decorated our home before we moved in....  
When houses need renovation they work free of charge as part of our church's self-help caring programme.<sup>74</sup>

And, a single parent had this to say:

I desperately needed a new roof on our house because the old one used to leak so badly.... until the brothers from the church came over to help me and in no time we'd gotten it done.<sup>75</sup>

### The Procedure

An appropriate example of exactly how this caring through the process of 'self help' endeavours is carried out by the black churches will now be presented.

When any member is desirous to have something done to their home and cannot afford the necessary expenses, they usually state the problem to their pastor. He/she in turn acts directly where possible, or indirectly through an auxiliary group of the church. One such group is the men's fellowship. Another is the women's band. A spokesperson for the former group stated the procedure in this way:

A brother or sister in the church needs to have their house painted, re-decorated, or for any other small matter. They cannot afford the expenses involved and they can't do it for themselves. So they'd inform the president of the fellowship or the pastor and together they'd organise so that we can go and do it free of charge.<sup>76</sup>

The ability to help the members in such tangible ways: 'free of charge', some of which are seen as only a 'small matter', while others are more 'significant', are all cast within the ambience of what it means to care in the black churches.

This other example which may be equated to be very significant, was given by a grateful member.

I've a large family with three boys and two girls. So when the children were smaller it wasn't too bad for them to sleep together in one bedroom, but as the girls grew bigger they wanted more privacy. We didn't have the space but they wanted a bedroom of their own so we decided to divide up this room into two, but we didn't have the means... I talked to our pastor and the church did something about it. The church gave us some material, we bought some, and the brothers did the job....We're so grateful to them for all their help. Now the girls are happy. They've got their own bedroom.<sup>77</sup>

Evidence of other helping endeavours performed by such groups in the black churches was alluded to by Bob Nind in an article entitled, 'Black Churches and The Inner City'. He wrote:

Being well equipped in their membership with carpenters, plumbers and masons, this has also....led to the rehabilitation and preservation of significant architectural structures that might otherwise have had to be demolished.<sup>78</sup>

The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic building in Leeds is a classic example of this. It is a very large building which was bought from a mainstream church denomination. The property was completely renovated almost entirely by the self-help efforts of the members.

This additional example of caring for an individual member may not be classified as important as those already mentioned. Nevertheless, that does not diminish in any way the meaning which it conveyed to the person who was helped. A pastor putting it into perspective told us that his church responded to the assistance of a member in a 'small' but effective gesture of pastoral care. 'There is an old lady', he continued,

Who needed a change of council housing. The Council said she had no card so they couldn't help her. She was sure she had the card somewhere but didn't remember where it was. Members from the church went as a group to help her search for the card.... We searched for a while and found it in a stack of paper beneath her bed....It was there in her possession for 10 years.<sup>79</sup>

Having found the card the pastor took it, accompanied by the lady to the council's housing office. Her name was placed on the waiting list - back dated to the time when she first made the original request for a change of housing. After waiting for some time she eventually got another flat. This time around, the new flat was 'less damp' and was much more to her liking. The pastor believes that it could very well serve to put some 'additional years to her life span'. And, even if she doesn't live much longer as a consequence, they are satisfied that for the moment she is now happier 'because we cared', he concluded.

## VI POOR HOUSING AND CRIME

We have made reference to the belief that sub-standard housing conditions like those which are usually found in inner city localities produce a degree of tension, and generate an amount of stress and strain for those who live in them. Such tension, stress and strain usually serve to bring about much inter-family squabbles of various kinds, some of which may lead to acts of crime being committed. A black church pastor described it in this way: 'Bad housing', he claimed, 'and the family problems that so often come about as a direct result, are part of the root cause of crimes in families'. That correlation has been further substantiated by Ron Phillips especially where black people are concerned. 'In the public mind', he said,



A firm connection was established between blacks, bad housing, crime and vice. Even in the Street Offences Act of 1959, which was intended to deal with prostitution, therefore, had a bearing upon the housing and social conditions of black people.<sup>80</sup>

A relevant example of how it might be possible for poor housing conditions to lead to crimes in family situations will be presented. The evidence which consists of an actual case study was told by a parent of a black family who are not members of any of the black churches. It will be interpreted and analysed. That will be done by making reference to examples from black church families to show how the churches offer care to those who may be similarly affected.

#### A Case Study

Harry is 16 and lives with a family of eight in an inner city council flat. They are experiencing constant problems due to overcrowding. The single bathroom and toilet facilities are in need of repair. The plumbing fixtures are defective and the fittings are worn out. All efforts to get the city council to have them replaced went unheeded. It requires much care and due attention to operate the units with any degree of success. Failure to do so leads to frequent over flooding and damages being done to other parts of the house. Harry seems either unable or unwilling to take the necessary precaution to operate them properly. There have been many examples of harsh abuse and sometimes physical exchanges between Harry (seen as the major culprit) and other members of the family. During one such time of physical exchange, Harry's twin sister Harryether suffered a deep head injury. The hospital, and then the police became involved. Harry left the house because of the incident. A week after leaving home he was arrested, together with three other youngsters during a police raid on the flat in which they had been sleeping. A quantity of goods which could not be properly accounted for were found in their possession.

#### Analysis

Similar examples of family disputes occur daily in most households even if they may not have been caused by the same factors. And, despite the presence of 'poor heating' and other insinuating problems, all of which could have contributed to bring about the conflicts in Harry's home, his mother insisted that the particular series of incidents happened because of the faulty plumbing fixtures. If it were not

for that 'unsuitable and really disgusting toilet....this shameful disaster would not have been brought upon this house and my children' she said.

We may not agree entirely with her conclusions. However, it is the firm and sincere belief of a person who speaks from experience. From that vantage and uniquely-placed position she asserts that one was the cause of the other. As she saw it: her children had had a 'fight' because of unsatisfactory conditions generated by the bathroom and toilet. One of the children had been seriously injured. The severity of the injury was such that it necessitated hospitalization and as a consequence, the intervention of the law. The incident had now become a criminal offence with the potential to lead on to prosecution charges being brought against another child.

Harry's subsequent arrest for possession is not an unrelated and detached incident. It could also be attributed to the poor housing conditions under which he lived. Had there been no dispute over the faulty fixtures he probably would not have had cause to leave home and therefore, be obliged to seek shelter in the flat where he was arrested.

When the case is considered in its entirety, it is difficult to see how one can properly assess or interpret it by isolating the role which was played by the housing condition on the one hand, from the concomitant series of new developments which transpired on the other hand. The two sets of factors are indelibly connected. Harry could face criminal charges on both counts. That is, for the injury to his sister and for the illegal items which were found by the police after he had left home because of the former incident.

Having said that, it is also possible to suggest, however, that if it were a black church family the entire incident may not have gone so far. It is almost a certainty that the pastor, for example, would have been invited to intervene at one or two possible levels. The levels are (a) before the hostilities reached the unfortunate conclusions which they did - leading to physical injury and the resultant flight of Harry from the home, and (b) before the intervention of the law.

The role of the pastor in similar family disputes will be developed more fully when we come to the chapter on, 'The Black Family and Pastoral Care in the Black Churches'. At this point, however, suffice it to be said now that invariably, the general character of the response of the majority of black church families is one based on the tendency to compromise. In other words, in lieu of the harsh words spoken, and

the attitude akin to that of wanting to 'fight back' which certainly had been done as exemplified in the case of Harry and his sisters, in a similar black church family there would have been, instead, an inclination based on the sincere desire, either to do 'what pastor said', to do 'what is christian', or 'what the Bible says'. Acting in accordance with any of those essential and conventional principles would be in keeping with another way of saying: as far as it is humanly possible, they should 'refrain from the use of physical force and hurtful language'. That is because, in their belief, the christian person should never 'pay back evil for evil to anyone'. The christian must not be overcome by evil, but rather, always strive to 'overcome evil with good'. Those vital attributes should be exercised even to the point of turning the other cheek (see Rom. 12 : 17, 12 : 21 and Matt. 5 : 39), in the unlikely event that there had been any physical or verbally-deviant reaction in the church family on the part of another member.

One gets the distinct impression, then, having visited and spoken with hundreds of black church members, that there is a pattern of behaviour and response common to all. That is, they observe and adhere to an identical approach which is taken towards 'other daily problems', like those encountered outside the home environment for example. The same approach is also used to deal with problems relating to the more immediate family situations as well. That general tendency, for instance, is supported by, and is indicative of the response of this member informing us that, 'we always leave those things in the hands of the Lord, and he takes care of them'.

Such problems are also deemed to be necessary now, because, as they see it: 'where there is no cross, there can be no crown'. And, as we have previously observed, black church members do not envisage this world as their home. They are only passing through a world in which problems are construed to be merely of a temporary nature. In that same context a member said, 'We must always have something to overcome while we are here'. So too, another remarked, 'black people suffer so much because we are waiting for our future home with Christ'. He then asked that one should read Romans 8 : 18 and John 14 : 1 - 4, which he called his, 'scriptural credentials' for what he was saying. The verses read:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us (Rom. 8 : 18).

And,



Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (John 14 : 1 - 4).

Consequently, seen in the context of the 'plumbing fixtures' in their temporal home: since they failed to work adequately, for example, and the residents had asked the council to do something about redressing the situation but to no avail, then, they had done what was possible under the prevailing circumstances. Therefore, 'the Lord will do the rest in His own time'. There is no need to fight each other over what they cannot do anything about, the black church family may conclude. The majority of black church members resort to such an example to deal with any stress or difficulties which they may encounter in the context of poor housing conditions. That conclusion relates very closely with, and is supported by what a pastor said in her assessment of the black churches' approach concerning the behaviour of the members towards housing problems in particular and to crimes in general. 'No one in this church', she claimed,

has ever had trouble with the police. Some of our people still live in unsatisfactory housing conditions but we're helping them to cope with their difficulties, so there's no real need for them to behave in ways that's likely to land them in trouble with the law.<sup>81</sup>

To what extent, then, could it be further ascertained that had Harry's family been members of the black church movement the chances are that he might not have behaved in the manner in which he did? There is a strong consensus of opinion which is held by a large number of black church people and accredited to what is conceived to be the 'result of the success' of their caring, which would suggest that he would have acted differently.

In support of that view the question can be partially answered in the affirmative by presenting the claims made by a pastor and a deacon. With reference to the quantity of goods found in Harry's possession, for instance, the pastor said it had been 'that incident' and others like it, which were presently being used to link all black people with such crimes. And, the association was being made with no regard to any of the factors which serve to bring them about. 'Take for example', he continued, there were certain assertions which were purported to have been made by an influential representative of the police high command

in Chapeltown to the effect that 'crimes relating to drugs and prostitution', were specific problems peculiar only to Afro-Caribbean people in the area. However, the pastor went on to say,

While certain types of crime may be committed by people from the Afro-Caribbean community, not all are involved in crime. Because here in this church we've got model families in a model faith community which is like an oasis of spiritual, moral and social values showing that in a desert around us where crime abounds, many black people are different.... they're God-fearing, law abiding and decent members of the society....They are members of a church that dares to care so our people show that difference in their lives.<sup>82</sup>

The police person whom the pastor had been referring to was Superintendent John Ellis. And, what he seemed to have actually said about members of the Afro-Caribbean community was published in The Guardian, 19 August 1987. In an article entitled, 'Police Chief Stands By Remarks About West Indians And Crime', David Rose wrote:

Superintendent John Ellis, the police officer in charge of the Chapeltown district of Leeds, said yesterday that he stood by his claim, made in a secretly taped meeting, that problems of drugs and prostitution were mainly created by the area's 15,000 West Indians....On the tape, which was made at a meeting on June 26 between Mr. Ellis and members of the United Asian Organisation, Mr. Ellis says: 'Fifteen thousand West Indians are very difficult to police. They create all sorts of problems. Drugs is one. Prostitution, brothels and vice. There are villains in the white population, there are villains in the Asian population, but West Indians in particular create these problems and we'll deal as effectively with them as we can....' The problem of cannabis in Chapeltown was, he said, 'almost exclusively a West Indian problem', and the same was true of prostitution: It cannot be denied, it's a fact'.<sup>83</sup>

Such a sweeping, generalized, degrading and debasing statement which only serves to cast aspersions on the integrity and veracity of black people, is not an isolated incident. Another example of that is this one published in The Guardian, 7 November 1987. In his article, 'Yard Seeks Details Of 'racist' Remarks', Steve Smith wrote:

Scotland Yard and the Home Office are demanding full details of remarks made by a senior police officer over street crime and black people. Superintendent Bill Ganley, who is based at Harlesden, North London, allegedly said that 99% of muggers were black, and that 99% of their victims were either Asian or white....Mr. Ganley had added that nearly every robbery was committed by a black man.<sup>84</sup>

The other youngsters who were apprehended together with Harry were also of Afro-Caribbean descent. And, because there are others like them - the victims and products of poor housing conditions who may also be involved in criminal activities such as robbery, it is possible to suggest as the pastor did, that it could very well be incidents like those which are used as the basis for making unsubstantiated claims similar to the ones cited above. In the same context, there is the additional assertion which claims that the 'Afro-Caribbean community has lost an entire generation'.

That is so not only because of any illegal activity which may be done by some, but also because there are many people who seem to have convinced themselves that those youngsters are the 'root-cause' for most of the country's social problems. However, in a direct response to those allegations the deacon said,

The claim that the black community has lost its younger generation doesn't represent the true picture. The number of young people who are actively involved in our church proves how, instead of being lost, there are several who have been found. They've been found through our teaching of following a Biblically-sound and new pathway in Christ....It's a way that is a measure of our christian commitment and our care for people.<sup>85</sup>

Problems which have to do with housing difficulties may continue to affect the quality of life and influence the behaviour of many black people in the inner cities of Britain. But it appears that the pastoral caring response of the black churches provide an appropriate channel through which some of those difficulties are satisfactorily dealt with by the people who are members of the black church movement.



NOTES

1. For more about this see Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, PP. 148 - 156.
2. A resident of Chapeltown and member of the Church of God of Prophecy.
3. A resident of Little London and member of the New Testament Church of God.
4. A resident of Chapeltown and member of The Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic.
5. Britain's Black Population, Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, P.75.
6. See Faith in the City, op. cit., PP. 229 - 230.
7. Factors like 'national loyalty' and the desire to be with people from 'back home', were also responsible for influencing where black people settled in Britain.
8. A Member of the Wesleyan Holiness Church.
9. A member of The First United Church of Jesus Christ - Apostolic.
10. For information about the various islands, see The World in Figures, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1987.
11. See Guardian, 19 August 1987.
12. Figures obtained from members of the St. Kitts-Nevis Association.
13. See The Black Liberator, No. 1. op. cit., P.33.
14. Ibid.
15. Dilip Hiro, Black British, White British, Penguin Books Ltd. Eyre and Spottishwoode, 1971, P.76.
16. See Faith in the City, op. cit., P.238.
17. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community in Chapeltown.
18. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community in Little London.
19. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
20. Member of a Mainstream Church in Chapeltown.
21. Ibid.
22. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
23. Member of the First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
24. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Harehills.
25. The New Testament Church of God.

26. The Church of God of Prophecy.
27. The First United Church of Jesus Christ - Apostolic.
28. See Quarterly Review: Department of Housing and Environmental Health: July - September 1988, Leeds City Council, P.110.
29. See 'Faith in Leeds: Leeds Churches Community Involvement Project - Information Sheet', June 1989.
30. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Chapeltown.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
36. The Church of God Seventh Day.
37. See Britain's Black Population, op. cit., P.88.
38. Housing Investment Programme Submission: 1989 - 1990, Leeds City Council, P.2.
39. See Guardian, Wednesday 7 September 1988.
40. See Britain's Black Population, op. cit., P.83.
41. See Housing, Investment Programme Submission 1989 - 1990, op. cit., PP. 97 - 98.
42. Britain's Black Population, op. cit., P.89.
43. See Casmore, op. cit., P.82.
44. See The Black Liberator, Vol. 2. No. 4. op. cit., P.297
45. Kenneth Leech, op. cit., P.173, also Sally Holterman, 'Areas of Urban Deprivation in Great Britain: An Analysis of the 1971 Census', in Social Trends, 6 : 1975.
46. See Housing Investment Programme Submission, op. cit., P.3.
47. For more information about those organisations, see 'Black Housing', Vol. IV. No. 7, August, 1988, The Federation of Black Housing Organisations, 1989, and also, 'Voluntary Action - Leeds'. No. 4 May, 1989.
48. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
49. The Church of God of Prophecy.
50. See Eaton, op. cit., P.69.
51. See Garbett, op. cit., P.14.

52. A Skevington Wood, The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist, The Paternoster Press, 1976, PP. 132 - 135.
53. Ibid., P. 137.
54. Ibid., P. 136.
55. The New Testament Church of God
56. The Church of Jesus Christ - Apostolic.
57. A member of a Mainstream Church.
58. The Church of God Seventh Day.
59. The Church of God of Prophecy.
60. The First United Church of Jesus Christ - Apostolic.
61. See James Stone, The Church of God of Prophecy: History And Polity, White Wing Pub. House And Press, 1977, P.173.
62. See Leaflet: 'The Church of God of Prophecy Would Like to Invite You to Come And Worship with Us'.
63. This is one among several such visits which I have made with members of the Churches.
64. John - a prospective black church recruit.
65. The New Testament Church of God.
66. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
67. The Church of God of Prophecy.
68. See The Evening Standard, 25 April 1988.
69. Shiloh United Church of Christ-Apostolic Worldwide.
70. I N C., Pentecostal City Mission Church.
71. Evening Standard, op. cit.
72. Shiloh United Church of Christ-Apostolic Worldwide.
73. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
74. The Church of God of Prophecy.
75. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
76. The New Testament Church of God.
77. The Church of God of Prophecy.
78. See Christian Action Journal, Autumn, 1982, PP. 22 - 23.
79. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
80. See The Black Liberator, Vol. 2, No. 4, op. cit., P.297.



81. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
82. The New Testament Church of God.
83. See Guardian, 19 August, 1987.
84. Ibid., 7 November, 1987.
85. The New Testament Church of God.

CHAPTER 4

EMPLOYMENT AND PASTORAL CARE IN THE  
BLACK CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION

We have seen that the majority of black immigrant people in Britain arrived here in search of better employment prospects. They were motivated to emigrate because it was possible to get jobs in Britain which were not so readily available to them in their native countries. After their arrival, however, most of them lived in the urban centres. Listed among those centres were London, Liverpool, Manchester, Derby, Leeds, Nottingham, Birmingham, Leicester, Preston, Sheffield, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

It was established also, that inner city housing for black people determined to a large extent the pattern of the pastoral caring response of the black churches. There is, therefore, a close link between employment which was the cause, and inner city housing and the black churches which are the results of the black presence in Britain.

This chapter analyses features of the early arrivals and the employment prospects among Afro-Caribbean immigrants. It considers also, some of the changes which subsequently occurred in the employment market. In doing so we will examine some of the major difficulties which the immigrants and their children experienced, especially in the midst of high unemployment. How the black churches provided pastoral care when there was a high rate of employment, and also, in the context of unemployment difficulties will be discussed. That will be done to show the value which such caring has as a coping mechanism. It is a coping mechanism which has enabled black church members to deal not only with unemployment problems, but also, with other related factors as well. Represented among those factors is the low status-position which so many black people presently occupy at the bottom of the economic ladder.

I THOSE WHO CAME

Some of the first black immigrant workers to arrive in Britain were Jamaican nationals. They disembarked at Tilbury from the ship named the 'S.S. Empire Windrush' on June 22, 1948. The number was 492.<sup>1</sup> By the year 1961, however, the total number of Afro-Caribbean people who had entered the United Kingdom was about 238,000. Included among them were 125,000 men; 93,000 women; 13,200 children and 6,500 persons who had been categorized as 'unclassified'.<sup>2</sup>

A listing of the island territories from which they came showed that during the years 1948 - 1961 a total of 142,825 had come from Jamaica, 5,036 from Barbados, and 2,282 were from Trinidad and Tobago. There were also 3,470 persons from British Guiana (Now Guiana). From the Leeward Islands there were 3,524, the Windward Islands, 8,202, and from 'all other territories', the sum total was 8,732. By the middle of 1962, that is, 14 years after the landing of the Empire Windrush, there were over 300,000 Afro-Caribbean people who had settled in Britain.<sup>3</sup> The total number of Afro-Caribbean people who were in England and Wales in 1981 was about 517,000.

TABLE 3: ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATION IN LONDON AND ENGLAND AND WALES, 1981.

Ethnic Origin	London 000's	England and Wales 000's	London as a % of England and Wales
Afro-Caribbean	293	517	57
Indian	270	716	38
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	88	323	27
Other	6,060	46,693	13

Source: Labour Force Survey, 1981.

## II AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT AND THE GROWTH OF BLACK CHURCHES

Early Afro-Caribbean migrants had very little trouble in finding jobs. Britain had full employment when the Windrush landed in 1948. One of the reasons for this was because post-war Britain had been in the process of getting its economy going again. There was need for overseas labour to fill the many vacancies which had been made possible by means of the positive economic upturn. Afro-Caribbean people who, by virtue of their colonial experiences - especially in terms of language and other cultural similarities, were deemed most suitable for recruitment. They were, therefore, invited to come to Britain as participants in the growing British economic endeavour.

As an indication of how very easy it was to find jobs, a black person said,

It was possible to pick up two or three jobs in a single week if you wanted them....But that was not specific jobs in offices or with the Local Councils and firms. Most of us went on buses and did the cleaning up part within the employment market. For others it was long hours of shift-work as factory labourers.<sup>4</sup>



It is the view of another person that,

Employment was no problem in those days, people came here to find jobs and found them. If you didn't like one job you could leave it and find another.<sup>5</sup>

And, a third person stated that,

When we came here as unskilled workers we got jobs rather easily. It was the skilled people who'd found it difficult....They had to accept unskilled jobs much lower than they were trained to do.<sup>6</sup>

There are three important factors about what the black informants have said which would eventually necessitate the caring role and involvement of the black churches. One of those factors was the ease at which persons could both obtain jobs and leave them if they were dissatisfied. The second has to do with the hours when most black people were required to work and the 'shift-work' aspect which was involved. The third factor relates to the type of jobs which they did as 'unskilled' labourers. We will interpret each aspect separately to show how the black churches were able to offer some care in response to the challenges posed by those circumstances.

One man who did not like the job which he had, and left to find another, first worked as a hospital porter in Leeds. However, the other job which he obtained was in the Buttershaw area of Bradford. This development meant that it was necessary for him to leave the black community in Chapeltown altogether. It also meant that his membership in the local black church lapsed. There was no black church in Bradford where he could attend.

What is also essential to note here is that some of the jobs which were available to black people were 'short-lived'. That is, they lasted for a specific time only. One example of such jobs is a building project which may require a few months to complete. After completion a worker's contract was terminated and he/she had to seek another job. Therefore, movements within the labour market were made possible not only because there was an abundance of work from which people could choose, the duration of some jobs influenced movements as well.

Because of such movements, membership of the black churches was never stable. Persons came into an area and left too frequently. The fact is, the different church groups were still relatively small in membership. Some comprised only a few family members. The moving of one or two men, followed by their wives and children, did mean the possible closure of a young church having been unable to sustain such disruption.

Under those conditions caring was difficult. Pastoral visitation, for example, could not be done on any regular basis. The churches were not always quite sure where some of their members were at any given time. Clifford Hill in his work, West Indian Migrants And The London Churches stated the problem in this way:

Large numbers of the migrants have but fleeting contact with a church, or attend for a few Sundays and then move on to another district. This movement does not allow them sufficient time to settle in a particular church.<sup>7</sup>

Another crucial aspect contained in, and consistent with such constant movement was the increasing level of isolation which it generated among black people. It was a factor which was serious enough to warrant pastoral caring. How did the black churches respond to the problem? They encouraged their members to 'retain their jobs when that was possible', a pastor suggested. The belief was that by striving to 'stay' in a job as long as one was able, increased their chances to gain competence in a particular job. So too, the scope for possible promotion was duly enhanced. Also, it provided stability and fostered confidence in those who were involved as essential factors which were necessary at that time. That was true not only for the church community, but also within the black family as well. The more settled people were, the better they would be able to deal with their problems, it was believed.

It may be possible to detect an element of self-interest on the part of the black churches for adopting such a philosophy as part of their caring ministry. However, there are two useful consequences which resulted. One was that the black churches began to see the urgent need to concentrate upon their ministry to serve the needs of those members who remained in a better way. The second is that they also recognised the need to expand their ministry into 'other districts' as a means of survival and to care for those who would continue to move.

By so doing it was easier for persons who moved from one district to another to find a church there to care for them. An indication of the possible effectiveness of those concepts of ministry can be seen in the pattern of black church growth from 1951 to the present.

The first public meeting of the black church movement in Britain was at the Wolverhampton Y.M.C.A. in the West-Midlands in 1951. That was just two and a half years after the arrival of the Windrush. It also marked the end of the period when the black community met only in family homes for worship. By the year 1954, however, the Wolverhampton congregation had grown sufficiently to send evangelists to Birmingham

where a second church was officially founded. The first National Convention of the black church movement was held there during the same year.

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TABLE 4: GROWTH OF CHURCHES IN BRITAIN

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THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

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Date. 1951 - 1961.	Location of Church	
	Wolverhampton	Leeds
	Balsall Heath	Letchworth
	Brixton	Manchester
	Coventry	Marble Arch
	Croydon	Nottingham
	Derby	Rugby
	Dudley	Sheffield
	Gloucester	Stoke Newington
	Hackney	Walsall
	Hammersmith	Bradford
	Handsworth	Wellington
	Kilburn	West Bromwich

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THE WESLEYAN HOLINESS CHURCH

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Date. 1958 - 1968	Location of Church	
	Birmingham	Bristol
	Manchester	Wolverhampton
	Leeds	Nottingham
	Leicester	London (Forest Gate)
	London (Buby Place)	London (Harrow Green)
	Birmingham (Handsworth)	

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The table above represents a selected sampling of the actual growth of only two of the black churches in Britain during the first 10 years after each group was founded.



In terms of membership, however, between 1961 - 1971 there was about 100% growth in The New Testament Church of God alone. That was from 10,000 - 20,000 members. In 1985 it had grown by 50%, numbering about 30,000. The Church of God of Prophecy had a membership of 5,638 in 1986.

Presently, the combined following of the black church movement consists of over '160 denominations' with about '2,500 congregations'.<sup>8</sup> The total membership is approximately 150,000. The black church 'community' in Leeds is 3,865.

Such impressive growth was realised because the churches endeavoured to meet the pastoral care needs of their people wherever they decided to settle. Indeed, as the leaders of the Wesleyan Holiness Church saw it: 'Establishing churches in cities where Pilgrims lived and worked became a necessity'.<sup>9</sup> In that way the black churches expanded as the black community expanded.

Another primary reason for the growth of black churches, is reflected in what has been described by a black pastor as the 'general need for religious fellowship'. Such fellowship was needed not only by the black people who endeavoured to move into other areas because they could easily change their jobs. There was also that of the new arrivals from the Caribbean, as they experienced 'rejection', and were not fully welcomed by the mainstream church congregations. Hence the need for alternative congregations to provide the required fellowship.

An additional factor and major benefit contained in congregational growth was that the black churches had been developing a tradition in providing pastoral care. It was a tradition that would serve them very ably in the future. For example, having previously exercised a ministry based on encouraging and educating their members on the values of retaining their jobs, when unemployment became a harsh reality, the black churches were equipped to deal with the new eventuality. So that, as black workers were being laid off and had been forced to move on in search of jobs (not because they did not like the ones which they had, but because they had no jobs), the black churches used some of their previous experiences to help within the new set of circumstances. Help was given, for instance, in the offer of assistance in making adjustment from waged earners to becoming dependant upon unemployment benefits. An amount that one man described as a mere 'hand-out' in comparison to what he once earned. Assistance was offered also on how to go about making claims to receive unemployment benefits. In some cases members were helped in filling out the appropriate forms. A few received 'financial support' while their

forms were being processed.

For some people, therefore, the black churches were instrumental in helping them to overcome the trauma and loss of dignity which being unemployed brought about. Others were helped to face personal relationships among family members as they tried to come to terms with the different life-styles which being unemployed demanded. Included among the people who were facing unemployment were men who believed that it was the 'duty of the husband to bring home the money and pay the bills'.<sup>10</sup> Faced with a situation in which roles were often reversed, so that, they were no longer the main 'breadwinners' had been a reality which was very difficult to deal with. One of the men involved said he felt so humiliated to be 'supported' by his wife that, he often cried out from the depths of his humiliation and hopelessness. 'I was so disillusioned....life was a vicious spiral of despair', he concluded. Another informed us that he used to spend most of his time 'repairing the same things over and over again, only to appear to be useful'.

In the 1986:1 issue of Contact the problem is expressed in this way:

One of the difficulties frequently found by the unemployed man is that of gender identity. On one hand he is deprived of his traditional role as a breadwinner, sometimes being the only non-waged earner in the household. On the other he is forced to invade the traditional female domain of the home. It is a real release to be able to learn not to be dependent on such stereo-typing and to begin, despite social pressures, to look afresh at role expectations.<sup>11</sup>

As the black churches developed, so did the sense of community which they created develop. A pastor explained it by saying: 'we realised that a person's job is a way of fostering community'. That factor is so because work is an activity that is often communal in nature, and many people find the sense of community which provides meaning to life, in their work. Therefore, the sense of community which was lost with becoming unemployed was 'replaced by the church activities', which were provided.

Not all the black church members regarded the unemployment benefits which they received as only 'hand-outs'. As we will discuss more fully later on in this chapter, some had not forgotten the fact that even if their situation was bleak, had they been in the Caribbean and had become unemployed, they would not have been able to claim as much as they were able to do in Britain. There are islands in which they might not have received any benefits at all. In the meantime, however, it is useful to say that some of the churches reminded their members about those factors

and the need to be thankful to God. It was in that same context, then, that a black church pastor said,

We thank God for living in a country where  
even if we are unemployed we are able to  
collect some unemployment benefits to live by.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most appropriate interpretations which we can give to such responses by the black churches, is this: Despite the nature of the situation faced by the members, they were reminded of the necessity to put God first, to be grateful to him, and in everything give thanks.

### Working Shift Hours

Shift-work adversely affected the lives of many black church individuals and their families. That was partly because most of the black workers who had jobs were involved in shift-work. A relevant survey showed that 15% of white workers were engaged in shift-work compared to 31% of black workers.<sup>13</sup> It is an indication that black workers were more than 'twice' as likely to be the ones doing shift-work. Also, the fact that black workers were mostly engaged in shift-work did not always result in an improvement in their wages as should have been the case. In Black Workers: The London Labour Plan, that factor is expressed in this way:

In addition to earning less, black people often have to work harder; in particular, they work more shifts. Since shift workers normally earn more than non-shift workers, this ought to mean that the average earnings of black people were higher than those of whites; the fact that the reverse is true means that the difference in basic wages is even greater than the differences in total wages. The P.S.I. survey says that 'just under a third of all black men work shifts on a regular basis, compared with a fifth of white men; the figures for women are 18% for West Indians....and 11% for whites.'<sup>14</sup>

The demands of that form of work did not allow church families to get together as often as they would have liked. Some hardly saw each other. Sometimes parents had to work all night when other members of their families were at home. They also slept most of the day when their children were more likely to be out of the home. In that way many black children grew up practically on their own. Guidance from parents was minimal at its best. At worst it was almost non-existent. So, too, having to 'work harder' than most, spend more time doing it while earning less, suggests that in every way the black family seemed to have been at a disadvantage. In financial terms they had less to spend on essential goods and services. From a religious perspective,



many were finding it difficult even to supplement and to compensate fully for the difference in financial rewards.

For example, they had a reduced range of opportunity to engage in as well as the support which, they received from corporate religious activities. The ability of families to attend church as family units was seriously affected. Those who worked on Sundays were unable to fulfil their religious duty of 'regular Church attendance', as required by most black groups. There was, therefore, a general decline in church involvement on the part of some black people. That was so especially at a time when the different groups needed every form of involvement from their members the most.

What was even more serious, however, was what that inability meant to the faith of the individual members themselves. Such developments were new ones for them. They were in marked contrast to what church life entailed 'back home' in the Caribbean where Sunday was a time for rest and for worship. Now the situation was different. The black churches had to assist their members to deal with the new situation as effectively as possible. That assistance was reflected in their pastoral caring. For instance, because shift work in a British factory was quite different from the Afro-Caribbean traditional way of going to work when they 'felt like it' - a pattern of work suited to small independent farmers, hustlers, shop-keepers and wholesale merchants, many were not accustomed to the 'check in and out' demands of factory employment. Now they were faced with having to observe not only unsocial hours and fixed-work schedules, but also, Sunday was like any other day on which to work. The black churches helped their members to make the needed adjustments and to adopt positive attitudes to the new work patterns. That is, they were encouraged to make the effort to arrive at their place of work on time and not according to 'Caribbean time'.<sup>15</sup>

In a very remarkable way, too, the churches had been obliged to stress the need to observe 'proper time' in order to be able to begin their own activities when they were scheduled. Also, the black churches developed within the framework of having to accept the reality that they were operating in a different society from the Caribbean. In that sense, the length of time which some of their members would be required to do shift work, and the fact that Sundays were no exception, should be reflected in their teaching. One way in which that was reflected was to accept that as long as 'non-attendance' was because the members had to work, it was part of the inevitable consequence of their lives. They could not help it. When the times for worship and work coincided,

for instance, they realised that the latter should have priority. They therefore assisted their people in the transition process needed to distinguish between the two. As a direct result, much of the 'guilt-conscience', for example, which once accompanied non-attendance of worship on the part of most Afro-Caribbean people, gradually lost its grip upon some members of the black churches.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, many of the members were helped to see that to work on a Sunday was not 'always a sin', but rather, it was a reality and requirement of life in their new situation. Such help could be said to have been instrumental in re-shaping the faith values and attitudes of some black church members towards work in particular, and the society in general.

### Quality of Skill

Thirdly, the kind of skills which black people had made no difference to the type of jobs they were able to attract. Those who were skilled, for example, did not get jobs commensurate with their qualifications. That is, their skills did not exempt those workers from being placed in the low-skilled occupations.<sup>17</sup> They were the people who had been most affected regarding the kind of employment which black workers had to accept. Peter Fryer succinctly described the position in his book Staying Power. He wrote:

Yet the newcomers found themselves in most cases having to settle for a lower job status than they had enjoyed at home. This was indeed their first big disappointment. For, by and large, the jobs they were offered were those the local white people did not want: sweeping the streets, general labouring, night-shift work....What they found here dismayed and shocked them.<sup>18</sup>

And, the authors of Black Workers expressed it in this way:

Yet black workers do not lack the skills, nor the potential for acquiring skills, which would enable them to do better jobs. Many black workers have arrived in this country with high levels of qualification and skill, only to find that these were disregarded or undervalued.<sup>19</sup>

How did many of them cope with those particular forms of disappointments? In attempting to answer that query, we will look firstly at a sampling of skills among a group of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Britain. Following that we will endeavour to show the job categories in which they were mostly engaged. Then, we will show the caring response of the black churches in the light of the problems faced by their members.

The results of a poll of 918<sup>20</sup> Afro-Caribbean migrants which was done in 1960 to discover their level of skills showed that 2% were professionals. There were 13% who had been non-manual, 46% skilled, 13% semi-skilled and 26% were agricultural workers.

Some of the job areas in which they were mostly represented were public transport, cleaning, steel production, rubber processing and regeneration. They worked in foundries,<sup>21</sup> as domestic workers, laundry or canteen assistants and in building such as carpenters. There were those who worked in health hazardous occupations such as asbestos processing and the production of carborundum grinding wheels. Assessing the promotion prospects for black workers within some of those job categories, one man said,

The farthest you got was a bus driver.  
Some of us even took the examination to  
become inspectors but they didn't give  
us those jobs....As a black person in this  
society, you can only go so far and no further.<sup>22</sup>

A reasonable conclusion which can be made here is that although there were many jobs available, most black workers did not progress beyond certain grades. Because of that there were those who became very frustrated, disillusioned and lacked motivation. They felt devalued.

There was therefore a genuine loss of pride and an increase in stress related problems as a result. In that context, Edward Shils has suggested that 'the employment' which the black person can get,

is likely to be in an occupation which is not  
well regarded by the host society. This is only  
one of the large number of stresses to which the  
newcomer to a society is subjected.<sup>23</sup>

A number of black people seemed to have been able to deal with the stressful job-related aspect of their lives by going to Church. A black pastor expressed it in this way: 'In church', he said,

they could be themselves. Here was a more relaxing  
atmosphere within a community of worshipping equals.  
As far as we were concerned, divisions of job-category  
didn't matter. Each person worked for God on an equal  
basis as we endeavoured to serve Him in exchange for  
our heavenly wages.<sup>24</sup>

In a real meaningful way, the churches were instrumental in giving back to them the dignity and pride which were lost on the job. The churches were saying to them in ways that they could understand and appreciate, 'You have worth and value....you are not simply cogs in a factory machine', the pastor concluded.

Expressing part of that same belief about black church members, Bob Nind wrote :



they are able to confirm each other in the knowledge of their value and significance to Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit. They are able to endure the pressures of life as a result and contain within them a source and spring that does not run dry....The black congregations are therefore of enormous importance....<sup>25</sup>

For many black people it was the sense of dignity which they received from their churches which 'rescued their sanity'. It was for them a haven of escape in which there was much opportunity to be at home. That was so because the churches were not only saying the things that mattered most to their people. They gave them the chance to contribute to the process of reaffirming and enhancing their own dignity in practical ways, as well.<sup>26</sup>

### III THE NEED FOR A REMINDER

Another way of dealing effectively with the dissatisfaction which some black people experienced was to make comparisons. Some of those comparisons were of the speculative nature. One relevant example of this was made between what they did in Britain and what they perceived they might have been doing in the Caribbean. In that context, certain conclusions were drawn. Included among those conclusions were those in favour of the Caribbean alternative. For example, the predominant belief was that they would have done better economically if they had not emigrated to Britain. Expressing that belief one man said,

I'd be a lot better off if I hadn't come to England. I came here as a qualified plumbing and fitting tradesman. I had experience working in the Esso Oil Refineries in Aruba and Curacao. I'd worked on large construction sites in The Trinidad and Tobago Oil Fields, and on buildings in Barbados before coming here from Nevis. But when I came here they wanted me to work as an ordinary labourer in a factory....that's the first job I could get to do. I did that kind of work for three months, until I heard that Sears wanted a fitter. When I went there they explained that the fitter they needed must be able to draw....I had to accept another labourer's job. If I'd remained in the Caribbean, I'd be still a respectable tradesman.<sup>27</sup>

Another black person had this to say:

The Government of Barbados was offering incentives and it seemed as though every one else was going to England. So naturally, I said I'd go to England for five years, work and then return. But that was not to be. The low paid jobs I got never brought in sufficient for me to even save as much as the return fare....I think I'd be better off back home in Barbados.<sup>28</sup>

Some black people and their pastors did not seem to have accepted the belief that such conclusions were always necessarily so. Not all those who claimed they would have been better off by remaining in the Caribbean were expressing opinions based on facts. That was so especially for those workers who were unskilled. 'When such complaints were made and sentiments expressed to us', a pastor said,

We were constantly reminding our members that they should not lose sight of what the economic conditions were in many Caribbean Islands, and the reasons why they've come to Britain....Here they had jobs which might not have been possible back home. Even if some jobs were not what they'd expected, they ought to be thankful for small mercies. It was better to have something here than nothing over there.<sup>29</sup>

One very influential and well known person in the black community who believes that most black people have done better economically in Britain, is Sam King. Writing in the Evening Standard, Monday 25 April 1988, he said,

It cost us £28 and ten shillings, which was the price of three cows in Jamaica....But we were better off when we got here because we all had jobs within three weeks.<sup>30</sup>

Those were jobs which they did not have in their native islands. That was so because in order to raise the cost of a ticket to Britain, some people had been obliged to sell certain items of personal property. Only a very few could realise such sums of money by means of direct employment. That is, employment with a firm or in a factory context.

There is reason to believe that some Afro-Caribbean people are indeed in a better position having come to Britain. However, there is also a substantial number who are not. They have become progressively worse off than they were before. Part of the reason for that is because the earning capacity of black people has remained low. With a significantly lower than average earning capacity as a group, their economic position remained as that of a depressed minority of the working class. Or, what could be described as a 'sub or lumpenproletariat, barely making ends meet'.

Emphasising the fact of their poor earning ability even more forcefully, D. Smith in his work Racial Disadvantage in Britain has suggested that,

Black skilled manual workers earn on an average 9.4% less money than white workers in similar jobs. Among non-manual workers, black people earn an average of 20% less than white people.<sup>31</sup>

Most black people in either category, like the informants above, have never been able to save for anything. Returning to the Caribbean is an option which they cannot choose. One such person is Sara Thompson. Articulating that fact in The Guardian, Tuesday May 31, 1988, Sara said,

It's my heart's desire to say bye bye to Britain.  
But for people like me coming at an early age,  
we provided cheap labour and now I can't go back  
to Jamaica.<sup>32</sup>

A visiting journalist from Barbados observing how very little economic progress has been achieved by the majority of the Afro-Caribbean community in Britain wrote:

What has struck me most forcefully since I have been here is the fact that a good many blacks have not progressed as they expected. In fact many seem to have gone below the poverty line. Going back to the West Indies....would bring a sense of shame.<sup>33</sup>

Because some black people have evidently 'gone below the poverty line', such a state of affairs is seen by many as an indication that their lives have been 'destroyed', and also, that 'it was a mistake for black people to come here'.<sup>34</sup>

#### An Aspect of Caring Assessed

It is necessary at this point to reflect critically on some pertinent aspects raised in our discussion thus far. That is in order to ascertain more fully their relevance for the caring process. For example, to what extent can it be suggested that some black pastors in attempting to care for their members may have unintentionally helped to sustain them in their poverty? How realistic is it to say to people in low paid, unskilled employment (a number of whom are unsatisfied because they have better qualifications), to accept such jobs, settle down, and be thankful for what they have? How does one care for people whose intention was to come to Britain, work, achieve economic prosperity and then return to the Caribbean but who know that they have not realised their ambition?

In attempting to deal with those questions, we will look at certain pertinent factors which they raise. Then we will present two pieces of relevant information given by two black people about the kind of jobs which they had. That will be done by looking at the caring which was given and how that caring seemed to have been complemented by factors emanating from the Caribbean.

There is some truth in contending that to ask people to accept



conditions which they do not feel happy in is tantamount to confining them to their conditions. It is also a way of sustaining their unhappiness. That was what the pastors seemed to have done in their line of approach to deal with the complaints of their members about their poor job status. It was the line of least resistance and appeared to have ignored the very essential fact that since the members were not happy in their jobs, then, they would have had very little job satisfaction. That is, job satisfaction that was insufficient to make it worth the while for them to want to continue working. As a consequence, there would be low morale among their members. There would also have been an increased amount of stresses and strains which, in turn, are causes for further unhappiness.

When viewed in those contexts, it appears that the approach used by the pastors to assist their members was counter-productive. The approach was a potential source for bringing about circumstances and conditions which required pastoral care. Instead of solving problems, therefore, they might have been creating others.

On the other hand, there is evidence which suggests that the black pastors did manage to succeed with the use of the approach. One person who had accepted the counsel of her pastor to stay in her job, had this to say:

I am lucky to have a job today. I began working at the Meanwood hospital when my boy was four. Now he is 22 and I'm still there. When I began there, it was confusing at first....it was dirty work all the time....but I was encouraged by my pastor to stick it out and stay in my job. They gave us the dirty work. I do the cleaning although I'd been a seamstress back home....I don't have to polish now but the scrubbing is hard. When I started I got a low wage but now I've a bigger wage. It's so much better than to be on the dole queue. Soon I'll be retiring and get my little pension....<sup>35</sup>

There seems to be evidence of an element of stability in that lady's work history. One of the reasons why she is looking forward to her retirement and pension is because she had decided to remain in her job. It was difficult to do so but she persisted. Counsel with her pastor was productive. In a sense she can indeed thank God for small mercies. There are many other Afro-Caribbean people in Britain who will never be in a position to receive a pension. They will not have done the required service in employment terms to qualify for pensions.

An example of a black person who could be placed in that specific context said,

I worked in several low paid jobs in Watford, Manchester, Bradford and Leeds. My first job was with the railway, and my last job was at a hospital. I'd wanted to be a nurse and the Matron advised me that the best way to become a nurse was to continue working at the hospital, but they'd put me to sweep the yard and clean the toilets. I didn't like it so I left and went to Nevis for three months. When I returned they didn't give me my job back. Now I'm unemployed. When you're not working you can't rely on supplementary benefits.... you can't even talk about that in front of your children. You have no future, you are less than a man, you're covered all over with shame because you can't pay your bills....there's no money coming in.<sup>36</sup>

The plight of this person is one of marked contrast to the former. That is so even if the job-area in which they were both employed had been in the low-paid manual category. And, consequently, their respective abilities to obtain only a certain level of financial reward were the same. Also, another aspect of similarity between the two is that both seemed to have derived very little enjoyment and personal job satisfaction.

However, the contrast is evident. The common features did not make any difference to the outcome. One remained in her job while the other did not. In the case of the latter, he left and made a visit to his native home. The visit was used to determine his employment possibilities back home. To all intent and purposes, however, it was not rosy. He was unable to find any form of gainful employment that would have justified a change of residence. Upon his return to Britain the job which he left here was no longer available to him.

That particular development was one way to support the evidence which suggests that the pastor's belief that some members would not necessarily have been better off in the Caribbean, might have been correct. Also, it is possible to conclude that if the man had accepted such counsel, he would probably have retained his job. And, with it, the possibility of a 'little pension' upon retirement.

Assistance was given to some people whose intention was to return to the Caribbean by using the testimonies and examples of persons who, like the informant above had actually gone but was obliged to return. So too, assistance was given by means of what a pastor termed their 'method of care in dealing with potentially-stressful situations in the face of unemployment realities'. Because of such realities, some of their members had become 'demoralized', he informed us.

In highlighting the similar plight of other unemployed people and the need to care for them, Paul Ballard wrote:

If our concern is for the pastoral care of the unemployed the actual reality is that they are not only caught up in events over which they have little control, but they are struggling for survival in a direct and personal way. So often it is, if not in the shock of redundancy then in the dark night of extended unemployment, a matter of facing personal annihilation and the destruction of all previous habits and assumptions. It is for them a matter of heart and soul, their whole life disposition. It is about spirituality.<sup>37</sup>

In their effort to care by lessening the tension and to decrease the level of anxiety which their members faced, some black pastors turned to their Bibles. As far as they were concerned, it seems that one way by which they understood and interpreted 'spirituality' in the light of the unemployment struggles of their members, was in Biblical terms. That is, they endeavoured to identify and to link certain relevant Biblical passages with the struggles of their members as a way of helping them. The prophecy of Jeremiah was used to good effect in that regard. One relevant section was chapter 29 : 4-7.

The passage reads this way :

Thus says the Lord of host, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build homes and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters: and multiply there and do not decrease. And seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will have welfare.

Pastoral care was provided in this context through the medium of sermons, Bible study and in one to one counselling situations. Some pastors endeavoured to impress upon their members that they would be here for a very long time, even for life in most cases. Consequently, they must be prepared for such an eventuality by taking certain essential steps. One of those steps was to integrate into the life of their communities. Just as the Jewish exiles were told by Jeremiah to build houses and to settle within the Babylonian society, so too, black church members were to do the same. They were encouraged to pray for their communities, seek the welfare of them and strive to ensure continuity.

The need to take those essential steps was paramount because their own well-being was related to and dependent upon that of the British communities in which they lived.

It is part of God's divine plan that 'our members are in Britain',



one of the pastors continued. For that reason his church members were told that just as God had 'delivered the Jews from Babylon', so too, in God's own way and time, He would deliver them. If it is His will, one day some may eventually return home.

### A Critique

A comparison between the Jews in Babylon and black church members in Britain may not have been a valid one to make. That is so historically as well as practically. However, as far as the black churches are concerned, it seemed worthy to merit theological and religious considerations.

There are a number of differences and similarities between the two epochs. For example, the Jews were in Babylon by means of force. Black people migrated to Britain voluntarily. The motivating factor was economic. That of the Jews was for political expediency - unlike the political motivation why some black people came here.

On the other hand there were also a number of interesting religious, social and cultural similarities. By making a comparison between the experiences of the two peoples, the pastors had been able to create many powerful religious imageries which suited their people most adequately. For instance, both the Jews and the Afro-Caribbean peoples encountered specific sets of problems associated with living in societies to which they were not native. Some of those problems were racial while others were religious and cultural.

A consideration of the religious difficulties shows that the Jews seemed to have been under the impression that they had left God behind in Israel. As a result of such an impression they were unable to sing God's song in a strange land (see Psalm 137: 1 - 4). In a similar way many black church christians found it difficult to worship God in the way they knew how back home. For example, most of the church buildings seemed 'cold, large and empty', one of the black church members informed us. 'The worship itself seemed cold', another member said. There wasn't that much 'warmth, liveliness, fervour and purpose as it was in the West Indies', he suggested. Because of those factors, together with the generally 'low-keyed' reception which they received, singing might have been an uninspiring exercise for them. In that context, there was the feeling that 'I'd been like a motherless child a long, long ways from home', the member concluded.

Also, due to the effects of secularisation and the impact of industrialisation - factors on British religious life, the black

christians found it to be a 'strange land' as well. There was strangeness in the sense that many had been accustomed to a simple pastoral way of life which was very different from the situation in an industrialized city. For example, work in a factory context was done in most cases on a continuous basis unlike the situation which the majority had left behind - where Saturday afternoon marked the time when all major work ceased in preparation for the Sabbath's rest. It was in the context of that primary difference a black person informed us how, after he had worked for four successive Sundays, he was of the opinion that where the majority of English people who were employed were concerned, 'their job was their God' because too many were working on Sundays when they ought to have been in church.

Both the Jews and the Afro-Caribbean people entertained hopes of returning home in due course. Those expectations had not materialised as envisaged. Consequently, like Jeremiah some black pastors had to give caring leadership in trying circumstances to a despairing, homesick people.

Showing their people that the Babylonian exiles had gone through experiences like their own, provided them with much justification upon which they could pattern their own lives. In that sense they were provided with a meaningful reference point which they could rely on and identify with. To be told, for example, that their presence here had been willed by God, was very helpful. Such information, full of religious meaning, produced convincing incentives for wanting to remain in Britain. It served to transcend and to supersede any original intention to return to the Caribbean. It became an acceptable alternative and motive enough for wanting to settle down. And, to work in whatever form of employment God had provided both in and outside the church. In the church context they translated that understanding as an opportunity to work for their God in caring services of love and support for others. For many, doing those things are interpreted as examples of fulfilling God's will.

The pastors' method of caring was further enhanced by means of the kind of advice which some political leaders in the Caribbean had been giving both to prospective emigrants, and also, to those who had been here. That position was expressed by Claudia Jones as 'the gradualist view voiced by many of their ministers' of Government in the Caribbean contending that,

the pace of West Indian advancement will be  
'slow' and West Indian immigrants would do  
well to consider themselves primarily citizens  
of Britain and to cease to worry about their

national identity. This idea is likewise based on the view held towards immigration by many bourgeois nationalist West Indian politicians who encourage migration as a 'safety-valve', fearing the growth of militancy for social change at home more than they do the loss of their most valuable citizens.<sup>38</sup>

The effectiveness of the combined set of influences from political personalities in the Caribbean, and the various persuasive endeavours from religious leaders here in Britain were such that many black people had become convinced, more than ever before, that whatever the conditions here were, they ought to tackle them as best they could.

### Integration

The question of integration is replete with difficulties. Therefore, that particular aspect of the recommendation by the black leaders did not seem to have registered well with all members of the Afro-Caribbean community. The same can be said for many persons in the host society as well. That is because there are very few people who are in agreement concerning what integration means. Because it is basically a sociological question we will not attempt to delve into any great detail about it here.

However, suffice it to be said, there are those who believe that integration entails a gradual social process. A process in which black people, for example, should adopt all the values and cultural lifestyles of the host population. For other people, integration is a movement towards the 'creation of a plural society'. That in which the black person is free to retain one's 'cultural identity consistent with the general demands of law and order' as required by the state.<sup>39</sup>

Another school of thought suggests that integration in whatever form, can only mean one thing. It is this: the smaller ethnic group of black people 'losing themselves' into the larger group. Any move towards cultural integration would be the beginning of the death process of every aspect of black identity.

That view seems to be the one expressed by A. Sivanandan in the book Colour, Culture and Consciousness. He believes that entering into such 'practice of cultural change, would be to emasculate the black cultural revolution'. In that context any such integration particularly at the time when the black pastors first advocated it, would have amounted to what the writer describes as the 'merging of the weaker into the stronger, the lesser into the greater'.<sup>40</sup> Or, to put the same thing in another way:



to cease to have a black cultural identity altogether.

Integration in that sense means to assimilate. Or, as Bhikhu: Parekh (when interpreting the views of yet another group) put it; 'some think', he said,

that it implies assimilation understood in its strict sense of obliterating the cultural identity of the immigrant and requiring him to adopt British values and practices.<sup>41</sup>

The concept has been thorny and problematic to the Afro-Caribbean community not only in relation to its meaning. The problem is equally divisive because the religious and secular leaders have not been able to agree on the precise notion of whether there has ever been any real need to adopt British values and cultural practices or not. Addressing that difficulty is very important. To do so is paramount because some people believe that the Afro-Caribbean person is already British. There is so much in common between the two people, they claim, that only the 'genetic factor of skin colour makes a difference'. The long years of colonial relationship is testimony and proof to suggest that what is British is Afro-Caribbean, as well.

Other leaders disagree. They contend that there has been a distinct and separate cultural heritage which they have to protect. Theirs is a cultural evolution which they must retain and keep alive from the destructive elements of integration.

As additional evidence of how diversely-opinionated the concept of integration has been, over the years it has featured very prominently in three areas of the general debate about black involvement in the British society. That is so to the extent where integration has, to a large extent, come to be equated with multi-culturalism,<sup>42</sup> anti-racism,<sup>43</sup> and equal opportunity.<sup>44</sup> However, none of those concepts has been able to provide an adequate and mutually acceptable solution for the black contribution and involvement. The search goes on, and the relevant debate which ensues will have to recognise the role of the black churches with ever increasing urgency.

One of the primary cultural elements common to both people about which there was agreement was religion. But it is in the religious context more than any other that there is at present the most acute difference. For example, the black churches represent a separate black cultural development in Britain. In that context, therefore, when the religious leaders advocated the need to integrate, they did not mean that in religious-denominational terms. It was not integration into the religious life of the British churches.

Any attempt which showed the slightest evidence that it might lead to religious integration was to be resisted. Such attitudes have made the progress towards ecumenism much more difficult. Even now, when many black churches have been forced to worship in the facilities of mainstream churches the fear has not lessened. Rather, the desire to remain distinct and separate religious groupings is still paramount. In some cases it has become unduly exacerbated.

That apparent intransigent desire to maintain separate identities is significant. It represents the major area of similarity between members of the black churches and the Jewish people in Babylon. That is so because despite Jeremiah's advice to the Jews to integrate by building houses and by inter-marriages, there was a particular element of their culture that was to remain intact. It was the religious. They were to keep their own religious identity as the one factor which was not to be compromised. Yahwehism was to be kept separate. It was in their religion that their identity remained. It contained their hope. The same is true for Afro-Caribbean people who are members of the black churches in Britain.

#### IV BLACK PEOPLE AND THE RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

The general picture which has been drawn thus far is one showing relatively full employment in Britain. For example, the rate of unemployment in the 1950's was 'just over 1%'. From about 1951 and up to the latter part of the 1960's, there was an average of less than two percent rate of unemployment in Britain. Between 1961 and 1970, the rate had risen to about 4%. In the period 1975 to 1978 there was a further 2% rise, falling back again between 1978 and 1979, before increasing 'three-fold' after 1979.<sup>45</sup>

There were black people, however, who found it difficult to get even the 'unskilled' jobs which were available in abundance. One person who was affected in that way said,

When I came here I didn't get a job right away. I arrived in April 1960 and didn't get a job until March the following year. All was not rosy as people say....Whenever you'd go to a factory they'd ask you what you can do, and if you don't have any skill, they'd say they can't give you a job....I was willing to learn but they didn't want to train you.<sup>46</sup>

This person and others like her may have been among the less fortunate ones. Her inability to find a job was not a widespread phenomenon. However, it was symptomatic of the acute unemployment problems which were

to follow.

One of the first signs of that materialised two years later. In 1962 the first Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed. A major aspect of that act was to restrict immigration to Britain. From then on, only black people from the Commonwealth who had 'employment vouchers' were allowed to work in Britain. Other similar Acts were passed in 1965, 1968 and 1971.<sup>47</sup> Each of those acts had the effect of further restricting the immigration of black people. A significant aspect of the reason for such restrictive measures was because of a fall in the rate of employment.

A reduction in employment tells us something about the apparent reluctance to train the informant. She was 'willing to learn', but there was very little need to train black workers. There were sufficient trained native workers for the jobs which were available. That reluctance was also part of a process. It was the continuation of a pattern of events which some black people experienced long before 1960.

The Black Liberator of December, 1978 expressed it in this way:

'Even in the early stages' of the Afro-Caribbean immigration to Britain,

Struggles had to be waged for acceptance of West Indian workers into the jobs they now hold. In the transport system (for example) despite the agreement between the British Transport System and the Barbados Government to train and employ workers, sharp struggles by progressive trade unions, led by communists had to be waged for hiring and upgrading of West Indian workers....<sup>48</sup>

Among the specific categories of training and 'upgrading' which are referred to here are, 'clerical know-how' to enable some black workers to obtain jobs in the booking offices. That relating to 'shuttle-plate' workers in the railway depots, and as 'clippers', drivers or bus conductors in the public transportation enterprise.<sup>49</sup>

Gradually, then, there was a steady decline in employment in Britain. Employers were using more selective methods to determine whom they hire. The ratio of workers to the number of jobs available was widening significantly. In the case of 'manual jobs', for example - the job area where black people were over represented, there was a decline of almost two and a half million such jobs by 1981.<sup>50</sup>

Those who were hit the hardest by rising unemployment, therefore, were black people. It has been estimated that for the period 'between November 1973 and February 1980' unemployment in Britain doubled. But for black people it 'quadrupled'.<sup>51</sup> In the following year, February 1980 - 1981, black unemployment rose by 80% while total unemployment in



Britain rose by 40%.<sup>52</sup> The Labour Force Survey of the same year indicated that there were unemployment rates of 20.6% for men of Afro-Caribbean descent. Those of Asian origin had rates of 16.9%. However, the comparable white male percentage was 9.7%.

The rate of unemployment for young black people in Leeds was in the region of 30%.<sup>53</sup> A Guardian Newspaper survey which was conducted in the same year - April 1981, discovered that black people were 'twice' as likely to be unemployed as white people,

One in every five black people eligible for work (was) unemployed compared with one in ten white people.<sup>54</sup>

TABLE 5: RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN GREATER LONDON 1979 - 1981

	Males		Females		Total	
	%		%		%	
	1979	1981	1979	1981	1979	1981
West Indian	9	18	14	13	11	16
Indian Sub-Continent	3	12	9	13	5	12
Other	3	7	4	7	3	7
All People	3	8	4	7	4	8

Source: The Labour Force Survey 1981.

N.B. The term 'Other' as used here includes the native white population as well as European white immigrants.

The pattern of unemployment among black people remained unchanged up to 4 years later. A Labour Force Survey done in 1985 showed that,

Overall unemployment rates for black people....  
(still doubled) those for whites: 20% as  
compared to 10%.<sup>55</sup>

A number of reasons have been put forward to account for the high rate of unemployment among black workers. In their book Britain's Black Population, the authors suggested that the proportion of black young people who were leaving school to enter the employment market was one major factor. That was so particularly,

at a time when job prospects for young people generally (were) adversely affected by the cutbacks in recruitment during the present recession.<sup>56</sup>

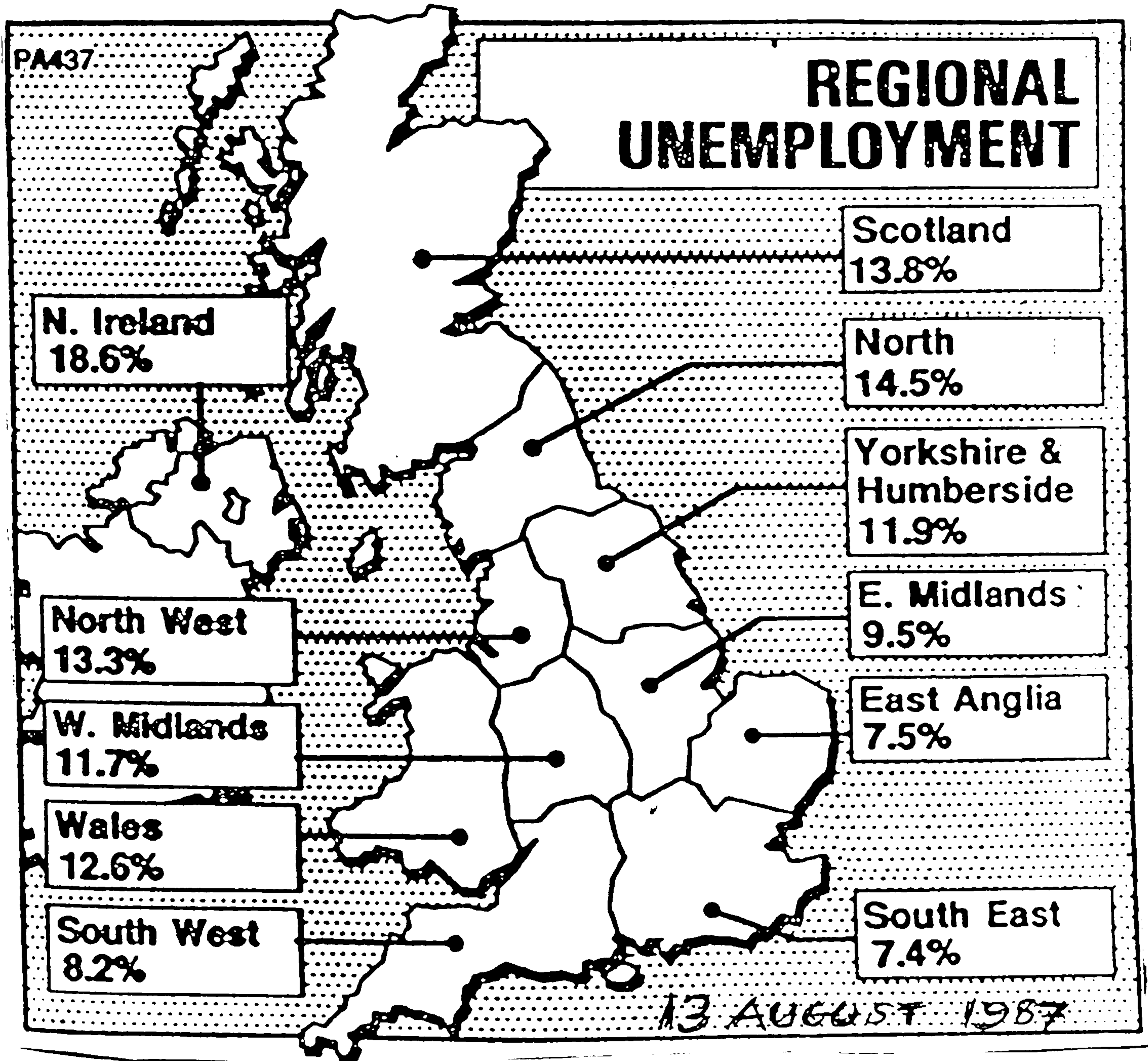
They also cited what was termed 'the shorter average duration in employment of black workers' as another factor. It was a factor which placed black

people in the precarious position whereby, they were the 'last in, first out' at times of redundancy'.<sup>57</sup>

A greater percentage-increase of unemployment in specific regions like the 'South East and the West Midlands', having large concentrations of black people, was seen as an additional reason.

That conclusion is accurate even if the regional unemployment position in August 1987, for example, showed that the South East had the lowest unemployment rate: 7.4%. In the West Midlands it was 11.7% which was lower than the 'North' where there was an unemployment rate of 14.5%. It ought to have been the case, then, that given the lowest percentage-rate of unemployment and the largest number of black people in the South-East (see Map 1. below), even if it were not so elsewhere, black people should have enjoyed a reasonable employment rate. That factor in reality had not been so. The reason is because as we have observed, in the majority

MAP 1: REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT: AUGUST 1987.



of cases, the unemployment figures among black people of Afro-Caribbean origin is more than twice those for the native population. Therefore, the rate in the South East for black people had been over 14.8%. (The relevant percentage for the West Midlands was above 23.4%.) The figures confirm the view that in the South East as well, black unemployment was excessively high.

Another very important reason was what the authors referred to as 'racial discrimination', which had become a feature in employment practice. Such practice applied in most cases by 'individual employers and in recruitment selection procedures', they continued,

means that faced with a plentiful supply of labour, employers will hire white in preference to black labour.<sup>58</sup>

As an indication of the extent to which such preferences were enacted, a black youngster said,

I went for a Saturday job one day and I asked the woman if she had a job going. And there was actually a sign that said there was a job going. And she said, 'Well, I don't mean to be prejudiced or anything, but we've already got a black person working here'. She just smiled and went back in the shop.<sup>59</sup>

In the same context another person informed us that,

I was up in the manager's office at the time, and one of the Saturday boys came up to the office and said to the manager that they'd got two girls waiting, asking about a job. And the first thing the manager said was, 'Are they black?' And the boy said 'yes'. And he said, 'Well tell them that we haven't got any vacancies here'. I was shocked! He just said that and I was still there, and then I just walked out.<sup>60</sup>

One of the contributing factors used to make discriminatory practices in employment more effective is what has been described as a 'secret quota system'. This quota system a black pastor believes, is consistent with the view that 'too many black workers', even when qualified, will 'rock the boat'. There is fear of what might happen if too many black people become part of certain employment establishments.

Much of that fear is in keeping with stereotyped aspirations about black people. The owner-manager of a large firm articulated it in this way :

I can tell you how coloured people are going to behave long before they are hired. You employ one of them, say, a girl in your office and she'll work fairly well. But if a second one is brought in, they'll chat all day....They'll set out to waste time, seek every opportunity to be by themselves....then it's difficult to get a fair day's work from them.<sup>61</sup>



With such notion about employing black people, it is not difficult to ascertain why the prospective employer said she already had a black person in her employment. It is very much in keeping, too, with the central reason why unemployment is high among Afro-Caribbean people. Malcolm Calley has expressed the position very aptly and succinctly. He wrote:

Some employers maintain a quota, limiting West Indians to a fixed proportion of their labour force. This is defended by employers and employees on the grounds that if a larger proportion of West Indians were employed, the industry would get the reputation of being a coloured man's preserve and native English workers would leave. The status of an industry or occupation appears to be related to the number of West Indians it employs. Employers may be fearful that by employing West Indians they may so lower the status of the occupation as to inhibit the recruitment of English workers. Qualified West Indians applying for advertised vacancies may be refused employment because of such a quota system, and some employers refuse to engage any West Indians at all.<sup>62</sup>

That assessment about the employment predicament of Afro-Caribbean people was true when it was written. It is still very much the same way in 1989 as far as a majority of black people are concerned.

An example of one 'occupation' in which the quota system is presently observed is the legal profession. In the Guardian, Thursday August 18, 1988 under the caption, 'Law Society Launches Drive To Tackle Discrimination Against Black Solicitors', mention was made of the fact that out of a total of 48,000 solicitors practising in England and Wales, only 70 were of Afro-Caribbean origin. The article recognises the extent to which there is serious 'discrimination faced by recruits' who are black. One such recruit was Trevor James who wrote to more than 30 city firms and received 'lots and lots of interviews' before finding employment with a 'medium-sized practice'. Another was Miss Shokoya who had to make more than 20 applications to get 'one offer'. That offer was, she said,

from a firm in East London who offered me work I didn't want to do at a salary I couldn't live on. I think I got a number of interviews because of my name - everyone thinks it's Japanese - but I could tell by their faces they were surprised I was black.<sup>63</sup>

And, as we have seen, when one is black, much care is taken to ensure that the right balance is maintained in the work force of most firms so as to prevent any 'blackening' of these firms or occupations' image, thereby maintaining their status, reputation and standing.

### Some Opposing Views

Not all black people agree that there is discrimination in the employment market. They do not see discrimination as a factor which contributes to the high unemployment rate among them. We will proceed by presenting some of those views. Then, we will show how some black people who are among the long-termed unemployed have adjusted to their plight. Following that we will show how the black churches are caring for such unemployed members.

One of the persons who hold that particular view has expressed it in this way:

I'm very reluctant to believe in the prejudice business. And that's perhaps because it has never happened to me personally. I've always had a job. But I think too many black people have a chip on their shoulder. They'd cry discrimination but often it's because they don't want to work. I know some black young men in Chapeltown who are over 29 and they've never worked. They don't really have any ambition at all. They'll party at night and play pool all day. But if you give them certain jobs they don't want them.<sup>64</sup>

And, another man said,

I don't have problems with racial prejudice. I don't think it really exists. Everywhere I went they were prepared to take me on....I know many coloured people who'd cry discrimination until the manager called them and pointed out their mistakes. They'd come to see it wasn't prejudice but their own incompetence that was the problem. So, if you've got the ability to do well you'll get jobs....You'll succeed.<sup>65</sup>

There is some truth in the information which the two black persons have given. People do find it convenient to cite discrimination where there may be none. It can be applied to suit one's purpose. Sometimes, if only to divert attention from what one does not want to face up to. Also, there are black people who see certain jobs as 'beneath' them. They do not have the skills for other grades of employment nor will they make any effort to improve themselves academically. It does seem, then, that they are without ambition.

However, what must also be said is this: some of the young men in Chapeltown about whom the respondent referred, have testified to the fact that they have tried to find employment but have failed. Such failures stem from the fact that young black people are among the most severely affected victims of discrimination in the employment market. When making applications, for example, a majority are obliged to submit as many as 'five times' the number compared with other ethnic groups within the same age group.

Some relevant studies have shown that more black people whose applications are rejected have had the 'minimum qualifications' , than is the case with other applicants. The conclusion is that 'black job seekers continue to lose out' to those who may be less qualified.<sup>66</sup> This state of affairs discourages many black people from trying to find jobs. Among those are young people who received training from the Youth Training Schemes. Between July and September 1984, for example, a study of the Youth Training Schemes conducted by the Commission For Racial Equality showed that 'only 38% of young people from the Afro-Caribbean community went on full employment'. It meant that as many as 62% did not find jobs upon completion.<sup>67</sup>

A combination of such experiences has led to much disillusionment among young black job seekers. They have very little incentive and no sense of motivation to persuade them to try harder. One of the young persons expressed it in this way: 'Why should I bother?' she asked,

Even if I've got the qualification there's not much hope for me to get a job. When a black person leaves school, there's nothing to look forward to; nothing to set their sights upon. They then say, 'Why bother to exert myself in getting any certificate? It won't help'. So they don't try hard at anything.<sup>68</sup>

A majority of those young people have been truly and comprehensively demoralised. They feel overwhelmed by their experience. They feel trapped in a vicious circle from which they can see no way out. It is a situation which is so devastating that it seems like a dark and endless night of despair. In a direct and pertinent reference to that same state of despairing, 'Notes And Reports', January issue 1983 put it this way:

Their difficulties are intensified by the sense they have of a concealed discrimination against them, particularly in relation to job opportunities and housing. Some young blacks are driven to despair into feeling that they are rejected by the society of which they rightly believe they are members and in which they would wish to enjoy the same opportunities and to accept the same risks as everyone else. But their experience leads them to believe that their opportunities are less and their risks are greater. Young black people feel neither socially nor economically secure.<sup>69</sup>

And, also, 'Black and White: An A E U News Pull-Out' expressed the position thus :

A young black teenager is watching children's television. There's no work, what's the point of looking any more? He's filled in dozens of forms. He's given up and the loss of hope is in his eyes. Of the white youngsters leaving



school in July 1983, 37% obtained jobs by September. Only 7% of black school leavers got jobs in the same period.<sup>70</sup>

Consequently, they know too well how very deceptive it must be for anyone to conclude that, 'if you've got the ability to do well you'll succeed'. Ability, they maintain, is not synonymous with success for most black people. That factor is evident especially for those who are young and where employment is concerned.

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE PERSONS BELOW RETIRING AGE WHO WERE UNEMPLOYED BY AGE AND ETHNIC ORIGIN, 1981.

ETHNIC ORIGIN				
Age	Afro-Caribbean	Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi	Other	All Persons
16-19	37	23	18	19
20-24	32	13	10	12
25-34	14	10	7	7
35-44	7	10	5	5
45-54	12	12	4	5
55-59	5	17	5	5
60-64 (men)	n/a	n/a	7	7
16-retiring age	16	12	7	8

Source: Labour Force Survey, 1981.

The 1985 Labour Force Survey revealed that Afro-Caribbean young people had an unemployment rate of almost 40%. The comparable rate for white youngsters of the same age group was 16%.<sup>71</sup> The evidence suggests that in the age group 16-19, for example, during the period 1981-1985, their unemployment rate had increased from 37% (see table above), to 40%. In 1988 there had been very little improvement in their plight. The crisis of despair continues. In most instances it is getting progressively worse, particularly for those 18-19 and over.<sup>72</sup>

As a response to such experiences other black people have developed their own ways of dealing with unemployment. As far as they have assessed the predicament, unemployment is something they have to live with.

'When I was first unemployed', one man said,

I tried to justify my situation by looking for work. But now, after trying for so long without success, I've come to believe that it doesn't matter any more and I take each day as it comes.<sup>73</sup>

Another man informed us that,

There are some months when I've not gone looking for work because it's so frustrating having gone through it so many times before....I've come to say, 'What's the use?' Now I give my time to the church.<sup>74</sup>

And, a third person said,

I'm unwaged but not unemployed. Right now I'm very active working with a voluntary group. We've found several areas of need in the community and strive to fill them....I don't receive a wage but I'm not an unemployed person.<sup>75</sup>

Some unemployed black people are involved in several voluntary organisations. They are trying to help others. They make valuable contributions to their society. Part of what two of the informants above do under the purview of voluntary work, is considered to be a form of employment.

If such an interpretation appears to be inaccurate, however, it depends upon one's understanding of the term. The Oxford Paperback Dictionary defines the word as 'employing, the state of being employed.... or to earn a livelihood'.<sup>76</sup> And, in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary it is defined as 'the act of employing, the condition of being employed, occupation or activity'.<sup>77</sup>

It can be seen that there are many contexts in which the word might be used. Only one of the various contexts implies that employment has to do with earning something in return for one's work. It is possible then, to be employed without receiving a wage in financial terms. That is the primary understanding of black church members when they work for the church. In the various churches there are many people who are not financially employed. However, what they do in the service of their God is regarded as forms of employment. The 'wage' which they hope to receive is eternal life. Caring for the spiritual well-being of others, for instance, is to be engaged in a form of employment.

From that perspective, therefore, many black church members see work in terms of what pastor John describes as 'a calling of God in the service of others'. It is a calling in which they do not look for their 'reward in this world'. As far as they are concerned, the essence of life is to work in the service of their fellows. It is by the 'fruits' of that service that they are convinced they will be known and held accountable by God. It is in it they get their fulfilment and what provides meaning and gives purpose to life here on earth. In that

regard, black church members are not alone. Rather, such ideals about work have a broader appeal and a wider application which ought to be shared by everyone. Indeed, Paul Ballard expressed it this way: 'Work', he said,

is the opportunity for self-realisation in the service of others and God and to receive from others the recognition of one's worth. Work is, therefore, part of that interchange that creates society and allows everyone to participate in the common life .<sup>78</sup>

Also, William Barclay wrote:

There is one thing which would go far to make work what it ought to be, and to cause it to be done in the spirit in which it ought to be done, and that is, if we could look at our work as a contribution owed to the community. <sup>79</sup>

Work interpreted and understood in those contexts is what helps in the formation of 'community bonds', gives a sense of identity and also imparts strength and solidarity to all who are involved in doing it, whether they are professed christians or not.

But it is precisely within the purview and under the aegis of those very related and shared concepts about work, that the christian parts company with the worldly outlook.

In many ways work does indeed consist of the capacity to give affirmation, security, purpose, well-being, value, worth and a sense of belonging to those who engage in it. For many people those factors are the motivating causes that provide justification for the reason why they work. Work is a means towards those ends. When those ends are achieved most people look forward to retirement. Work comes to an end, either at retirement age or at death for them. However, for the christian, work is much more than that. While it does entail some of those basic aspirations, it supercedes them. It is conceived on a higher level with an added dimension which does not end here on earth: neither with retirement nor death. For example, one aspect of that other dimension of the christian's work is the opportunity to make their 'calling and election sure'. In that way, 'we are able to ensure that the end of life here will mean going to be with our Heavenly Father to begin a new life and a new set of work', a black church christian informed us. 'When we get to heaven there'll be more work to be done....what we do now is only a preparation for that', he concluded.<sup>80</sup>

Such notion of work for christians conceived in heavenly terms might appropriately be equated with, and expressed in the words of Rudyard Kipling. Work will continue to be done by Christians 'till', he said,



the Master of all Good Workmen shall put us to work anew....They shall find real saints to draw from. Magdalene, Peter, Paul. They shall work for an age at a setting, and never grow tired at all.<sup>81</sup>

It can be said, therefore, that because many black church members who are unemployed are actively engaged in serving their church, the efficacy of such participation is that it enables them to remain very much a part of the 'common life' and scheme of what they do as churches, instead of 'out' of them. And, also, the fact that they believe ardently that by so doing they will eventually earn a place in God's Kingdom where He will put them 'to work anew', are positive-contributing factors in dealing with economic unemployment as caring features.

#### V ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Much support is given to members of the black churches who have applied for jobs but without success. Those who may become disillusioned are encouraged to keep on trying. They are reminded of the commitment of their church to be involved with them at every stage of their struggle. They are never left alone.

Most of the black churches endeavour to reassure their unemployed members scripturally. One of the ways by which that is done is by means of what Pastor John calls 'perseverance and encouragement of the scriptures supported by prayer'<sup>82</sup> (See Rom. 15 : 4). The pastor informs us that his church has used two particular passages of Holy Scripture to provide care in that specific context. The passages are James 1 : 12 and Luke 18 : 1 - 7. The first one reads,

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (James 1 : 12).

And, the second,

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying,  
'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'give me legal protection from my opponent'. And, for a while he was unwilling; but afterwards he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out'. And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said, now shall not God bring about justice for his elect, who cry to him day and night, and will he delay long over them? (Luke 18 : 1 - 7).

In Bible classes, discussion groups, and from the pulpit, church members are told that being unemployed could be part of God's plan. God might be testing them for His own purpose. Consequently, an appropriate response ought to be that of perseverance in the midst of such times of testing. That was what James meant when he wrote that those who persevere 'under trial', and have been found faithful or approved by God, will receive their reward. In that case, the 'crown of life', which the Lord has promised to those who love Him will be theirs. The crown of life in that context, is the fact of having obtained a job. Also, 'love' for God is interpreted and expressed by means of perseverance. That is by waiting on Him and believing in Him to fulfil His promise.

It is quite clear that as far as Luke 18 : 1-7 is concerned, what eventually moved the judge was the persistent plea of the widow. Likewise, they must be unyielding with their job applications. If they do so the chances are that one or two employers might become persuaded like the judge was and offer employment to those who seek it.

What Jesus is also saying in the parable, they maintain, is that they should continue praying. They must never lose heart. In doing so, they must cry to Him day and night (v.7). And, God who is more benevolent than any earthly employer will eventually grant the request of the relentless job-seeker.

#### God's Hand in Job Attainment

Members of the black churches testify to the 'effectiveness and relevance' of such caring methods. There are those who claim that they were successful in getting jobs because the church prayed for them. Others believe that their success came about because they were encouraged through attendance at Bible study classes. 'God had a direct hand in helping me to get the job that I have', one member said.

I was very sceptical at first even though I'm a firm believer in my church....but I didn't think that praying like that would work in my case. I was encouraged to join the prayer group. The church prayed for me and the pastor gave me a reference....now I'm employed and happy about the outcome.<sup>83</sup>

A deacon expressed an almost identical view. A number of people in his church are in jobs because they prayed regularly 'on their behalf', he claims.

In the early 1980's many of our people were unemployed and they were getting frustrated. So we had to do something about it as best

we knew how. Every Monday and Friday we met to fast, study the Scripture and those unemployed requests put before God....now many more have jobs.<sup>84</sup>

So too, another member said,

I remember it was in 1984 and I was unemployed. I saw a vacancy, spoke to the pastor about it and we prayed together. The members prayed for me, then I applied and God provided it for me.<sup>85</sup>

It is possible to attend the worship service at any black church and hear the same views expressed. Occasionally, one will hear members speak about the 'new job' which they have just obtained. Such successes are attributed to God's doing. They are evidences of answer to the prayers of their church. On those occasions the opportunity is taken to testify in thanksgiving to the Goodness of God. It is also a means of 'sharing' news about their respective good fortune or their crown of life, with the church community.

#### A Critique

In undertaking any critical evaluation of such use of Holy Scripture by the black churches, a number of important factors must be borne in mind. Among those factors is the unquestionable belief held by the members that prayer is real. Another equally important one is that all scripture is inspired by God. One of the members expressed it in this way:

Our church believes that the Bible is verbally inspired by God....It is the inerrant word of God. We accept all its laws, its doctrines and its infallibility.<sup>86</sup>

Consequently, there is no unanswered prayer and the Holy Scripture is the supreme rule for all christian life. The two concepts are God's eternal and pre-ordained ways for meeting the needs of His people. Therefore, there is no reason for any critical evaluation or approach to be applied in dealing with either. To do so is to be in danger of 'questioning' God and to challenge His will for their lives, the members believe.

Because of those assumptions, therefore, almost any form of interpretation given to the scriptures is accepted. That is the case despite however loosely such interpretation might be done. Once it is made to appear to have some semblance of relevance to a particular point of view, or to suffice for a particular caring need, then, the interpretation is acceptable. It thus becomes the churches' 'helpful resource' for presenting the infallible Word of God to the caring needs of His people.



The same is true about prayer. God hears and answers all prayers. It is their way of getting needs met. 'All we've got to do is to ensure that always, in everything by prayer, we make our request known', a deacon maintains (see Phil. 4 : 6). In the unlikely event that a need is not met there is no reason to ask why because, God has answered. He has either said no, or he is testing for faith. Thus, in the latter case the necessity to wait and to persevere becomes all the more essential in keeping with what it means to pray in the black churches.

### An Alternative Interpretation

There is certainly a more authentic form of interpretation for what James meant by perseverance under trial. That interpretation would be one, for example, which has very little to do with the fact of unemployment. The context in which James used the term would have been basically religious. It served to inform his readers about the possible reward for holding on to their faith in Christ. However, it was very easy and practical for the black church to interpret it especially in relation to the quest of the members for employment. That is because unemployment was a predominant and pressing factor for them. It was the focus of their attention at the time and therefore, they applied it to a contemporary situation which was meaningful.

So too, the phrase 'crown of life' as used by James seems to relate more appropriately to our understanding of eternal life as a heavenly reward. But in their interpretation the black church group used it as an indication of what it means to get a job.

It must not be believed, however, that faced with a different set of prevailing circumstances the church would not have interpreted the term 'trial' differently. Also, they are quite capable of articulating the relevant phrase in the context which we have suggested. Rather, what is pertinent here is the unlimited ways in which the Scripture can be used to meet any situation which the members face. Or, to which they want to apply it in caring for their people.

One of the members portrayed the Bible's multi-faceted roles in this way:

The Holy Bible speaks the truth when it is addressing any discipline....it has an answer for every problem we face and a cure for all the ills of this world.<sup>87</sup>

### A Quality to Imitate

The recommendation that the widow's persistence, for example was a quality which the unemployed members might adopt was of much value.

It consisted of the approach used by a Biblical character with whom they could readily identify in a meaningful way. The corresponding request that such an identification should be accompanied by constant prayer was very significant as well. It comprised a primary manifestation of what it means to care in the black church movement. That is conveyed in the fact whereby, even if (unlike the case of the widow), prospective employers are not persuaded as the judge had been, the black church members should not lose hope. They should keep on praying still. Expectations are kept constantly alive in their unfailing belief that their God will deliver. The belief in God's promise to those who love him that he will not delay long over them (James 1 : 12, Luke 18 : 7), is not easily shaken. As far as they are concerned, the Bible speaks it, the church affirms it: it must come to pass. Therefore, they hold on to that belief even when the delay is a life long one.

#### A Contributor to Unemployment?

One of the more predominant aspects about our discussion has been the complete willingness of black church members to accept what their religion teaches. To what extent, then, can that obedience contribute to the unemployment rate among some black people? Is obedience to what some of the black churches teach more important than holding on to one's job, especially when there is conflict between the two? Which ought to claim priority?

We will proceed by presenting two relevant examples of such conflicts. Then, we will assess the implications which they raise for the pastoral caring process.

Mavis is a young unmarried mother with a son aged 8. She was gainfully employed but subsequently left the job because it conflicted with the teaching of her church on the strict observance of Saturday as the Sabbath. Expressing the issue Mavis said,

When I was employed, I always asked for more flexible hours because I was conscious that Sunset and the Sabbath hours came before I finished work on Fridays. My Church was stressing it, and I was preaching to people that they shouldn't work on the Sabbath.... yet I was doing it myself. I tried to get the boss to change my regular working hours to be more flexible. I was prepared to do extra time and to work late hours on other days just to avoid working on the Sabbath hours. 88 But the boss refused. I couldn't continue. I left the job.

This second example is from Kevin who is 34. He is married with two girls of 6 and 10. 'I owned a small business', he said,

But when I became saved I began to wrestle with myself constantly. The business demanded all of my time.

There wasn't any left for the work of the church which is binding on every member. When I'd manage to attend Church I'd just sit there and get emotionally depressed....I had problems with going to church and being engaged in a business which sometimes called for a little hand twisting to succeed....I got deliverance by selling my business even if it didn't solve my financial problems.<sup>89</sup>

### An Assessment

In Mavis' case, the decision was taken to leave her job rather than to continue working on her Sabbath. She is a member of the Church of God Seventh Day - A Sabbatharian group among the black churches in Britain. The religious motivation had taken precedence over her employment responsibilities, unlike the example of the other black churches whose members had decided to accept the need to work on Sundays when it was necessary.

It can be said that obeying the strict regulation of her church was more important to Mavis than holding on to a job. When all efforts to get another job on her religious terms had failed, Mavis began to receive unemployment benefits. She had become one more black person who was added to the list of the unemployed.

It is possible to conclude on the strength of such evidence that Mavis's church appears to have been uncaring in this particular regard. By opting on the side of obedience to religious requirements, the young mother seems to have given scant consideration to her other important responsibilities. One of those responsibilities was her financial obligation to her young son. Could any responsible christian group justify that kind of response especially when, having left one's job, the capacity to earn is reduced?

There is evidence which seems to suggest that the church does try to justify such actions by its members. One of their spokesmen suggested in that context that, 'peace of mind' is better for some people than access to increase financial opportunity. Therefore, each case must be assessed on its individual merit. So that, in Mavis' case the 'happiness' which came about as a result of obedience to the dictates of her religious conscience, was more meaningful than the difference between what she earned from her employment, and what she could command by receiving unemployment benefits.

By putting forward such justification the faith factor and its implication to answered prayer in black church understanding becomes evident. It constitutes a significant aspect of the pastoral caring endeavour. There are times for example, when it might only have been one of the many



coincidences which occur so very often in the black churches. But, invariably, as people pray, there seems to be a positive response which appears to correspond with what they have prayed for. Then comes the remark: 'see, my prayer has been answered'.

Whether that general pattern had been part of the same development or not, Mavis believed that her faith in God had been rewarded and her prayers answered. 'God blessed me for my faith in Him and the stance that I took', she said,

I never did stop praying about it and since I was out of a job I used the time to get my A levels. Now I'm working on my degree. If I'd stayed in the job, I wouldn't have been able to improve my education.<sup>90</sup>

In a similar way it can be said that Kevin too, had allowed religious motives to bring about his unemployment situation. The amount of time which the business demanded was one factor. Another factor was the difference between what his faith demanded and what seems to have been necessary for success in the kind of business venture which he was engaged in. He found it difficult to reconcile between the requirements of the two.

There was 'deliverance' as a result of having sold the business. However, there had been a decline in his financial position. Consequently, like Mavis, that particular aspect of his responsibility to his family might not have been adequately fulfilled. Also, the deliverance which he got might be evaluated to be more important to him than the business was. It was akin to the peace of mind which, like Mavis, the church used as evidence to justify the relevance of its caring.

## VI BLACK BUSINESS, EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND PASTORAL CARE

There is much to be gained by looking more thoroughly at two important factors which surfaced in the discussion. One has to do with business ventures among black people, and the other relates to attempts at achieving better employment - training, and educational standards. We will endeavour to look at the two factors separately.

The black churches may not have the competence nor the required financial means to resolve the problem of unemployment among their members. However, there are a number of practical ways by which they provide employment on a limited scale. Some of the churches have small schemes which help to employ members on 'short-term' bases, a pastor said. Among those schemes are,

1. Church building, repairs and renovations
2. Landscaping and church ground improvement
3. Church secretaries and caretakers' posts
4. Youth Directors and Evangelists positions.

There are also attempts to promote self-employed endeavours such as church sponsored projects.

Some of those projects seem to have been unsuccessful. 'This is an area of weakness among our church people', another pastor informed us.

For the past six months we have been trying to set up a couple of people to be self-employed: To do window cleaning, carpet renovating and food catering, but it appears that there isn't enough motivation on the part of those chosen....<sup>91</sup>

In promoting such endeavours the particular churches help to provide part of the initial capital and, in one instance, a building to house the business was made available.

Another form of church sponsored employment scheme is the Day Care Centre. The New Testament Church of God in Leeds operates one such enterprise. It caters for a group of senior citizens who meet at the church on Wednesdays and Fridays. Two people are presently employed. A similar scheme is run by the Bethel Church on Victoria Road. An article in 'Headline: The South Headingley Community Association Paper', refers to the project in this way:

One of the most exciting developments in Headingley Ward at the moment is the establishment of a new day centre for old people at Bethel Chapel, Victoria Road. Local councillors have worked closely with an Afro-Caribbean group based at the church to obtain £47,000 annual funding for the project from Social Services. The centre will be run by a local management committee and will provide a multi-cultural base for support to the increasing number of isolated and vulnerable older people in our community. It will complement existing day centre support for the area currently provided by the Apna (Buckingham House), Hyde Park, Queenswood Drive and Lincoln Green Centres.<sup>92</sup>

While this particular endeavour is ecumenical and community-related, the initiative to establish it came from the black church group. The number employed is four.

In addition to those tangible examples of providing employment, black churches care in the following ways:

1. Members are appointed to serve on different statutory bodies such as local legal aid groups, social services, community relation, police liaison and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Vital information about any available job opportunities are then passed on to those who are unemployed.

II. Circulars and pamphlets from prospective employers and their agencies are placed in churches. Some are handed directly to unemployed members.

III. Members who are gainfully employed inform others who are not, whenever any vacancies arise at their place of work.

IV. Assistance is given with character recommendations and references.

V. Appropriate announcements are made in churches informing where jobs may be available.

### The Christian Preference

There are instances where people have been given jobs because they are practising christians. In that regard a pastor said,

I've had several requests from prospective employers who contact me and say, 'Do you have a young christian person in your church with such and such qualifications for this job?'<sup>93</sup>

The basic premise here is that certain employers seem to prefer to have professed christians working for them. In such cases, the black church movement functions as a potential source from which some of those workers might be recruited. One person who was employed in that way mentioned what he referred to as the 'christian qualities' instilled in him by his church. Examples of those qualities which are applied at work to the benefit of his employer are as follows,

- I. respect for my employer's property
- II. more tolerance for my co-workers
- III. a willingness to be more productive
- IV. a conscious effort to be always punctual
- V. the endeavour to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.<sup>94</sup>

Each of those examples contain positive approaches which are expected from all workers. However, if the non-christian worker might be inclined to avoid observing any, the christian by virtue of one's faith does not. Consequently, the examples are inclusive of the reasons why some employers might prefer to have christian workers who do apply them.

### Church-Community Support

In this regard pastoral care is given in many specific ways. One of those ways is support in the care of children. Some members in full-time employment would find it difficult to keep their jobs without the assistance of others. A young mother who was helped in this way expressed it thus:



I needed to go to work and couldn't afford day care nursery expenses for my son, but the members came and took him on different days....<sup>95</sup>

Such service is rendered as a convenient community effort on behalf of each other. There is no financial reward. The only incentive is the belief that by so doing they are caring for each other on the Master's behalf.

Mention was made by the young mother of her inability to meet the cost of day nursery facility for her son. That particular problem has been recognised and expressed by Ann Phoenix in her article entitled, 'The Afro-Caribbean Myth'. Because many of those mothers are obliged to seek 'employment while their children are young', the author stated,

Possible difficulties may arise from the type of care that black parents are able to arrange for their young children. There is a general lack of childcare provision in Britain. Because more Afro-Caribbean mothers than white mothers are employed, they need more childcare facilities, and are likely to suffer worse from poor provision. In a society where racism is an important structural determinant, black people are frequently in poorly paid jobs with the least flexible hours. They have been found to be more reliant on the flexible childcare that childminders can provide than day nurseries.<sup>96</sup>

Childminding is, therefore, an integral part of the network of support systems that the Afro-Caribbean community relies on to care for its young outside the confines of immediate parental homes. It would seem, however, that while such caring takes place as a community-wide endeavour in general, it is very much so in the black religious community in particular.

## VII TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

The black churches place much emphasis on the need to acquire job-training and other educational qualifications. Mavis and Kevin were encouraged in that context. One training institution to which the black churches have recommended their unemployed members is PATH (Yorkshire) Ltd. It is not a church affiliated institution. However, there are two important reasons why it has been chosen

for special mention here. The reasons are:

- (i) PATH is a predominantly black-run institution, and
- (ii) it offers us the opportunity to look at one of the young persons who was encouraged by her church to get on to the PATH training scheme.

In considering the two factors we will present some aspects of the aims and objectives of PATH. Then, we will look at the areas in which training is offered and the rate of success achieved in job-placement. Having done that we will critically assess the information and show how the young graduate believes the church has been helpful in caring for her.

#### Aims and Objectives

PATH is located at Dyson's Building, Buslingthorpe Lane, Leeds. The institution was founded in 1985 as an initiative to attempt to redress some of the disadvantages in employment faced by black people. It functions to remove what one of the supervisors called,

Some of the bottlenecks and red tapes in the way of black people and to provide them the opportunity to compete favourably with white people for available jobs.<sup>97</sup>

In a position paper entitled, 'What is the PATH Scheme?', the authors stated that,

PATH is an exciting new training venture for black people....If you are unemployed, if you want a professional job, and if you're ready to work hard and study hard for at least a year, this could be the scheme for you.....PATH is a charitable company whose sole purpose is to provide work experience, training and education for young people of Asian and Afro-Caribbean origin. It isn't a scheme for filling-in time between periods of unemployment. PATH is about putting black people in line for professional full-time jobs.<sup>98</sup>

The paper goes on to mention what it refers to as, 'positive action'. In that regard PATH 'exists', it says,

because we know that fine words and good intentions are not enough to overcome the racism that is a major obstacle to progress for black people. All the figures show that black people are under-represented in, for example professional jobs. The Race Relations Act, therefore, allows for special organisations to work to ensure that proper representation of black people in those occupations where statistics prove that there are fewer black people employed than there should be, given the number of black people in the local population. PATH is a positive action scheme which takes up this special provision in the Race Relations Act. Our intention is to take real steps to get black people into the professions. Experience shows that these programmes work best when they are run by black people and when all the trainees are black. At College some of your classes will be with other black trainees only. Your work experience, of course, will normally be with white organisations.<sup>99</sup>

### Recruitment

Information about PATH, together with any of the training schemes on offer is obtained in a number of ways. Among those are advertisements in the local press and radio. Through primary institutions like the black churches, and by word of mouth.

There is a standard application form which each prospective recruit receives. Applications are assessed by a selection committee. The committee produces a 'short list' of those who are offered interviews. During such interviews, the following qualities are looked for:

- (a) ability to cope with work
- (b) ability to cope with training
- (c) job-related experience, and,
- (d) ability to cope with academic work at college level.

A final selection of applicants for training is made in accordance with how each individual is rated on the basis of those criteria. Successful candidates are notified by letter.



### Areas of Training

Each of the training schemes may last for a period of one year. One day per week is devoted to work at the college level. Therefore, all trainees are attached to one of the colleges of higher learning in Leeds. A training 'allowance' is given to every trainee depending on individual needs. In some cases the amount a person receives is £4,000.<sup>100</sup>

There are four areas or schemes in which training is offered. The areas include :

(a) A Housing Association Scheme. This began in October 1985 with 12 trainees. It prepares people for Management roles in Housing Associations. The scheme is 'designated', the co-ordinators have informed us,

to ensure that black people get responsible jobs in Housing Associations. The training programme is based on the assumption that, if black people are to get their fair deal from Housing Associations, their policies and activities must be sensitive to the particular needs of black people - whether they were born in this country, in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean or wherever.<sup>101</sup>

(b) Local Authorities. On this scheme candidates undertake administrative training in conjunction with one of the Leeds City Council Departments. These include, Education, Leisure Services, Planning, Housing/Environment, Health, Highways, Administration/Finance, Social Services and Municipal Services or Public Works.

(c) Private Sector. This scheme prepares black people to obtain skills for jobs in Banks, Building Societies, Solicitors' Offices and other comparable areas in the private sector.

(d) Voluntary Sector. This scheme undertakes to train and equip people to do jobs in advice centres, in housing association endeavours dealing with the homeless and other social-care related organisations.

In each area the training course is tailored to suit the latest employment demands. To ensure that such requirements are achieved, there is always some prior discussions and formal arrangements made between PATH's management and prospective employers before any training begins. Some employers contribute financially to the training. Others have provided employment to a number of graduates.

### Rate of Success in Job Placement

Among the 12 trainees who took the first private sector course, 11

were successful in finding jobs. There were 12 trainees in the first housing-project scheme, and 11 were able to find employment. In the second housing association scheme (voluntary sector) 10 persons out of a total of 12 candidates had been successful. And, in the first local authorities scheme, 39 persons from a group of 42 were also successful. In other words, a total of 78 people were trained in the four areas. Of these, 71 or about 91% had been able to find gainful employment.

### A Critique

The move to get more black people qualified for professional roles in the employment market is a positive undertaking by PATH's management. Such an undertaking has implications for two very important factors regarding the employment position of black people. One of the factors has to do with the question of standard and the other is about promotion. Both of these in turn have relevance for pastoral care in the black churches.

With regards to the question of standards, because many black people experience real disadvantages which seriously affect their ability to get jobs, sometimes concessions have to be made for them. That is, in order to compete more favourably with other ethnic groups who have had better advantages, standards on entry requirements, for example, might be lowered to accommodate black people into certain professions. PATH's drive and initiative to train more black people is one way to remove the need for such practice and concession.

Janice, the young christian graduate of PATH is of the opinion that black people should not get jobs 'simply because they're black'. That belief was one of the reasons why she took the advice of her church to upgrade her qualifications. As christians we must strive to set standards: 'never to lower them'. That is true in relation to beliefs in spiritual matters, equally as it is in the 'job market', she suggested.

The black church has helped her to appreciate the need for standards in her christian life. PATH has provided her with the necessary skill and competence to perform at a reasonably high standard in the employment market. 'I've benefited immensely' she said,

The church and PATH have equipped me for  
the job I'm in....I do it to the very best  
of my abilities, with thanksgiving and to  
the glory of God.<sup>102</sup>

In the case of promotion, there ought to be certain distinct disadvantages which come about when people are allowed to enter into any job area by lowering the required standards. One such disadvantage is that those

people tend to remain subservient and are seldom seen to be germane to the organisation. It also makes for 'inferior ways of evaluating black people', the young graduate maintains.

Those beliefs have significance not only in the context of promotion. They are also relevant for determining the kinds of jobs which black people may command with lower qualifications. In the booklet The Enemy Within, a black respondent expressed it in this way:

I think the real difficulties for black people in this country come when they start to move forward for promotion. Even getting on to the permanent roll in an institution can be a problem. In education, for example, many black teachers are only offered temporary jobs so they are never eligible for promotion.<sup>103</sup>

As a group, teachers are supposed to be skilled workers. However, if it is possible for some teachers to be unable to command permanent jobs, then, it offers an indication why so many other black workers are primarily in temporary employment. In most cases, all permanent positions are for those who possess the necessary qualifications. People who are not qualified seldom command promotion. That is because the type of skills which they may have are not always among those for which it is either profitable or feasible, to offer promotion.

As more black people are qualified, it is the hope that they may not only get permanent jobs, but also be able to command promotions as well. It is in this context, therefore, that the caring of the black churches can be of mutual help. That is so because of the very complex nature of the problem in this specific regard. It is not only one in which some black people may be unqualified for the jobs which they have. It is also one in which there are others who are 'over-qualified' for what they do, but must accept jobs which they are more than qualified for in order to have any jobs at all.

Sarah, another graduate of PATH has put this into sharper focus when she said,

There are not enough black people employed in the higher-job sectors of the Leeds City Council for example, and PATH is training black workers to reach the standard necessary for senior positions in the Council. It was the belief that after we'd completed our training we'd enter at grade 3. Rather, we're entering at the bottom scale: at grade 2....I'd applied for a higher job, one which I think I'm qualified for but they didn't give it to me. I was offered a scale 2 job instead....<sup>104</sup>  
if I didn't take it I know I wouldn't get another one.

In that same context, part of the findings of a research project among



100 clerical officers in the Civil Service showed that 30 of the officers were 'over-qualified'. Of those 30 officers, as many as 23 were black.<sup>105</sup> Like Sarah, they probably decided to accept those positions because there was hardly any other alternative.

Such experiences are lucid examples of the way in which the adverse situations faced by black people in Britain, and the attitudes which generate them, have not changed very much. A black church member expressed it in this way:

When we arrived from the West Indies with our qualifications we'd been told they weren't good enough....Today when our children and grandchildren get qualifications from English institutions, they still ain't good enough....<sup>106</sup>

It could very well have been in response to the same experiences that Sam King said,

The black man has been climbing up the rocky side of the mountain in this country for 40 years. We are still having humiliation.<sup>107</sup>

In a real sense, many qualified black people must be content with the fact that they can only reach where others begin. There is hardly any move upward for them. Consequently, they are destined to remain forever at the bottom of the totem pole of job-status. That is, at the lowest rung of the employment and economic ladder.

However, for Sarah and other church members who are similarly affected, the black churches are saying to them, 'continue to improve on your educational qualifications....strive to obtain the highest standards possible . It is through such means that your cause will be justified even more fully.'

Those who are never 'eligible' for promotion despite their levels of qualification, length of service or experience, the churches are helpful as well. In the black church movement they are made aware of the fact that they are never alone. 'We are cognizant of the situation', they are told. 'We are all in it together. We feel the pain and know the degree of diminished worth that you are experiencing....But the most important thing: God is with us. Do not give up. Press on toward the goal of the higher job-status in Christ Jesus' (see Phil. 3 : 14).

Such form of support by the black churches may seem trivial, simple and even inept to the uninitiated. But for a people who have been marginalised all their lives, it evokes a different interpretation. Those who know what it means to be placed into what a black pastor called their 'deep dungeon of continuous discrimination in employment practices', that kind of support is for them a matter of utmost importance. It is truly

their 'whole life disposition'. It is pastoral care at its most positive, effective and meaningful.

#### Similarity in Service and a place for Caution

A vital aspect of what the black churches are offering to their members is related to that which constitutes part of the objectives of PATH. As we have seen, the churches provide pastoral care through understanding. It is the kind of understanding which comprises the whole ethos of PATH's objectives. That is the understanding about which they speak when they say: 'Experience shows that these programmes work best when they are run by black people and all the trainees are black'. In other words, the programmes are better operated simply because those who run them and those who are being trained, experience a common set of frustrations in and out of the employment context. They can understand each other. They belong in more ways that unite them than what divides them. The same could not be said if it were the case where either the trainees or the trainers were from a different ethnic background. The needs of the trainees can be better met in that relationship just as pastoral caring is enhanced when those who offer care and those who receive care, have similar experiences. Or, when there is enough understanding.

Having expressed that conclusion, we would ask for caution, both with respect to the black churches and on the part of PATH's executives. Because, as the executives have observed, the trainees' place of work will, in most cases, be in non-black organisations. It seems appropriate, therefore, that the training ought to have some input to reflect the expectations of, and experiences relative to those organisations. And, one way to ensure this might be to have a representative of those organisations on the training staff.

So too, pastoral care in the black churches structured on understanding might be greatly enhanced if it is informed by examples of caring in the mainstream church denominations.

If such caution is taken into consideration the chances are that PATH will be producing trainees with all-round abilities. The abilities which enable and equip them to meet most of the expectations of their employers. And, also, the black churches may never be seen only as little religious islands 'entire' on their own. But, rather, as an essential part of the ecumenical continent: part of the whole people of God, caring for people in God who is One.

NOTES

1. See Fryer, op. cit., P.372.
2. This grouping may have included persons who were from The Turks and Caicos Islands, The British Virgin Islands and The Bahamas.
3. Immigration Statistics from the former West Indian Federation Office, Migrant Services Division.
4. Member of The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
5. Member of the First United Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic.
6. Member of The INC., Pentecostal City Mission Church.
7. Hill, op. cit., P.28.
8. See Faith in the City, op. cit., PP. 42 - 43.
9. See Pilgrims in Progress, op. cit., P.9.
10. Such views are still held by many Afro-Caribbean men despite the fact that in a number of cases it is the wife and mother who maintains the family financially.
11. See Contact: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Pastoral Studies, op. cit., P.4.
12. The Shiloh United Church of Christ Apostolic - Worldwide.
13. See The PEP Survey. Cited also in The Enemy Within, P.20.
14. See Black Workers: The London Labour Plan, The London Strategic Policy Unit, 1986, PP. 32 - 33.
15. A term used to designate the usually late beginnings of and arrivals at most scheduled events in the Caribbean.
16. That factor, as we will see later in this chapter, did not seem to have applied equally to the Church of God Seventh day. They are 'Sabbatharians' and worship on Saturdays.
17. For more about this see 'The Commission For Racial Equality' Annual Reports, 1977 - 1978 and 1983, also, Britain's Black Population, op. cit., PP. 61 - 62.
18. Fryer, op. cit., P.374.
19. See Black Workers, op. cit., P.27. Also, see Paul Harrison, Inside The Inner City: Life Under The Cutting Edge, Penguin Books, 1983, P. 383.
20. The Black Liberator Editorial Committee.
21. As many as 76 persons out of those who arrived on the Windrush in 1948, had their first jobs in that particular area. See Fryer, op. cit., P.372.



22. Member of The New Testament Church of God.
23. See Colour, Culture and Consciousness, op. cit., P.202.
24. The Church of God of Prophecy.
25. See Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.23.
26. One example of this is active participation in worship.
27. A member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Leeds.
28. A member of the New Testament Church of God.
29. The New Testament Church of God.
30. See The Evening Standard, 25 April 1988.
31. See D. Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain, Pelican, 1976. and also, The Enemy Within, op. cit., P.20.
32. See The Guardian, 31 May 1988.
33. Niles, op. cit.
34. Guardian 31 May 1988.
35. Member of the Church of God of Prophecy.
36. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community.
37. See Contact, op. cit., P.5.
38. The Black Liberator, op. cit., P.36.
39. See Colour, Culture and Consciousness, op. cit., P.223.
40. Ibid., PP. 115 - 116.
41. Ibid., P.223. See also, Race and Class: A Journal For Black and Third World Liberation. Vol. XXI, Spring 1980, No. 4. PP. 333 - 336.
42. For more about this concept see Racism Awareness Training - A Critique, London Strategic Policy Unit, 1987, PP. 64 - 78, and also, A Davies, 'Racism Awareness Training - What's it All About?', Voluntary Action, Vol. 11 No. 5. June 1984, PP. 14 - 16.
43. Racism Awareness Training - A Critique, op. cit., PP. 13 - 34 and Racism Within Trade Unions, The GLC Anti-Racist Trade Union Working Group, 1984.
44. See G. Nordlie, 'A Decade of Experience With Race Relations, Equal Opportunity Education and Training in the Army': Human Sciences Research INC; 1981.
45. For more about this development see Alan Gordon, The Crisis of Unemployment, Christopher Helm, London, 1988, PP. 34 - 37. Also, Ross Davies and Peter Hall (eds.), Issues in Urban Society, Penguin Books, 1978, PP. 84 - 96.

46. A member of the Church of God Seventh-Day.
47. For information about these see 'Notes and Reports', No. 12. Catholic Commission For Racial Justice, Jan. 1983, P.7 and also, 'The British Nationality Bill and The European Commission of Human Rights - CCRJ Briefing Paper', April, 1981.
48. See The Black Liberator, op. cit., P.33.
49. Ibid., P.34.
50. See Faith in the City, op. cit., P.202.
51. Britain's Black Population op. cit., P.66.
52. Department of Employment 1981.
53. See Faith in Leeds op. cit., PP. 16 - 17, see also, 1981 Census information PBS/E3. 814/F2.01, 2nd Sept. 1981.
54. Guardian, April 1981.
55. Employment Gazette, January 1987.
56. See Britain's Black Population, op. cit., P.66.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., see also, Guardian, Wednesday 19 July 1989.
59. See The Enemy Within, op. cit., P.2.
60. Ibid., P.18.
61. Member of the host population in Leeds.
62. See Calley, op. cit., P.140.
63. See Guardian 18 August 1988.
64. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Leeds.
65. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community.
66. See 'Racial Equality and the Youth Training Scheme', CRE Oct. 1984, Black Workers op cit., PP. 28 - 31, and also, Britain's Black Population, op. cit., PP. 63 - 71.
67. For more about this see 'Unequal Opportunities - Racial Discrimination and the Youth Training Scheme, West Midlands Y.T.S. Research Project', October 1985, TURC.
68. A young Afro-Caribbean Girl.
69. See Notes and Reports op. cit., P.9.
70. See 'Black and White: An A.E.U. News Pull-Out on Race, Racism and the Kingdom of God'.
71. See Gordon, op. cit., PP. 55 - 56.

72. According to government's projections Y.T.S. places for all 16 - 17 year olds should have eliminated unemployment among that age group in 1988. See Gordon, op. cit., P.96.
73. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community.
74. Member of the Church of God, Seventh Day.
75. Member of the Wesleyan Holiness Church.
76. See The Oxford Paperback Dictionary, op. cit., P.203.
77. See The Merrion-Webster Dictionary, op. cit., P.308.
78. Contact, op. cit., PP. 3 - 4.
79. William Barclay, Ethics in a Permissive Society, Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1971, P.97.
80. Member of the Mount Zion Pentecostal Church - Apostolic.
81. See Barclay, op. cit., PP. 92 - 93.
82. The Church of God of Prophecy.
83. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
84. The New Testament Church of God.
85. The New Testament Church of God.
86. The Church of God of Prophecy.
87. The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
88. Member of The Church of God Seventh-Day.
89. Member of the Church of God of Prophecy.
90. The Church of God Seventh Day.
91. The Emanuel Pentecostal Church.
92. See 'Headline: The South Headingley Community Association Paper', No. 39, P.4.
93. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
94. The Church of God of Prophecy.
95. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
96. See Phoenix, op. cit., P.13.
97. A member of The PATH staff.
98. See leaflet: 'What is the PATH Scheme?'. Obtainable at PATH (Yorkshire) Ltd. Dyson's Building, Buslingthorpe Lane, Leeds.
99. Ibid.



100. Information received from Sue and PATH executive member.
101. See leaflet No. 4 'The Housing Association Scheme', PATH (Yorkshire) Ltd.
102. Janice, Member of a black church and PATH trainee.
103. The Enemy Within, op. cit., P.21.
104. Sarah (another person who is a graduate of PATH).
105. For more about this see Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, 'Application of Race Relations Policy in the Civil Service', London HMSO., 1978. Sarah's example is only one among several other similar cases which show that there is not much difference in 1988. That is, 10 years after the 1978 study was published, black people are still over represented in jobs which they have higher qualifications than are necessary.
106. Member of the INC., Pentecostal City Mission Church.
107. See Guardian 31 May 1988.

CHAPTER 5

T H E   B L A C K   F A M I L Y   A N D   P A S T O R A L   C A R E  
I N   T H E   B L A C K   C H U R C H E S

INTRODUCTION

The history of Afro-Caribbean people is marked by domination and characterised by hundreds of years in which they had been forced to adopt some facets of the cultural life-styles of those who dominated them.<sup>1</sup> However, throughout that history, Afro-Caribbean people have managed to retain much of the primary characteristics of black family values.<sup>2</sup> Some of those values like genuine concern for one another, respect, obedience and honour given especially to their elders, are traditional bulwarks upon which black family life is based.<sup>3</sup> Those basic features of family life, enhanced by firm discipline, and rooted in the principles of strong religious beliefs, have been vital to black survival. They have been instrumental in keeping the black family together, firstly as slaves, then as subsistence tenant farmers, and presently (for many who are here), as urban dwellers in the inner cities of Britain.

In the third chapter we noted that the black churches were founded around black families. Consequently, the majority of the black churches had their inception in the homes of black people. The churches came into being as a result of the many black people who undertook to call their families together for worship on a regular basis, around family altars, and as an expression of their deep religious beliefs.

This chapter will look at the 'extended' or greater family concept<sup>4</sup> as that traditional institution around which black family life has developed. In doing so, we will evaluate the present shape of the black family in Britain, assessing the extent to which there has been any pattern of restructuring in the context of British cultural influences. Following that, we will endeavour to see whether there has been evidence of any 'spreading out'<sup>5</sup> development of the black family, not based on blood, but as a reaction in enhancing its preservation.

Such a spreading out factor has important implications for pastoral care. That is because it inevitably prompts questions about whether the black family as an institution is stronger or weaker in Britain today. Those factors in turn have direct bearings on the role of the black churches as legitimate extensions of the greater family tradition. For

example, are they part of the preserving structure enhancing any perpetuation of the traditional black family character which might be necessary for its survival? In what ways people who are not related by blood-ties, become bonding members of the extended-surrogate family relationship which functions as the black religious community?

We will look at the extent to which the black church movement has become the vital institution which provides the caring ingredients essential to the preservation of the black family. The chapter will conclude with appropriate examples of how that caring is provided.

## I THE EXTENDED FAMILY

It is possible to identify two major forms of family life-styles which are almost universal. Those two forms of family are the nuclear family and the extended family.<sup>6</sup> The nuclear version is widely accepted as the more appropriate form of what the 'family' is. This type of family is considered to be the more outstanding and ideal one because it represents the accepted Western model. The Black Health Workers and Patients Group put it this way: The 'nuclear family,' they suggested, is supposed to be 'the universal norm against which other structures and types of family are to be evaluated.'<sup>7</sup>

Such a concept of the family consists primarily of a man, his legally married wife and their children living together in a single-unit household. 'In the West', Leslie and Winifred Brown wrote,

it is generally accepted that 'family' means father, mother and children who live together in a single dwelling. Of course there are other people in the picture - grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and so on. But they are 'relations', not 'family', they do not 'belong' in the same way as the intimate<sup>8</sup> group of those who are together all the time.

That 'generally accepted' version of the family differs from the extended family grouping found in the Caribbean - a family type which, for example, has been described as 'a special form of family life which evolved during slavery'.<sup>9</sup>

The single unit-household understanding of the family, then, is not only limited in scope, it also poses great problems for those whose idea of family is not confined to the borders of a household but includes relatives, friends and persons from the wider community as well.

In the book Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean, Nancie Solien outlines part of that particular difficulty.

There has been a tendency to identify the family with the household....However, the situation in



(Western) societies differs so much from those described in other parts of the world, that great difficulty often arises when one tries to apply the classical concepts of 'family (as) household' in Afro-America.<sup>10</sup>

What is true about the Afro-American family structure, holds true for the Afro-Caribbean family also. The two peoples are products of a plantation system in which forms of the nuclear family ethos were discouraged and forbidden, and promiscuity was encouraged. 'European forms of marriage', for example, Lewis and Gibson have informed us,

and all other forms of family union were outlawed by the slave masters and denied the slaves from whom the West Indians in (Britain) are direct descendants....The nuclear family model that operates in Britain is simply not understood by the majority of West Indians living here.<sup>11</sup>

Expressing some of those very sentiments in relation to persons from the host society, a black church member said,

It is difficult for most white people to accept the extended or surrogate family concept - that this person is not only my wife, husband, son or daughter, but individuals in a larger mixed-family relationship.<sup>12</sup>

Some of those who seem unable to accept the extended family system are not confined to people in the host society only. There are Afro-Caribbean people who express similar beliefs about the black family as they echo the identical views of most Europeans.

The black people who express difficulties about the extended family contend that the families which they have are no different with regards to 'who are included', than those of the nuclear family model. They go on to say that they are 'married', with two or three children living together under 'one roof', and consequently are typical nuclear families in every respect. Anyone who is not so 'closely' represented in terms of same blood-group, cannot be classified as part of their family. Outsiders may be 'accepted as relatives', but they are not legitimate representatives of those who are true family members.

Any discussion about the extended family in relation to Afro-Caribbean people, therefore, must reflect those conflicting points of view. To do so is very useful because it can assist us in determining part of the reason why some black people ascribe to the views which they hold about the kind of family they have. For instance, if all representatives of the Afro-Caribbean community in Britain are direct descendants of African slaves, to what extent is it possible for some to have families which are

not categorised as, and defined within the ambit of the extended black family model? Why do they classify themselves as belonging solely to the nuclear family structure which in many ways is predominantly Western and European in orientation?

In response to those queries, two essential factors can be discerned. The factors suggest that part of the reason could be:

(a) because such people may have chosen to forget their African historical roots, or,

(b) it is possible that they are reflecting the extent to which they may have assimilated European cultural values.

The first factor will be looked at now. The second will be considered when we come to deal with the sub-heading entitled 'influences of British cultural values on Afro-Caribbean family life'.

### Emerging Features

The majority of the people who were rounded up in Africa and transported to the Caribbean plantations as slaves, belonged to extended families.<sup>13</sup> However, during the transatlantic journey to the Caribbean an emerging feature known as 'bonding' or comarade became manifest. Slaves who had never known each other began to 'bond together' as if they were members of the same immediate family. They supported each other and relied on the mutual benefits which such support provided for survival.

Having arrived in the Caribbean, the system referred to as 'socialisation' or acclimatisation added a new dimension to the extended family concept.<sup>14</sup> In accordance with a general practice, each new slave was placed under the care of a 'seasoned' or established member of the slave community who played a parenting role in many positive ways. One of those ways of parenting consisted of having to provide materially for the new arrivals, and to 'nurture' them until they had become fully initiated into the basic routine of plantation labour. (In the same way, some of their descendants - the newly arrived immigrants to Britain received help, and were assisted in getting acquainted with life here by those who had settled before them).

As a result of that system of parenting endeavour, deep and endearing relationships akin to those between actual blood-families developed. In time it became almost impossible to distinguish between some slaves who were members of the same blood-families and those who were not. The extended family ideal had, therefore, become a way of life in the Caribbean. So different was this way of life from that of the slave masters that Lewis and Gibson expressed it thus:

Of all the cultural divergences between family life in the West Indies and that in Britain, the concept of

the 'extended family' is probably the most marked and most crucial. In Western Europe the 'nuclear family' is the norm, relatives and friends being seen as comparatively separate and uninfluential; also marriage and family life are usually co-incident and, therefore, automatically equated. The patterns that emerge in the Caribbean as a direct consequence of slavery and (anthropologists believe) as a legacy of traditional African culture, have long appeared deviant and immoral in British eyes because they do not confirm to the monogamous model and frequently seem disorganised and unstable. For West Indians in Britain this has meant a continuing saga of erroneous perceptions, misunderstandings and mishaps on all sides.<sup>15</sup>

The presence of much mistaken beliefs and prejudices about the extended family, we have seen, is not held by a majority of British people only. A small upwardly-mobile sector of the black middle-class is included as well. They are representatives of those who have not only forgotten their African cultural heritage, but also, choose to suppress any legitimate expression of it. For them the extended family represents the 'stigma of blackness and the scourge of slavery', a respondent said.<sup>16</sup> They feel offended and are ashamed to identify themselves with a tradition which they believe is inferior to the one they have conveniently adopted. In giving articulate expression to such beliefs, a black mother insisted that her daughter should ensure that she marry a white person because, 'white marriages are the ideal'. The benefits of such a relationship she continued, are that her daughter's marriage would be more 'stable'. Also, she would gain respect, and there would be 'some light' in the daughter's house.<sup>17</sup>

It has been suggested that what this lady and others like her see in themselves and in their children is only the 'negative image of blackness'. Consequently, they are of the opinion that one way to 'brighten up' that image, is for their children to marry into the host population. Doing so makes it nominally easier for them to 'belong'<sup>18</sup>: to be as British as possible because, it is seen as having climbed one more step on the social ladder of success for those who 'have done well for themselves' in Britain.

#### An Appreciation of Values

If the black people who have rejected the extended family tradition in preference to the nuclear concept find it difficult to recognise any of the basic values of the former, the question which must be asked is: what are some of those basic values?



We will proceed by looking at some of the values which can readily be identified. To assist us we will summarize a few relevant portions of what is probably one of the most outstanding works available on the family.<sup>19</sup> Having done that we will offer a critique of the summarized literature, comparing and contrasting it with what other writers and 'observers'<sup>20</sup> have said about the contemporary black family in Britain and the Caribbean, and what 'other local' black people have stated. Then we will look at the contribution which the black churches make as extended-caring families.

In his book Child Care And The Growth of Love, John Bowlby sees the extended family as a primary social network in which people 'live in large family groups'. Such groups, he suggested, may consist of persons who represent and go back as far as a third and fourth generation, including 'near and known relatives'. Among those relatives are 'grandmothers', aunts or older sisters, who are always available to assume the 'maternal role' whenever that might become necessary. As a consequence, essential factors like 'economic support', love and comforting are provided in the event that the 'breadwinner' is unable to give them.<sup>21</sup> In that context therefore,

The greater family group living together in one locality provides a social insurance system of great value.<sup>22</sup>

The author went on to suggest how it is possible that only in communities where the extended family system does not function that most of the difficulties which are experienced by 'deprived children', for example, may become prevalent. Those conditions are 'found', he said,

in many communities of Western industrialized culture, in which it is usual for young men and women to migrate far from their birthplace and, not infrequently, to move many times in the course of their married lives. As a result of such migrations very many families have such loose ties with their local surroundings that for whole communities it has ceased to be a tradition to help a neighbour in distress.<sup>23</sup>

One of the results of such social disintegration and the absence of any extended family relationship Bowlby believes, is that a much greater 'responsibility for the care of children falls on the natural parents'. That responsibility is not as heavy in the 'more traditional close-knit communities', where the extended family system is the norm. For those reasons,

Not only does such a broken-up community provide no substitutes should a mother or father be temporarily or permanently incapacitated but, by putting this great load on parents, it may destroy a family which in better circumstances

What pertains as the norm in Western Societies today, Bowlby further suggested, is that 'normal home life is provided by the mother and father' of any children they may have. Such a system, he contends, is known as the children's 'natural home group'.<sup>25</sup> And, in spite of 'social break-up', the tradition continues. However,

The break-up of society and the greater family in Western industrialized communities sets grave problems....and in this (sense) the economically less-developed communities may well have much to offer the more developed ones.<sup>26</sup>

There are a number of examples which the author gives as reasons why the nuclear or 'normal home life' families which are predominant in Britain, for instance, may fail to care for children. Some of the reasons are:

(a) when there has never been any 'natural home group' because children were illegitimate,

(b) there is a natural home group, but it does not function effectively because 'the bread winner is unemployed, is chronically ill, or both parents are incapacitated',

(c) the natural home has broken up, and as a result, it does not function on account of: 'the death of a parent, separation or divorce, imprisonment of a parent (and) desertion by one or both parents....'<sup>27</sup>

In the event that any of those circumstances occur and families actually become deprived, depend on three related factors. Those factors are (a) 'whether both or only one parent is affected' (b) whether, 'if only one parent is affected help is given to the other, and (c) whether relatives or neighbours are able and willing to act as substitutes'.

It is possible, however, for neighbours and relatives to also fail to become substitutes. Therefore, what pertains in the case of parents holds true for those groups as well. That is the case because, 'not infrequently', he continued,

the state of affairs which causes the failure of parents to provide for the child is also the cause of relatives being unwilling to substitute. For instance, the unmarried mother not only has difficulties economically, but may also be alienated from her relatives....and neighbours.<sup>28</sup>

As a means of compensating for possible failure of families to care, most Western countries have enacted certain legislative provisions whereby, 'family allowances' are available, the author suggested.

### A Critique

Bowlby's concept of the greater or extended family has striking

resemblances to much of what is the norm for black people. One such likeness is the composition of relatives living in close proximity to each other. That factor allows easy access to potential sources of help for any family member who may need it. Such a possibility whereby help is available is akin to the kind of 'social insurance' which the author speaks about. Much of that help does not appear to be available in the case of the Western nuclear family model. Part of the reason for that lack is because the popular trend in Western industrialized countries like Britain, for example, is for young adults to establish nuclear family households away from their place of birth, especially on new housing estates.

The authors of The Family in Contemporary Society referred to that procedure as a 'disrupted pattern of life'. It is one which affects generations of young adults in the sense that,

the disruption will repeat itself, for there is no room on the estate for the next generation to settle near their parents when they marry and found their own families: they will have to move again, without the three generation pattern, without long family residence in the same locality, the network of kinship and friendship, upon which so much depends, cannot establish itself.<sup>29</sup>

In the Caribbean context, however, the separation is not so distinct. In the vast majority of cases (some observers put the figure above 75%),<sup>30</sup> children still continue the tradition of building their homes on 'family plots' very close to their parents' home. For that reason, it is possible to see many clusters of homes belonging to four or five generations of the same extended families located in what is popularly known as the 'family compound', or the 'same yard'.<sup>31</sup> Because of the strength, mutual benefits and value of that tradition, the practice of being able to help a 'neighbour in distress' which Bowlby suggested does not seem to apply in any appreciable extent to Western Industrialized societies, is very much an essential part of the ethos of the black extended family in the Caribbean.

New housing estates became an important feature of re-housing in Britain as early as 1945. In a reference to what was inclusive of all such estates it was said that:

With the removal of the second generation, with their children, to the new estate all (the) network of kinship and friendship is broken up, and the old security is broken with it.... Grandparents are no longer at hand either to give the wanted support or to receive it.... the neighbours are un-neighbourly; the journey to work is long, exhausting, and expensive; the shops are unfamiliar and 'unfriendly'....In this



'un-neighbourly' life, possessions take on a social importance....possession the balm to anxiety: anxiety the spur to unfriendliness.<sup>32</sup>

Where life is lived under such conditions, and 'possession', for example, plays such a role, it ought not to be too difficult to envisage why any endeavour to assist one's neighbour could be difficult to be realised.

Some aspects of the contrasting attitudes, family life-styles and values between what pertains in the Caribbean and the black people in Britain who have adopted British family norms, are reflected in the observations of this visitor to Britain. He wrote:

What little I have seen of young British blacks that probably distinguishes them from their counterparts in the West Indies is the tendency to assert their independence at an early stage. But they are English and that is to be expected. It is considered normal to leave the relative comfort of parents before the age of 21 in this country. In the West Indies, one is liable to be called a renegade for doing that. Some parents who have been born in the Caribbean must find it difficult to come to terms with this. Because the extended family is not a feature of British life-style, old age will become a lonely experience. The head of the Salvation Army said on his recent election that this is one of the things his organisation intend to tackle. I find it sad to hear that old people die in this country and it takes days before their neighbours find out. That people could live next door to each other for years and yet are strangers - the very thought is nauseating.<sup>33</sup>

It is partly the concern which neighbours exercise to 'find out' and to seek the welfare of each other as a matter of priority, that gives the black extended family concept an added dimension. It is one which helps to 'hold' families together, and compensates for the absence of such an endeavour which Bowlby implied was partly responsible for the larger incidents of family separations in Industrialized communities.

The view of one respondent is that, 'many black families in the Caribbean try to stick together.' Another respondent said,

With help from neighbours and friends they endure the problems which they can't solve.... But here, they don't have to try. They don't have to tolerate in a marriage the things they don't like....they opt for separation instead of trying.<sup>34</sup>

It is not to be assumed that family separations do not take place in the Caribbean. There is evidence to suggest that some of the modern

characteristics relating to a section of the black family in Britain, are also developing in the Caribbean as well. One example of that increasing trend has to do with caring for older people. A group of church representatives from the Caribbean who visited Britain in 1981 and compiled the report entitled, 'Caribbean Christian Challenge', had this to say:

We are seeing a similar phenomenon taking place in the Caribbean where, to a much lesser degree, but in ever -growing numbers, older people find themselves living on their own where, in former times, they would have been cared for within the context of a larger extended family.<sup>35</sup>

The 'older people' who have been referred to, and the causes for any failure to care for them can be included among those which Bowlby gave why 'relatives' for example, may fail to care for family members. In addition to those reasons, one which ought to be cited is that the old people themselves may have decided to live on their own. In doing so they are attempting to assert their independence and may be reluctant to accept help. That is not the same as if they are being abandoned. Children do care for their parents. Where that caring is not possible such people benefit from the extended family network. So that, friends and neighbours visit them - seeing to their needs, even if they may have taken the deliberate step to live on their own. So then, while some of those older people may not be cared for within their immediate family groups, nevertheless, they receive care through the wider family endeavour that is still common in the Caribbean. A similar group in this country may not be able to receive such caring. However, they may be helped by state entitlements for the elderly.

#### The Alienated Un-Wed Mother

What Bowlby has suggested about the un-wed mother, her mother, and her relatives, is seldom the case with black extended families. It is true that most un-wed mothers experience some financial difficulties. But that factor is precisely one of the primary reasons why they are never alienated from both parents and relatives at the same time as the author seems to have implied. Either the natural parents or relatives will offer support if one group fails in that regard.

In the majority of cases, when black parents find out that their daughters are pregnant, the first reaction is one of shock. That sense of shock is sometimes followed by the desire to 'punish' their daughters. One way of carrying out that punishment is to put their daughters out of their homes. But in so doing, they are aware that their daughters have

other homes where they can safely go to. The whole process is aptly described by Lewis and Gibson in this way:

Mother punishes daughter by ordering her out of the house....However, mother knows she need not worry as she can count on relatives to intervene until she calms down and decides to forgive her daughter. In this....situation the daughter first goes to her aunt's house and then moves in with her elder sister who, has two children. Sister reassures her that mother will not let her down in the end, explaining that she may have to suffer for a while, but when the baby is due mother will undoubtedly be at her side to welcome and assist with the new arrival.<sup>36</sup>

Any suffering which the pregnant girl experiences might be more of a moral nature than an economic one. Such suffering may be due to the 'shame' which she has brought upon herself, her parents, relatives, neighbours and friends, who are all members of her extended family. As far as economic support, care and acceptance are concerned, when the baby is born it is not only that mother will be there to 'welcome' and to assist, but also, the maternal grandmother will assume the role of raising the child.

In the cases where there is a grandfather, the relevant practice among black families is expressed by Yehudi Cohen in this way:

The culture assigns illegitimate children to the care of the maternal grandparents rather than to the unwed mother, and it turns out that almost every couple rears two generations.<sup>37</sup>

In those contexts, therefore, the black extended family system contains certain intrinsic cultural modes of procedure which prevents the alienation of any member, especially un-wed mothers or their children.

## II THE BLACK CHURCH AS EXTENDED FAMILY

A specific group of people who receive care from the black churches functioning as an extended family are also un-wed parents. There are a number of young unmarried mothers (and fathers), who are members of the black churches. They are among those whom the churches refer to as having 'come out of the world'.<sup>38</sup> During the time when they were 'in the world', as it were, they became parents.

Some of those parents receive care as they are taken into the homes of church families on a temporary basis. Others are cared for by members who give moral support and financial assistance. A parent who was helped in this way said,



My daughter needed a blood transfusion. I, being a single parent, didn't know what to do or who to turn to....there was no one to share my grief and emotional struggles with. The problems of loneliness, disorientation and displaced feelings had me shaking from head to toe....I felt hopeless and overwhelmed until I joined a church and received the support I needed.<sup>39</sup>

The children of those un-wed parents receive care from church families who look after them like their own children. 'Church members took such care of my children when I was ill, I don't think I could have done better', another parent confided.

They didn't do it as a mere gesture, but more as an obligation. We have learned to look after each other in a deep bond of love and active family kinship.<sup>40</sup>

In the book A Light In A Dark Tunnel, the authors gave an example of another mother and her son who received care from a black church.

'Miss Bourne', they wrote:

found her greatest solace in the church, where, she could mingle with fellow West Indians and where she felt her son Joel would be subject to the most beneficent influence this society could offer.<sup>41</sup>

Part of the 'solace' which such people receive is expressed by a pastor who said, 'an unmarried girl who is also a maid: two of the factors which society looks down upon, can find herself in this church, and assume positions of great responsibility'.<sup>42</sup>

Also, some of the beneficial influences which their children receive come from a group of people who are not only spiritual sisters and brothers in Christ, they function also as 'uncle Powell's and aunty Mavis' to all the children who belong to their church. They assist natural parents to know where their children are at all times, and to be 'aware of what they do'. If, for example, those aunts and uncles of the extended family see any of the members' children behaving in ways which are deviant, they are promptly corrected, 'there and then', a member informed us. Action is taken to correct the children as if 'we are dealing with our own', the respondent continued,

We never cast a blind eye on these things....  
We are all our brothers' keepers, we look out for one another.<sup>43</sup>

Such concerns by church members for the good of each other's children, is not limited to that group only. It extends to the entire church family as well. 'Our church takes the family seriously', a member suggested,

We encourage them to stick together. If they are having problems we lend a helping hand, so they can solve their problems....if they are separated, we try to get them back together again. If they

are single parents, we encourage them to get married.... We try to instil in our youngsters the need to be good citizens at all times, to be guided by Godly principles and to uphold christian practices.<sup>44</sup>

'The church helps to shape and mould good lives', a deacon has suggested,

It develops useful characters. The church is like one big family. We have responsibility for each other....We have ways of knowing when others are in particular needs, through our Band Leaders. We operate a system that demonstrates care. If one member isn't at church, we enquire about them, find out if they're sick and visit them. When members are in hospital, for instance, other members usually go to their homes, wash, cook, iron and do most of the necessary housework....visit them in the hospital with words of encouragement....not showing that we want to take over the house, but helping in ways that show that others are there and are always available for each other.<sup>45</sup>

### Instability

The group which is most appreciative of such caring, and appears to be less likely to see any contributing aspect of it as interfering, or that others may want to 'take over', is the single or one parent family member. One of the reasons for such positive disposition on their part is that when anyone of those parents is ill, for example, there is no other parent in the home who might resent the involvement of church members. The sick parent is happy, therefore, for the assistance of others to fill the role of 'temporary or surrogate parents', in their absence.

The fact that they are single parents (the majority of whom are unmarried), however, makes them very vulnerable to all kinds of unfavourable labelling. They are seen, for instance, to be representing the family life-style which is most unstable among all black family households.

There are two major reasons to account for that kind of negative description. The reasons are (a) the precarious economic position of young black males, and (b) the large number of black female head of households. We will look at both factors together since one has a direct bearing on the other.

There is the belief that one reason why a number of black men seem to father children and do not marry the mothers of their children, has been a carry over of what was the norm for plantation slavery.<sup>46</sup> Because, as we have seen during this chapter, in that society, the sanction of marriage was withheld from slaves, and the practice was

'largely ridiculed' by them.<sup>47</sup> As a consequence, illegitimacy and single motherhood are purported to be normal cultural practices among Afro-Caribbean people.

The incidence of high unemployment and the minimal earning capacity for black males, have been cited as additional reasons why they remain single. Many feel ill-equipped to take on the financial responsibilities of married-family life. Ann Phoenix has stated the problem very succinctly. She wrote:

Since we know that young black men are rather more likely than young white men to be unemployed and to work in poorly paid occupations it is not surprising that Afro-Caribbean women (who predominantly marry Afro-Caribbean men) are less likely to marry than their white peers.<sup>48</sup>

Also, Hare and Hare made almost the same point in their book The Endangered Black Family. Black people seem to 'pretend', they wrote,

that somehow we can't see the deadly significance of unemployment and underemployment of the black male - for whom a programme of mass employment and reconstruction other than in prison and military camps is necessary if the black family is ever going to be reconstructed as a viable leverage<sup>49</sup> in the quest for social and economic evaluation.

The fact that most of those unemployed black men seem reluctant to marry and some of the women with whom they have children appear equally reluctant to marry them, has resulted in a high percentage of single parent households among black people in Britain.

In 1982, the percentage of white single households in Britain was 10% compared to 31% of Afro-Caribbean households.<sup>50</sup> (In the United States the number of black single households was more than three times those for whites in 1984).<sup>51</sup> Figures for the Urban Priority Area of Leeds show that in 1980-81, Chapel Allerton, which includes Chapeltown, had the highest number of single parent families - 11.1%. That factor seems to support the view that black households are more likely to have higher percentages of single parent families.

Apart from the major reasons which we have given why there are so many single black family households, some of the young parents themselves suggest that they have become pregnant because they wanted their 'own council flats'. Getting in the 'family way' was one means of achieving that goal. Also, there is the view that some black girls become single parents in order to try to 'keep their boyfriends'.<sup>52</sup> There are others (including some who were legally married) who have 'thrown out their husbands', because they were 'no good role models'. One parent in this category said,

Some fathers are no good role models like the



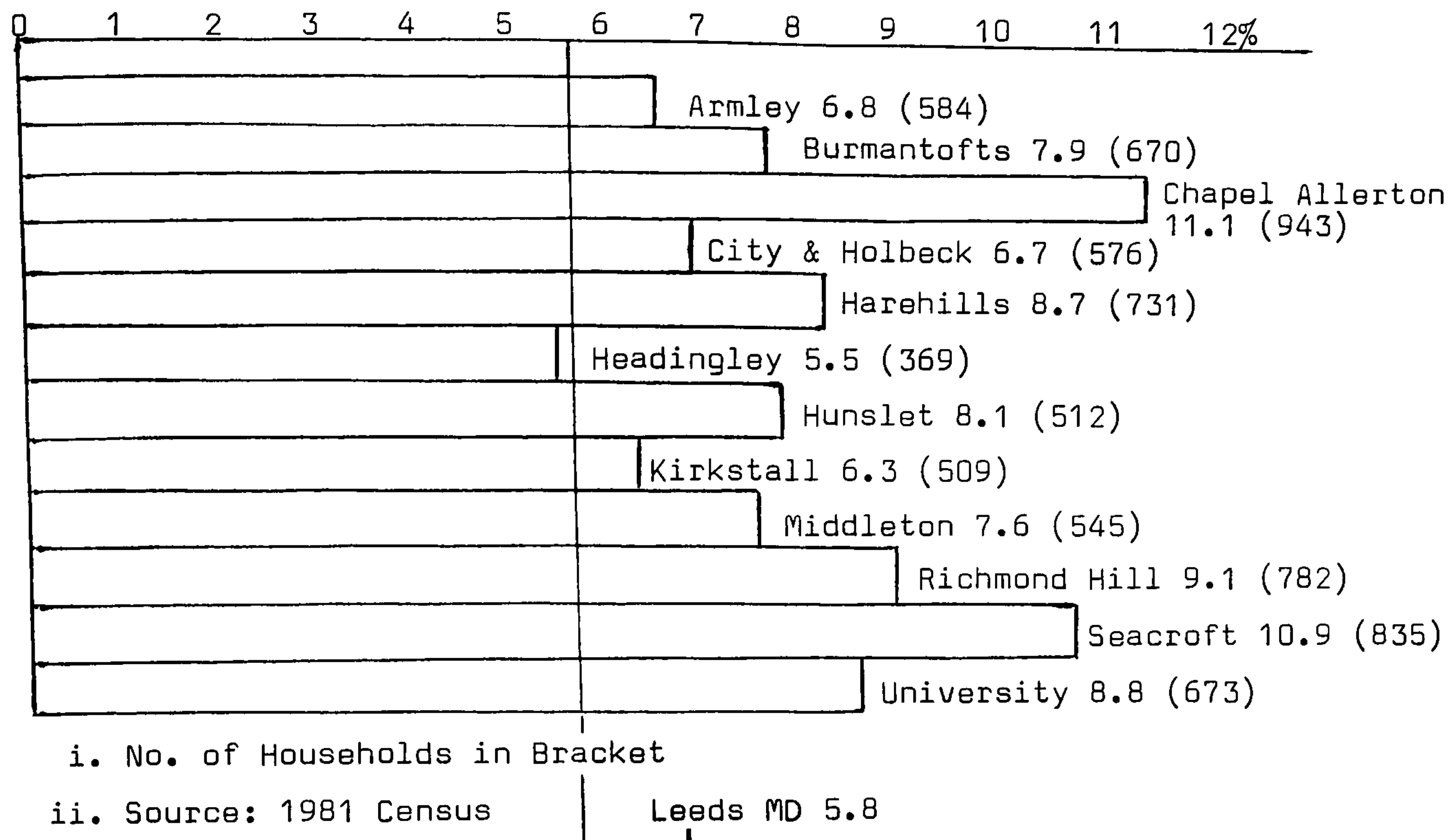
one I had,....not being around is a good thing.  
A father who'd be drunk, who gambles and who  
beats up his woman is better off if he's not  
around for the children to observe these things....<sup>53</sup>

Whatever the reasons for the high incidence of black single parents in Britain, that group is one which is large enough to be 'frowned upon in a society where marriage and motherhood are meant to be inextricably linked'<sup>54</sup>, as the societal norm for respectable family relationships.

A very positive sign, however, is that the black churches are helping to lessen the impact which such stigma has upon single parents. The churches are accepting them and caring for them. In that way, they are enabled to gain some of the individual respectability which they may not have been able to get in the wider society. The extent to which such caring can become more meaningful will depend on how many of those families who can be reached, the willingness of the families to respond, and the general effectiveness of the churches' attempt to help to modify negative societal attitudes toward them. The need for such modification of attitudes, for example, is one which cannot be more urgent.

In that context, therefore, it may very well be that two basic factors which could be both instrumental and decisive in enhancing the meaning and success of the churches caring towards those ends are these: One is a combined social outreach programme for single parent families supported by all the black church groups in Britain. And, the other is their own teachings on moral values to inform it. Essentially, then, it is obvious that the churches are equipped with the latter requirement. The pertinent question is, however, do they also have the will to do what is necessary to make the former possible in an endeavour to improve upon their caring?

TABLE 7: HOUSEHOLDS HAVING ONE OR MORE SINGLE PARENT REPRESENTING A PERCENTAGE OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS IN THE URBAN PRIORITY AREA OF LEEDS



Cultural Inducement

The attempt of the black churches to care for black families is more effective among those who are immediate members. That is because some aspects of the pastoral care which is offered by the churches are not readily accepted by all black people in Britain. There are those who regard such forms of caring, especially when they include specific family matters, to be 'improper' and unwelcome interference in their private lives. Part of the reason for that attitude is expressed by this lady who said,

The particular tie and bind that pertains in the West Indies no longer exists among a number of black families in this country. That is basically because black families are greatly influenced by, and try to accommodate the lifestyles of the British people. The place of the church, for instance, in the eyes of the black family is not like it presently is in the West Indies: here it is just another thing. Young black parents have completely fitted into most of the ways of life of the English. They are not like the older immigrant black parents.... That difference creates much friction within the home. Some facets of the extended family still exist but many have been replaced with English family traditions which tend to be more private....

There is the tendency to believe, however (part of which is implied by

the above information), that the adoption of English family cultural traditions by Afro-Caribbean people, have been forced upon them. 'Black families are struggling to hold on to some of their cultural values as best they can, considering how much they are under pressure to give them up and to copy the life styles of British families', a young man said.

The almost identical view is expressed by Lewis and Gibson who contend that,

The far stronger and larger indigenous section of the population is bludgeoning the smaller, weaker West Indian ethnic group into conforming with its own standard and norms.<sup>56</sup>

There is evidence to suggest, however, that any influencing which might induce standard British family traditions upon Afro-Caribbean minorities, is not as one-sided as it may seem. There is a corresponding element of some counter influencing as well. One example of this factor upon the other side has to do with work habits of Afro-Caribbean mothers in respect of employment outside the home. Ann Phoenix seems to convey that particular aspect of counter-influencing. She wrote:

And white mothers are increasingly behaving like black Afro-Caribbean mothers in seeking employment while their children are young.<sup>57</sup>

An indication of the way in which it can be said that Afro-Caribbean mothers are influencing some of their British counterparts is this: More and more native born mothers are seeing that since their Afro-Caribbean friends are working while their children are young, and those children do not seem to suffer in any way that is detrimental to them, then they too can do the same. In other words, as Phoenix continued, British mothers are accepting the fact that:

Care away from mothers need not be damaging to their children. Afro-Caribbean mothers are not, therefore, likely to harm their children simply by virtue of being employed.<sup>58</sup>

Consequently, the number of white mothers with young children who are working is on the increase.

### Conflict and Tension

What is true also about a number of Afro-Caribbean families according to the informants, is the amount of 'friction' and the degree of tension which are evident in them. Those conditions are related to the same desire to retain positive elements of the extended family tradition on the one hand, and the seemingly continuous 'pressure' to conform on the other hand.



There is tension between British born black children and their immigrant parents because the former seem able to affirm 'their independence' while still young, one observer said. Differences in educational systems, appear to have played a major role in that regard. 'Black kids derive much independence at school', a parent suggested,

Which, when exercised at home, black parents can't deal with: this difference brings about antagonisms and makes for unhealthy family relationships.<sup>59</sup>

This observation does not apply equally with respect to second generation British born parents, as it is with immigrant and first generation born parents and grandparents. Second generation black parents seem to be less assertive. They are likely to allow their children much more freedom than they had been allowed. For example, 'a black child of 13 who wishes to date may be permitted to do so, even if it means he'd be returning home after midnight', a deacon said.

The older parents kick against this because it means going to late night parties. The young parents who are not the staunchly religious ones usually agree....<sup>60</sup>

Another indication of the nature of that conflict is to be found in many young British born children who are doing their utmost to be 'accepted as full-blooded English children', and their parents who may be 'attempting to impose essentially Caribbean values' on them with little consideration given to their peculiar position as a group in the society, another informant has stated.

There is an amount of tension which comes about because of a vast disparity between black parental expectations on how to raise their children, and some of the statutory requirements of British Social Services. That particular area of tension is heightened by 'Statutory agencies', Lewis and Gibson said,

such as schools, the police and the courts (which) are all operating in a cultural register which differs greatly from that of West Indians.<sup>61</sup>

Such a 'cultural register' fails to appreciate or to take into serious consideration the presence of Afro-Caribbean patterns of motivation and behaviour. For example, it seems to have failed to take into account even the slightest possibility that some of the people who are involved might be influenced by a carry-over of certain Afro-Caribbean traditional extended family characteristics which make it difficult for them to fit easily into some of the statutory requirements intended for native children.<sup>62</sup> One such factor is that of language requirement in the

school system. Another example which can be cited is that of housing occupancy.<sup>63</sup>

As we have seen in this chapter (it is acceptable Afro-Caribbean cultural practice for children to be cared for by their grandparents many of whom are migrant generation blacks, speaking a language which is a patois of English: usually a mixture of creole and standard English, with an accent and meaning that is distinctly Caribbean). There is therefore a difference between the language which most black children speak at home, and that which is expected of them at school being the medium of communication. That difference is one which education authorities seem to have failed to address in 'relevant cultural terms'. Consequently, as Lewis and Gibson put it:

Not only do words sound mutually strange, but every mode of interaction in the classroom and elsewhere is affected. In a real sense teachers and children are perceiving, conceptualising and talking about different worlds.<sup>64</sup>

#### Black Church Care

In the black churches, however, the members endeavour to allow the religious groups to deal with potential sources of conflict between parents and children instead of allowing the social service agencies to do so. 'If my sons of 14 and 15 should begin to give me problems so that I couldn't control them', a black church member informed us,

first I'd speak to the pastor and see what he'd say ....then, we'd pray about it. Whatever we can't handle we put it into the hands of the Lord....When we seek God's help and nothing happens, then, as a last resort I'd reluctantly go to the social services and say, 'I can't cope with my sons, what can you do? Then I'd return home and continue praying.<sup>65</sup>

Fully aware of the adverse influences which some social services requirements can have on their children, many black church members refer to them only when all other possible avenues have been tried without success. Others would never consider the possibility of taking such steps. 'No matter what the problem', one such person said,

I'd never willingly refer my child to social services. They'd have to come and take him away themselves. If I had problems with him, I'd seek the help of my church and then put the matter to the Lord in prayer, I know he'd never let me down.<sup>66</sup>

There is hardly ever any need, however, for black church people to refer their children to social service agencies, because the majority seemed

always well-behaved. Lewis and Co. expressed it in this way:

Children of parents who are members of this Christian movement represent a more positive image of West Indian (family) than that found among the more delinquent elements of alienated young West Indians in British society.<sup>67</sup>

The black churches help non-member families who may be more inclined to consult the social service agencies about conflicts with their children in many ways. The churches provide a forum where conflicting parents and children can meet so that, 'both groups may see the different sides of what they disagree about', a pastor informed us.

The churches help parents to 'appreciate more fully the position and expectations of their British born children'. This opportunity is aimed at 'improving the quality of their relationship and family lives through counselling and sharing of common experiences', the pastor concluded.

'Our church provides representation and support to many families in times of conflict and stress', a member of another church said. Family caring under the aegis, and within the ambit of those options is possible from the churches, where, in the opinion of a deacon,

We show them how to ally the help of God to see them through, no matter what the conflict or the difficulty they face....Black-led churches are places where we assure people that their difficulties do not have the last word, so, they can rely on Jesus who solves every family problem, and mends every broken relationship.<sup>68</sup>

The nature and extent of such pastoral caring is probably best summed up by this other pastor who said,

The church places great emphasis on family stability and togetherness. Obviously, when there are problems within the family, this is given top priority....the church gives counselling to the family both on an individual and collective basis....Problems such as marital, or children-parent difficulties, are dealt with in their own contexts. The church has adopted a<sup>69</sup> caring attitude to members and non-members alike.

One of the most important functions of the black churches, then, has been their ability to 'nurture' and to maintain primary 'virtues and values' of the Afro-Caribbean extended family life in Britain.<sup>70</sup> Those factors are of primary importance to the black family. As people care for and relate with one another, many of the pressures of black family life are lived and experienced. In that sense, the churches provide what John Wilkinson describes as a 'space' in which black people can 'breathe free',<sup>71</sup> as they encounter and live out some of the problems of black family life.



### III LOSS AND GAIN FOR THE BLACK FAMILY

There is reason to believe that it is some of the essential aspects of those very virtues and values of the extended family tradition, which have been lost to many black people in Britain. A church member has expressed that possibility in this way:

By coming to this country the black family has gained something and lost out on others. We've gained financially but we've lost culturally. Take the question of respect for elders, for instance, no matter how old a son or daughter was, they'd respect their parents, seek advice from them even if they ain't going to take the advice, but they'd give the opportunity for their parents to be involved. Now the situation has changed. Black youngsters these days don't care about parents. They're doing their own thing....I must say, though, that behaviour is seen mostly among non-christian families. There ain't many who can still maintain the discipline and standards which we knew....Christian families haven't departed,<sup>72</sup> very much from the standards that we knew back home.

Another member had this to say :

Initially, we black parents brought with us to England a model which we believed our children would model themselves upon. But that type of strict family pattern didn't last as it was different from the British....more lax and in keeping with what the state and the law permitted. Our children broke away. There was a different economic and social situation to contend with. That brought lots of pressures to bear upon them, and broke up our families. If employment had not deteriorated so badly there would have been more togetherness in the black family. The black family has lost that sense of oneness, and children and parents have lost that value of the extended family....the responsibility of caring for their parents and parents for their children.<sup>73</sup>

'The black family has gained by coming here', a third person said,

We have gained on social security benefits and from the welfare state which is not available back home....but morally and spiritually we're losing out.<sup>74</sup>

Part of the information given to us by the three respondents must be assessed critically. To do so is helpful because it is one way in which the information can assist us in gaining further clarity from some of the issues which we have discussed thus far. For example, financial gains within the area of social security benefits of the welfare state have been cited as specific examples of where the black family has made gains.

We have seen in the chapter on employment, however, that while some black people may indeed have become 'better off', the majority have not. It has been to a very large extent the financial circumstances of many black young people, for instance, that have contributed to swell the number of single parent families, and consequently, gave rise to the high incidence of unstable black families in Britain.

Also, we have looked at the impact of some statutory social service agencies and their rules and regulations on most black families. The results can hardly be said to amount to much gain. That lack of gain is particularly evident (as we will see in greater detail when we consider the question of strict family patterns of discipline), how the social agencies tend to usurp the traditional role of black parents to control their children. It is a factor that has very serious consequences for the black family.

It would appear, then, that what some black people might have gained in terms of social security benefits, others have lost through the involvement of the welfare state and its various agencies acting in lieu of the extended family system. In that context, therefore, it is possible to conclude that even if social welfare schemes may be more adequate in Britain and cannot be matched in the Caribbean, nevertheless, there is still the presence here of broken families and children who are inadequately cared for. It is the presence of such a situation that was described earlier on as 'lack of parental control', coupled with 'emotional instability and the inability of parents to make effective family relationships' to be very 'outstanding causes of children becoming deprived of normal home life in Britain'.<sup>75</sup>

In the Caribbean where the extended family system is still very much a way of life, emotional support enhancing family relationships is possible in a way that may not be as equally effective where there is no extended family. With assistance from the extended family network, children are less prone to suffer because of inadequate parental support.

An additional benefit which this type of family has for children, is stated once more by Bowlby when he suggested that,

The absence of such a greater family is one of the many handicaps from which a child deprived of a normal home life suffers when he grows up and becomes a parent.<sup>76</sup>

The families which make up the black church establishment in Britain, seem to have lost very little because the various groups are all links in the extended family chain - the black church movement. That movement functions as a reliable family support network, consisting primarily of what a pastor described as a 'functioning christian army

of caring black people who can be relied upon to foster children temporarily and sometimes on a permanent basis when the need arises'.<sup>77</sup>

To a very large extent, therefore, it is the existence of that primary functioning-family network which spreads out far beyond the narrow confines of the nuclear family, that has been lost to those Afro-Caribbean people in Britain who are not members of the black church movement.

### Discipline and the Black Family

Freedom to discipline their children without fear of state intervention has been mentioned as one of the most important examples of what has been lost to the black family. Because there is a 'more slack kind of discipline' that pertains in Britain, a mother of two girls suggested,

Many black parents fear that if they use the traditional form of West Indian child disciplining practice to correct their children, they'd become liable to be brought before the courts.<sup>78</sup>

Another parent has given this example of how such fear can be brought to bear upon them. 'When my seven year old daughter Susane insisted on having her own way', the mother said,

I gave her a good spanking on the hand. But her reaction had me so frightened, I didn't know how to respond....Susane said to me, 'If you don't let me do what I want, I'll report you to my teacher and the police will come and get you'.<sup>79</sup>

There does not seem to be any law against the spanking of children by parents in Britain at the moment. What is a criminal offence is if any such spanking is severe enough to be classified as child abuse. Consequently, what Susane may have had in mind was the practice whereby, if a child goes to school, for example, with physical signs that are consistent with having been spanked severely enough to appear that the child was abused by its parents, then, a teacher could investigate and have the local authorities brought into the picture. Or, a case where a child complains that he/she has been abused because a parent disciplined the child by means of spanking, could lead to an investigation by the authorities. The reaction of Susane's mother, therefore, may have been caused not because she spanked her daughter. Rather, it could have been caused by the fear which she and many other black parents have about the frequency at which they are losing their children who are 'taken into care' by some local authorities. That is so not because these parents are abusing them, but because of misunderstandings about black family cultural practices on the part of local authorities and social workers.

In an article entitled 'racism and Children in Care', the authors have established the presence of part of that misunderstanding when



they wrote:

It is the West Indian extended family that is on trial now. Parents, particularly young single mothers are accused of yo-yoing their children when they send them to their own mothers for short periods and then have them back. Grandparents who want to look after the children permanently often have to do battle with local authorities - and sometimes lose. In a recent case, the health visitor's concern for a child living with her grandmother was based on how well-behaved the child was. Another local authority wanted to remove a child to long-term foster parents because, although the child was 'well cared for', she called her grandmother 'mum' and her mother was always around at the grandmother's, who 'appeared to be looking after both'.<sup>80</sup>

Rather than risk any possible intervention by the state in their domestic affairs, a number of black parents have abandoned the familiar forms of child discipline which they knew. In relenting on the right to discipline their children as they please, some black people see it as the 'society taking over the role' that they should have as parents.<sup>81</sup>

However, there are others who feel that such kinds of child rearing is archaic. As a consequence, black parents ought to be able to conform to the norms of the society in which they live. One man who holds that view had this to say:

Migrant generation West Indian parents have overdone it in many ways....the kind of stern discipline that they advocate has served its usefulness in the Caribbean. We are in a different environment now which must be taken into consideration in bringing up our children....Our discipline must be able to relate to the expectations of an English society.<sup>82</sup>

### Holy Scripture and Black Family Discipline

What the informant and others like him see as 'stern discipline' has been defended with the use of Holy Scripture. We will outline part of that defence, and show how those who advocate firm discipline as essential to black family life believe that their credential for such belief is Biblically based. Following that, we will look at a portion of the current literature on the issue of a Biblical criteria for discipline. Then, we will reflect critically on what has been said from the perspective of how the black churches are caring for those who have difficulties about how they might correct their children.

Some members of the Afro-Caribbean community believe that the best way to discipline their children (especially when they have done something

contrary to their parents' will), is with the use of a 'strap'.<sup>83</sup> By so doing, one claim of those parents is that they are keeping with what the scripture teaches, giving them 'legitimate and divine' bases for their conduct. The book of Proverbs 'clearly shows', they contend, that,

He who spares his rod hates his son. But  
he who loves him disciplines him  
diligently (Prov. 13 : 24).

It is because they love their children, therefore, that the rod is to be used. In doing so, they are trying to 'train up' their children in the proper way they 'should go', so that, when the children are older, they 'will not depart from it' (Prov. 22 : 6).

Such style of parenting is, however, regarded by many people in the host society as wholly 'inadequate' and unacceptable child care. In outlining part of that objection, those who make it contend that parents are likely to inflict injury on their children physically and emotionally. 'Each kind of beating', says one advocate,

Caning and spanking of a child is a humiliation  
and is a serious damage for his whole life....  
To hit children means killing the psyche, the  
emotions, the potential of a human being.<sup>84</sup>

It is the belief of another advocate that, 'West Indians attitudes to their children cause problems' because they 'dominate them by force'.<sup>85</sup>

Lewis and Gibson expressed what can be interpreted to be a very relevant assessment of the whole debate when they wrote that,

The 'spare the rod - spoil the child' Old Testament  
approach is one of those features that does not find  
favour here, even though there is little evidence  
that West Indian parents do any real harm to their  
children.<sup>86</sup>

Another aspect of the impropriety of Afro-Caribbean parenting is that it causes what the objectors see as 'inter-generational conflicts with adolescent children'.<sup>87</sup> Those adolescent persons being at an age when they are 'between childhood and maturity', often become very resentful of parents who may use a rod on them. They prefer to be treated in a more mature way, like the adults who they perceive themselves to be. When that is not done, those young adults sometimes react so forcefully against their parents, that the consequences can be very 'disastrous' for both, the opponents maintain.

In response to those criticisms, some Afro-Caribbean parents contend that it is exactly at that very time their children need to be given 'stern discipline'. That is because the children are at the stage which

Proverbs calls the 'path of life', and which they interpret to mean the 'threshold of adulthood'.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, instead of being resentful, they ought to heed instructions, because,

He is on the path of life who heeds  
instruction. But he who forsakes reproof  
goes astray (Prov. 10 : 17).

One of the ways in which those adolescent children may attain the wisdom they need, so that, they might not go astray in adulthood, is to be guided by their parents' instructions, however unwelcome, since,

The rod and reproof give wisdom.  
But a child who gets his own way  
brings shame to his mother (Prov. 29 : 15).

And,

A fool rejects his father's discipline,  
But he who regards reproof is prudent  
(Prov. 15 : 5).

There are black parents who even go a step further and say that their kind of discipline might sometimes be God's way of using them to carry out his purpose for their children. Consequently, it is not always they who are doing the actual disciplining, but 'God acting through' them. As evidence of that belief the parents often ask resentful children to read Hebrews 12 : 5 - 7. The passage reads:

And you have forgotten the exhortation which is  
addressed to you as sons,  
'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline  
of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov-  
ed by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He  
disciplines, and He scourges every son whom  
he receives'.  
It is for discipline that you endure; God  
deals with you as sons; for what son is  
there whom his father does not discipline?

#### Proverbs: The Book of Family Discipline and Counsel

One of the most influential works linking the scriptures with family discipline is Donald Capps' Biblical Approach to Pastoral Counselling. Focusing on Proverbs, Capps suggests that the book contains a wealth of human experiences that make 'claim to divine sanction'.<sup>89</sup> Aspects of such divine approval have been successfully followed as patterns for individual relationships 'with one another....that have inspired people to seek better lives'.<sup>90</sup> Proverbs is, therefore, a book with meaningful guide-lines and specific ways for proper human conduct of which discipline is a primary example.

Reflecting on part of J. E. Adam's previous work, Competent to Counsel,<sup>91</sup> Capps suggests that Proverbs is a book of 'good counsel', because it,



anticipates the pitfalls and problems of life and directs the reader to make biblical responses to them. Proverbs capsulizes segments of life as God expects his children to live in a sinful world.<sup>92</sup>

As a consequence, when parents discipline their children according to Proverbs they are acting as counsellors to them, helping them to avoid the many 'pitfalls' which they face.

As parent-counsellors, they cannot allow their children to rely solely on their own initiatives. Children must be helped and given 'insights'<sup>93</sup> which they do not have. Sometimes, it is necessary for parents to force those insights upon their children as part of the greater wisdom which parents may possess. For both Adams and Capps such parental 'wisdom' becomes,

personified and made to say, 'I have counsel and sound wisdom' and 'I have insight, I have strength'. Thus, Wisdom (as the ideal (parent) counsellor) gives advice; tells people what to do'. In other proverbs, counsel is expressed in the form of paternal advice: 'My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights' (Proverbs 3 : 11-12).<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, according to Capps,

Plainly the reproof that is spoken of is the kind of discipline that a father gives to his son for the son's own benefit. Thus, Proverbs makes clear that 'an outside source imposed upon (a child) from above in an authoritative fashion by means of precepts, commandments, instruction, words, reproof, discipline and correction, is what a young man....needs.'<sup>95</sup>

Young people need to 'learn to listen' to their parents. The fact that some are not doing so may well be a major reason for any 'present distress' which they might experience, the author concluded.<sup>96</sup>

### A Critique

The majority of Afro-Caribbean parents who support the use of firm discipline as their style of parenting do so on the basis of a strong conviction that what the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy says in chapter three and verse 16 is true:

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

In which case, the scriptural suggestion that part of the training and correction of children in the way they ought to go might be done by means of the rod, has led those parents to believe that they have a

divine obligation to follow such an example. It is a form of discipline which they credit with success because it has God's sanction and approval. Any reminder that many children who have been trained, disciplined and corrected with the use of the rod have subsequently 'departed', even before they became adults, is not a relevant factor to the parents concerned. Rather, their contention is that they have no control over what their children do as adults. While the children are young, however, God expects them to do their duty as responsible parents. God wants children to be disciplined as a primary part of that parental responsibility.

For that reason, discipline is a divine requirement which must not be taken 'lightly' (Heb. 12 : 5). Parents who fail to use the rod, therefore, are failing in their duty to their children and to God. Even more so, because God has no hands of his own but the hands of parents, God is only using them to fulfil his purpose.

The black churches affirm the importance of such beliefs to their members. They maintain that whatever is done by God in the service of His people can only be accomplished if God's servants perform those endeavours for Him. And, any such accomplishment can only be realised in the sense that, as one of the pastors expressed it more fully:

God has no hands but our hands  
No feet but our feet  
No ears but our ears  
No mouth but our mouths,  
God has no eyes but our eyes. <sup>97</sup>

In every divine endeavour of christian service, then, God relies on His children to speak, walk, hear, see and to act for Him. Those factors are true with respect to family discipline as well as in all other aspects of the christian life.

Donald Capps may not agree with, nor be supportive of people like the Afro-Caribbean parents who advocate and are inclined to use the strap to discipline their children. However, the author appears to be in agreement when he suggested that 'discipline and correction' is what some children often need for their own well-being. <sup>98</sup>

Many black parents testify to the fact that what they have accomplished can be credited to the firm disciplinary measures of their parents at home and teachers at school. They were actually 'caned' at school because their teachers wanted to 'push' them, and the cane was part of their way of doing that. Clifford Hill has cited that very tendency among other Afro-Caribbean parents who have insisted that teachers should beat their children 'good and they'll learn well'. <sup>99</sup> Those parents are convinced of the value of that course of action even if the opponents of corporal punishment may say it does not work.

One motive for the desire to push their children is of particular

significance to most Afro-Caribbean parents in Britain. That motive is expressed by Lewis and Gibson when they suggested that,

West Indians are at the bottom of every known social scale in Britain, be it in education, employment, housing or anything else.<sup>100</sup>

Because of that, parents want more for their children. They want them to have a better life. In that context, therefore, just as their parents and teachers had done, those contemporary parents try to motivate their children to attain high standards of educational, economic and social success. For the majority of the children involved, however, most of their parents' expectations are too high and unrealistic. The children cannot realise them, and, as such, some parents often feel that their children have 'let them down'. Other parents believe that all their 'hard work and sacrifice have gone down the drain', that their children are 'ungrateful', and have not tried hard enough.<sup>101</sup> The reality of such expectations by parents on the one hand, and the non-fulfilment by children on the other, often results in the development of much resentments between them.

The black churches are very instrumental, however, in lessening some of the frustrations and resentments of parents and children. The churches serve as bridges upon which parents and children can meet each other halfway. With the aid of such bridges, the expectations of some parents about what their children ought to achieve and what in fact most children are capable of achieving are put into perspective, so that, there is a common ground for compromise. One way by which that is done has been expressed by this pastor. 'Every other Saturday', he said,

We go to the homes of black families, go in, sit down and in an informal way talk to them. In so doing, we've found people are willing to talk.... expressing their pains, sadness, frustrations, expectations, joys and achievements.<sup>102</sup>

There are times when such visitors act as 'referees' between disputing family members. At other times, it is no more than just an opportunity to 'lend a listening ear to an individual who wishes to air a particular problem', another black church representative informed us. So then, in those small and meaningfully-involved ways, persons are assisted in the process of resolving some of the difficulties in their lives, and share the successes which they may have achieved.

#### A Misinterpretation Recognized

Some black parents seemed to have misconstrued the meaning which the Proverbs writer intended to convey with the use of the phrase 'on the path of life'. They missed the inclusion of the preposition 'on' which



indicates that what the Proverbs passage probably meant was to inform that one is on the correct road of life who takes certain instructions. Rather, the parents appear to have interpreted the relevant phrase in a different context. The context in which they used the term suggests that children who, for instance, are at a 'semi-adulthood' stage in life, need instruction to show them how best to move from what they are to become full adults.

There seems to have been a difference then, with reference to what was stated and how it was conceived and interpreted. Another way of stating this is: the parents believed that what the writer of Proverbs meant was that one had been at the transition point from one state in life to another. That is the stage which is the transitional one between childhood and adulthood, or the 'liminal phase' of life which is a betwixt and between position, when, having lost the former state, one has not yet acquired the new one. Or, to express this to include broader terms, it is the stage between when, for example, 'one day a person is a wife, the next a widower, a single individual next a married man'.<sup>103</sup> Whereas, what Proverbs was referring to was one's journey in life.

#### An outward Feature of Parenting and Family Care.

Capps' mention of 'reproof' as a form of discipline, which, according to Proverbs is 'what a young man' sometimes needs even when such discipline comes from an 'outside' source, is akin to, and in keeping with, an example of pastoral care in the black churches. That is the example of pastoral care from an outside source which is evident as church members express their love, involvement and concern for each other's children as if the children were their own.

Due to the fact that black church members act not only as parents but also in the meaningful capacity of uncles, aunts and other relatives to each other, they demonstrate a manifest quality of the black church movement as an effective extended family. In that context, therefore, the members sometimes make the pertinent claim to be a family that 'truly cares'. One outstanding aspect which has been cited as support for that claim is the capacity which such family-type has, in meeting the needs of each individual member at whatever stage of life they are, or the kind of circumstance they face: spiritual or temporal.

A major drawback, and a potential weakness of such caring, however, is the tendency to be ostensibly authoritarian. Precepts, commandments, instruction, correction, reproof and discipline, emanating from above

do seem to be able to generate more problems than they are beneficial in meeting individual needs. It is necessary then, to turn to the related area of 'authoritarian discipline' in black family care.

#### IV AUTHORITATIVE FEATURES AND BLACK FAMILY CARE

The word authority can be used in a number of contexts. Four of those contexts have been outlined by R. S. Lee in his book Principles of Pastoral Counselling. According to Lee, there is first of all, 'the legal or quasi-legal meaning' of authority. This meaning relates to the privileges and 'powers' given to someone by virtue of that person's office. For example, the headmaster of a school has authority because he/she has been given official responsibility to be the head of that institution. However, the authority which the headmaster exercises is related more to the office which he/she holds, rather than to the individual person.<sup>104</sup>

Secondly, there is what has been referred to as 'moral authority'. This type of authority consists of the official as headmaster, and also, the willingness of the pupils and teachers 'to accept' the decisions which the head might make on behalf of the school's board of governors, or the appropriate body to which he/she is accountable. 'Legal authority', says the author, 'is valid against all men but moral authority depends on its voluntary recognition'.<sup>105</sup>

In the third sense, there is authority which is due essentially to the 'accumulated' amount of knowledge and experience that one has. A person could be an authority for instance, on fishing or on chemical reactions, primarily because one's expertise on those particular subjects is validated by other experts in the fields.

Finally, the author mentions what he terms 'purely psychological' authority. This kind of authority is one 'in which a man may be esteemed', he said,

Ostensibly on the grounds of the second and third types of authority, but derive his authoritative position from the emotional attitudes of those whom he exercises it. The basic example of this is the authority a parent or an adult exercises over a young child. This...type becomes important because the infantile attitudes persist in the unconscious mind and lead us to ascribe authority to people where circumstances predispose us to it. This emotional authority, needless to say, because it is so largely unconscious reinforces or becomes confused with other types.<sup>106</sup>

When Afro-Caribbean people speak of parental authority, some features

of the four kinds mentioned by Lee are included. For example, like all families, they have legal authority as parents to protect their children from the abuse of other people. Also, there is moral authority which consists of the children's readiness to be protected and defended by their parents. There is, however, the authority which constitutes and is incorporated into what a pastor called a 'carry over of African tradition based on reverence and respect for elders'.<sup>107</sup> Some aspects of that tradition are sometimes mistaken to be draconian in method and severe in practice, especially when it may be necessary to have them enforced. An example of such mistaken assumption is this one by Clifford Hill, stating that,

The West Indian family traditionally is a strongly authoritarian institution imposing a standard of discipline upon children from both parents which is rigid and unbending.<sup>108</sup>

Another interpretation of the traditional authority of parents in the black family has been given by Yehudi Cohen in Peoples And Cultures of the Caribbean. 'In general terms', he said,

parents maintain absolute authority over their children as long as they support them....(a son) owes his parents absolute obedience as long as he is being supported by them....Likewise, parents enjoy absolute authority in every sphere until their children have left school....As he gets older and earns more money he enjoys greater freedom, and once he has reached premarital adulthood his parents enjoy minimal authority over him. But as long as he is living in his parents' home he is somewhat restrained, for he retains the luxury of having his mother cook for him. Often, in early adulthood, parents will threaten a son with deprivation of this luxury or with possible expulsion from the home if he does not comply with certain prescribed requirements enumerated by them.<sup>109</sup>

An uninformed reading of both references can result in the tendency to misconstrue the proper meaning of authority in the black family. In its actual and traditional sense, authority is a reciprocal endeavour. Both parent and child exercise it over the other to fulfil basic needs. Such authority is essential to the well-being of the black family and is rewarding to each individual who exercises it.<sup>110</sup>

In essence then, that is consistent with a mode of authoritative behaviour which is culturally and traditionally conducive to foster closer relationships between parents, children and relatives. As a direct consequence, it has been said that Afro-Caribbean families contradict the dominant ideological assumptions about the proper way to raise children in 'another way'.<sup>111</sup>



An understanding of the exercise of authority in the black family tradition, then, is not one which is based solely on repression, nor must it always be equated with harshness and inequality. It is not part of a process in which parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles see themselves as superiors and children as lesser. Rather, in a more important way, it is part of a dynamic relationship in which all the participants - parents, grandparents, children and relatives, enjoy full parity with each other within the structures of home and family. Expressing the essence of that relationship a parent had this to say:

We're good for one another. I control them and they control me....I become the child sometimes while they become the parent....it works beautifully.<sup>112</sup>

When some black parents use strict disciplinary measures in dealing with their children, therefore, it is never an exercise devoid of humility. Such forms of discipline are those which the parents themselves will humbly receive from relatives, friends and from children, if they have erred.

If examples of black family discipline are sometimes seen as being harsh in intent and authoritarian in character, they are executed with the benevolence and compassion of loving parents who intend nothing but good for their children.

#### Authority in the Black Church as Extended Family

Most of the basic principles akin to the exercise of Authority in the black family apply to the black church movement as well. For example, authority in the black churches has nothing to do with purely 'coercive modes of power' which seeks to dominate others, but refuses to submit itself to the discipline of members of the group. Rather, authority in the black churches is a shared process. An appropriate feature of that kind of authority is expressed by Thomas Oden. 'Properly understood authority' according to Oden, consists of,

persuasive, participative modes of benevolent, empathic guidance....(it) is not an external manipulative, alien power that distances itself from those 'under' it, but rather a legitimized and happily received influence that wishes only good for its recipients.... what the flock yearns for and needs.<sup>113</sup>

The nature and character of authority in the black churches (as in the black family), is based on what has been described by the members as 'faithfulness to the teaching example of Jesus'. Evidence in support of such teaching is recorded in Matthew 7 : 28-29.

The multitudes were amazed at His teaching;  
for He was teaching them as one having  
authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus' teaching was authoritative in every way. However, it was not the kind of teaching which was 'overbearing', dogmatic or one that attempted to 'compel' people to do what he said. On the contrary, as James Stewart put this, Jesus' teaching was manifested by an 'overwhelming respect for their personalities' as human beings.<sup>114</sup>

The people whom Jesus taught were not seen as 'servants' who only received instructions, but as colleagues who were privy to certain information. John expressed the same thing in this way:

No longer do I call you slaves; for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15 : 15).

Black churches put much emphasis on the ministry of authoritative teaching. Such emphasis is motivated by the belief that a substantial proportion of Jesus' own ministry had to do with teaching (see Matt. 8 : 19, 11 : 1; Mk. 5 : 35; John 13 : 13-14; Lk. 19 : 47 and Acts 1 : 1). Also, some of Jesus' early followers like Paul and Barnabas, for example, 'with many others' (Acts 15 : 35), exercised ministries of teaching. As a direct consequence of that belief, therefore, there is a vibrant education ministry of caring in the black churches.

#### V EDUCATION AS CARING

Education is given pride of place by a majority of black parents and by the black church movement in Britain. One of the 'other' reasons why many black people migrated to Britain (in addition to the one we have cited in chapter four), was the desire to achieve 'better education for our children', a number of black parents have informed us. The wish to procure such educational attainments continues to be paramount among black parents even if it appears that British schools have not 'turned out' many black children with the level of educational standards which most Afro-Caribbean parents expected.<sup>115</sup>

In this section we will look at the Saturday School system as one of the major initiatives which Afro-Caribbean parents have taken to improve the education of their children. As a way of looking at that initiative we will compare and contrast the Saturday School system of Afro-Caribbean parents with the former Socialist Sunday School movement of native British parents to see how working class parents took it upon themselves to try to enhance the education of their children. Having done

that, we will look at an example of a community school as an endeavour of a black church to care through the process of the education ministry.

The beginning and growth of Saturday Schools within the Afro-Caribbean community has been in many ways like the founding of the Socialist Sunday School movement in Britain during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries.<sup>116</sup>

The Socialist Sunday School movement began in 1892 when the first school was started in London by Mary Grew who was the 'daughter of a Berkshire shopkeeper'.<sup>117</sup> However, as Brian Simon has informed us,

But it was in Glasgow that the movement really got under way four years later when four or five schools were operating as a result of the initiative of Caroline Martyn. From here the movement spread once more to London and provinces, particularly Yorkshire and Lancashire....<sup>118</sup>

'Justice', the Socialist Journal of 15 September 1900, makes mention of a Yorkshire conference during which it was reported that Halifax had 159 scholars, Bradford 112 and Huddersfield had 50. In 1910, the Socialist Sunday Schools at Leeds participated in a large 'procession through the Leeds Streets'.<sup>119</sup> Also, in 1912, they were able to fill the 'Great Coliseum' with a cast of almost 600 performing artists and an audience of 3,500 people.<sup>120</sup>

Most of those schools were established to promote what Maureen Stone calls,

a self-image based not on therapy or charity but on hard work, disciplined study and the will to succeed.<sup>121</sup>

In like manner, groups of Afro-Caribbean parents came together to found their own Saturday Schools, stressing among other ideals,

the importance of hard work, high aspirations, willingness to sacrifice and beliefs in one's ability to succeed as the only possible way forward for most West Indian children in Britain.<sup>122</sup>

The Saturday School system began to take root in the black community in 1967. There is evidence of one such school which was 'established in Shepherd's Bush, West London' by Clinton Sealy in that year.<sup>123</sup> The new development was given media coverage and brought to national attention by the Guardian, 20 February, 1978. In an article under the caption, 'Old Fashioned Learning by Rote Pays Off', the columnist suggested that Saturday Schools were being established in response to Afro-Caribbean parents refusal to accept that their children had been 'intellectually inferior' to native children, and were incapable of achieving.<sup>124</sup>



Like the Socialist Sunday Schools, Saturday Schools were run initially by the ordinary parents who had set them up. They were the first teachers. So too, Brian Simon informed us that 'all over the country', it was the

rank and file socialists, men as much as women (who) made work for the school their main contribution to the socialist movement.<sup>125</sup>

Stone's assertion, therefore, that 'eventually' trained Afro-Caribbean teachers together with their counterparts from other professions became involved in the teaching and running of Saturday Schools, has an historical parallel with the socialist schools.<sup>126</sup>

In the case of the socialist schools, Brian Simon has averred that a 'venerated' personality like Alex Gossip, a leading trade unionist and president of the National Union in 1909', gave much time in,

teaching, organising and forming new schools. Other leading socialists also gave their time and energy (as well).<sup>127</sup>

Included among this group were those whom Reid described as,

professional school teachers who, frustrated by the impoverished barrenness of much of the state school system, found in Socialist Sunday Schools an opportunity for experimenting in the teaching of history, civics and ethics.<sup>128</sup>

In the Saturday Schools, efforts are made to relate what is being taught in conventional schools to the cultural life of Afro-Caribbean children. In those schools, also known as 'Supplementary Schools', there has been a conscious undertaking to expand the 'curricula to include aspects of 'African and Caribbean History, creative writing and black literature'.<sup>129</sup> That factor has been expressed by Trevor Carter in this way:

Whatever the grouping behind a supplementary school, religious or community, the main objectives are to motivate the children to succeed in mainstream school and to equip the children with sufficient knowledge of their history to meet the future with confidence.<sup>130</sup>

Emphasis on black history and literature provide a basic awareness and induce a level of consciousness-enhancement which Afro-Caribbean children need to develop their identities as black people. One of the parent-teachers put it thus:

Supplementary schools were formed to give an extra-cultural dimension that the black child should have ....In our school children are made aware of black people who've achieved. They have role models in the form of black teachers who are in control and who're running their own schools.<sup>131</sup>

So too, in the socialist Sunday Schools, Reid suggested that great emphasis was placed on 'literature and history', which were, based on the lives of heroes, saints and reformers as a means of awakening the moral sense of the child.<sup>132</sup>

One of the positive results of the socialist schools was that they 'provided a focus for young socialists in many cities'.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, Saturday Schools offer an avenue where black children meet on equal terms. There, they are able to relate to, and compete with each other in an atmosphere where much of the disadvantages which they experience in other sectors of the society, are considerably reduced. The schools are places, therefore, where, like the black churches, children can be themselves. They are not assessed on anybody else's standards and criteria but their own, which is an important way of discovering who they truly are.

#### The Critics of Black Parents Answered

We have seen that some of the people who provide positive role models in Saturday Schools are not only professional teachers, but also, ordinary parents as well. The presence of such parental involvement at that level serves to invalidate much of the criticisms which black parents face. Among the many criticisms which have been levelled at working-class parents in the Afro-Caribbean Community, is that they do not take sufficient interest in the education of their children. That is an assertion which is held even by a number of black people. One of the black persons who hold such belief said,

Black parents are not interested in the education of their children....they ain't conscious enough to say, 'let me see your school work, let me see your home work'. They just don't have the time, they've got too much to do otherwise. The husband or boyfriend may not be too keen either, so the children grow up with no education.... without education they are doomed to a pre-determined fate as a generation of blacks who are increasingly isolated from mainstream society and its opportunities....When those parents were small they didn't get any education, now they just don't appreciate its value, and they don't take the steps to ensure that their children go to school.<sup>134</sup>

The fact that there are Saturday Schools is a reality which refutes the belief that some black parents show no interest in their children's education. It was an expression of the extent of their commitment to

the education of their children that brought about the establishment of Saturday Schools. Such schools serve to demonstrate that black parents are no different from any other ethnic group regarding the scholastic welfare of their offsprings. Like their working-class counterparts in the host society, black parents do show much concern about whether their children learn or not. The Socialist Sunday School movement of 1892, and Saturday Schools today are clear evidence that black parents, too, are no less appreciative of the tremendous value of education.

It is not true to contend, therefore, that black parents do not have the consciousness to enquire about their children's home work, for example. What might be a more accurate interpretation of such response is to say that many black parents may not have the necessary educational skill and professional competence to assist children with their home work. For instance, most parents may not be able to solve some of the modern mathematical problems which children might have as part of their home work. However, a majority of black parents do endeavour to encourage their children to do the work.

#### Difference, Relevance and Reality

While it is clear that some of the basic sets of criteria which pertained to both the socialist Sunday School and the Saturday School movements in Britain are similar, the same is not true concerning their respective destinies. For example, one of the most important factors which served to precipitate the decline of the Socialist Sunday School movement had been the effect of 'economic depression'.<sup>135</sup> However, it is to a very large extent that same factor that sustains the life and promotes the growth of Saturday Schools in the Afro-Caribbean community. Stone expressed an element of that belief in this way:

The process whereby the Socialist Sunday School ceased to be needed can never, of course, be reflected in the West Indian schools.<sup>136</sup>

An outstanding aspect of that 'process' was manifested in, and motivated by a change in the social and economic circumstances of Britain after the first World War. Faced with the severe economic conditions of 1931 and weakened by the paralysing 'strains of unemployment', in particular, the Socialist Sunday School movement declined rapidly.<sup>137</sup> Today such



schools are almost non-existent. Evidence that a small number of those schools may still be functioning is contained in the Young Socialist of Winter 1964. The document made reference to 'seventeen' Socialist Sunday Schools, the majority of which are located in the Glasgow community.<sup>138</sup> In spite of that possibility, however, it can be said that Socialist Sunday Schools have now ceased to be a reality in the British society while Saturday Schools are very much a functioning part of the Afro-Caribbean community.

Saturday schools are definitely increasing in number.<sup>139</sup> There is reason to believe, therefore, that what gives impetus to and influences such growth in the number of Saturday Schools has been the widespread precarious economic circumstances experienced by black people. Faced with high and unacceptable unemployment rates, black parents continue to put their faith in Saturday Schools as the vehicle to effectively supplement their children's education. In that way they may be better able to compete for available jobs. Given the seriousness of that motivation, it is quite possible that as long as black people are adversely affected by severe and pressing unemployment factors, they will remain persuaded in their resolve to develop and to maintain Saturday Schools.

Another equally important reason why socialist Sunday Schools have declined and Saturday Schools are increasing, is the fact that much of what the socialist schools stood for was taken into state schools which are presently failing black children. Consequently, Saturday Schools will continue to flourish because of the extremely large number of black children who are represented in the 'remedial and lower streams of comprehensive schools'. Added to that particular group, for example, is the high percentage of black children who are in schools for the 'educationally sub-normal'.<sup>140</sup>

The result of an educational survey<sup>141</sup> has shown that while there were almost 54% of immigrant children in ordinary schools who were of Afro-Caribbean descent, as many as 75% of the children in Educationally Subnormal Schools were Afro-Caribbean.

Saturday Schools serve to improve the educational performance of black children in both ordinary and in remedial schools. They are an essential part of the contribution of black parents in their resolve to ensure that the percentage of black children in subnormal schools are reduced, and those in ordinary schools achieve their full potential.

### The Easterley Road Community School

This school is attached to and is run by the New Testament Church of God in Leeds. It is one among similar efforts by the black churches to make a contribution to the wider community beyond their own membership. Black churches were among the first group of people in the Afro-Caribbean community to be involved in the Supplementary School endeavour. The community school enterprise, therefore, is based upon and inculcates many of the basic principles of the Supplementary Schools while implementing some new facets of its own. For example, like Supplementary or Saturday Schools, this community school provides 'standards of teaching' which range from 'basics to G.C.S.E. level'.<sup>142</sup> Included among the subjects which are offered are mathematics, sociology, English Language and psychology. The Saturday School supplements the teaching of such subjects giving to black children an opportunity to get an additional amount of tutoring apart from and in a different setting from mainstream schools.

Also, like Saturday Schools, subjects are taught with individual needs in mind as one of 'our specialities is an interest in the education of West Indians', the teachers have informed us. So too, we have seen how Saturday Schools emphasise an awareness about the Caribbean in terms of a grounding in its cultural dynamics and with subjects that are similarly orientated.

Saturday schools differ from black community schools, however, with regards to the times in which they function. Whereas Saturday Schools meet on Saturdays, the Easterley Road Community School, for example, meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 6 p.m. - 7.45 p.m.

Other differences between the relevant set of schools include the fact that community schools are orientated primarily towards the teaching of adults, whereas, Saturday Schools are 'places where the younger ones go', a parent-teacher has suggested. Another way of stating the same thing is that: while the latter is intended basically for black children (most of whom are in mainstream and remedial classes), the former is geared towards adult education in particular as a service to the wider community in general.

Two of the additional subjects offered by some black community schools are literacy and numeracy. Parents and adults who are unable to read or write attend such schools where the teachers 'take each step with them' until they achieve a satisfactory level of reading, writing and numeracy skills. It is the hope of the Easterley Road School, for

example, that from such humble and modest beginnings, a few of the adult students who are mostly immigrant generation blacks, may be motivated to improve their education to the G.C.S.E. standard. In the meantime, one of the teachers stated that their principal aim in teaching adults is to 'build confidence in them about their education with us and to take each step with them until they realise their goals and objectives'.

An essential feature of that 'confidence-building', and a positive aspect of the success of the school to date has been the acquired ability of some Afro-Caribbean people who could not read previously, but who have now found a 'new life of discovery' in being able to read their Bibles, for instance.<sup>143</sup> They have been enabled to make their contribution to the life of their church in much more individually-rewarding ways, and with the 'confidence that literacy provides', the teacher concluded.

One of the adults attending the Easterley Road Community School expressed almost the same view most convincingly and poignantly on behalf of many other immigrant Afro-Caribbean people when he said,

Migrant generation blacks like me who didn't have an opportunity to become literate back home....coming to this school here enables me to offer something extra to my church that I couldn't do before this time and I thank God for it....<sup>144</sup>

Education as a caring ministry in the black churches appears to function, therefore, as a means of nurturing and equipping individuals to be more effective human beings. As some individuals are equipped educationally, it seems that they become empowered to make their own contribution to the life and ministry of the black church community. By so doing, they are enhancing the quality of its wider ministry in the Name of Christ.

#### The Family Training Hour (F.T.H.)

Black churches provide care to families through the medium of the education ministry in ways that do not fall within the purview of the formal school setting. One of those ways of caring is by means of the F.T.H.<sup>145</sup>

The F.T.H. is an auxiliary arm of the New Testament Church of God. It provides an additional opportunity for members to express themselves in a 'more informal setting' than might be possible in the wider worshipping-community, for instance. It is a setting geared for trial and error, and where personal support is given to individuals who may



not be sure of themselves in terms of how they might function in the church. For example, any fear which an individual might have about making a particular contribution to the worship service is allayed through coaching received at family training hour meetings. A member has expressed it thus:

The F.T.H. is a means of caring for the family and individuals on a more one to one basis....As families come together, if one has a fear and isn't good at singing or testifying, during the F.T.H. they are trained and helped to do those things so they can overcome the fear and improve.<sup>146</sup>

Examples of such help come by means of 'small skits and plays', scripture showers, and by other practical suggestions deemed to be necessary to meet individual needs.

As members are added to the church congregation, the new converts are provided with information and guidance 'about what they ought to do and what to expect'. In that way the F.T.H. helps them to get acquainted, to feel at ease, and to become as fully a part of the whole as any other established member of the church family.

The Family Training Hour is the place where the church spots talents. Children who have special capabilities and show leadership qualities, for instance, are encouraged and helped to improve upon their talents. In that context, another member said that this 'arm' of the church is,

a training ground particularly geared to develop young talents to be ready to take over when older ones have given up.<sup>147</sup>

In that way the F.T.H. does not only function to ensure continuity, it is also ascribed the essential role of being a forum for bridge building between the old and younger people in the church. Consequently, as each group come together and learns to appreciate more fully those values which are common to both, the F.T.H. provides an atmosphere in which caring as supportive and participative therapy at its best can be found.

## VI CARING THROUGH RITUALS

Rituals play a very important part in the caring process of the black churches. Rituals are modes of caring which, like the F.T.H., are intrinsically family-structured and community orientated. Such rituals, centred in and drawn from the religious tradition consists of means by which the black churches respond to change, facilitate transitions and cope with loss among the membership.

Rituals can appropriately be classified into two distinct groups. The groups are (1) rituals of beginning and, (2) rituals of ending. In

this section we will look at an example of a ritual of beginning and one of ending to see how they provide care.

### The Wedding

The marriage ceremony is a ritual of beginning in the black churches. This ceremony is a corporate event in which an entire church community becomes involved in one way or another. Usually, in preparation for such an event, an invitation may be extended to the whole church. In cases where it might not be possible to invite the collective church community, members become involved as they undertake to offer good wishes and take part in various aspects of helping the couple to begin their new life together.

There is the practice known as a 'pounding shower', or a shower of blessing, which is observed in the black churches during marriage ceremonies. This practice involves the collective participation of all members as they contribute money towards the wedding expenses. Also, during a wedding festivities and prior to the time when the married couple leaves for their honeymoon there could be a sending off shower, or a 'pounding booster'.<sup>148</sup> In this case, an additional sum of money is collected to help with expenses incurred on the honeymoon trip.

When the couple returns home, it is possible for them to be greeted by a welcoming party of church members at which time a 'grocery shower' may be held, providing sufficient food for the newly-weds' use over a period of time. So too, the first worship service which the couple attends after the marriage might be an occasion for 'congratulations', as each member greets the newly-weds once more. This provides an opportunity for any persons who may have missed the wedding ceremony to express good wishes, or to contribute in some way to the event in a corporate-family setting. In this context there is also an opportunity for verbal sharing by the couple of any highlights experienced as part of the journey, and to express their gratitude to the church for its help. That is followed by special prayers said on the couple's behalf for future blessings and happiness together.

Such prayers have an important significance in black church rituals. That is so because even in cases of rituals of beginning like a wedding, the prayers endeavour to recognise the element of ending. For example, each spouse has recently ended one form of life and has begun another as man and wife. In recognition of that important principle, the black churches use prayer as a primary vehicle for giving thanks to God for the way of life left behind, and influencing the new one which has been embarked upon.

## Funerals

The funeral is an example of a ritual of ending. This particular ritual holds pride of place in the wider sphere of bereavement in the black churches. It is a culmination of the community's grieving response to the death of a member, and marks the beginning of its need to remember with hope of life after death.

The term 'ending' as it is being used in this sense, therefore, does not imply that after a person is laid to rest for example, the bereaved family or the church community's period of grieving has ended. Rather, funerals in the black churches help to enhance remembering and endeavour to provide a context for grieving to take place, and to continue for some time afterwards with purpose and meaning which makes remembering relevant. In some cases, the period of official mourning is for 'nine nights' after the funeral service. This is the time which characterises the most intense series of activities, when there are many friends, neighbours and community around the bereaved family.

What is said during a funeral service on the one hand, therefore, and what happens after in terms of community-support for the bereaved family on the other hand, are very crucial factors for this ritual of ending as a form of pastoral care in the black churches.

It is aspects of care relating to the latter, however, that we will be looking at. To proceed in this way is essential because more than what has been said, it is that other aspect of the ritual of ending which clearly distinguishes the nature of caring in the black community from what seems to be a trend in the host society.

Instead of funerals which observers of this ritual in the Afro-Caribbean community like John Wilkinson described as 'great black community' occasions,<sup>149</sup> people from the host society appear to limit funerals within the confines of private family affairs. One informant put it in this way:

The English don't believe in making funerals such big events....They feel that funerals are occasions for quiet reflections, so there is the tendency to stand back and leave the bereaved individual or family severely alone.<sup>150</sup>

That belief seems to find support from and is corroborated by an article in the Observer Magazine of Sunday 11 September, 1988, which stated:

The funeral is the most private of public rituals, often shrouded from outsiders....the home was alive with memories, but within an hour it was empty....<sup>151</sup>  
Three hours after it had happened the funeral was over.

In his reflection on a funeral of the host society, a black church member compared it with what is the norm for the Afro-Caribbean community



and informed us that,

When the wife of my next door neighbour (a native) was being buried people came to the funeral, but soon after, nobody came around....Black people would be in and around the home for weeks after the funeral....<sup>152</sup>

Another aspect of marked difference between most funerals in the host society and Afro-Caribbean funerals according to the informant has to do with the involvement of 'immediate' neighbours as a particular group. 'We were shocked to discover', he continued,

that no one from the other side of the street attended the funeral....One family three doors apart, and the immediate neighbour, one who is supposed to be close to the family, didn't go to the funeral. We found that strange.... Black people living within similar distances would have gone. Another neighbour said she 'didn't even know the woman had died....' <sup>153</sup>

If an interpretation of what such information conveys is that people from the host society may not always be involved when their neighbours die, it does seem to purport that most Afro-Caribbean people do become involved. The inclination to do so and the possibility of such greater involvement, however, is not limited to neighbours only. 'Black people come from all parts of the country to attend funerals', even when the individual who is being buried is 'barely' known to them, the member concluded.

One major feature of the outcome of this greater participation therefore, is that in lieu of being 'private affairs', such rituals become expressions of the exuberance that characterises the 'warmth and openness of black community family celebrations and observances'.<sup>154</sup> To a very large extent, the combination of such exuberance, 'warmth and openness' expressed in the community of faith constitutes an essential aspect of black church caring through rituals. Faith in Leeds affirms part of the ethos of that same principle in this way:

West Indian knowledge of community and their ability to support people under the stress of bereavement is an example of this.... <sup>155</sup>

A meaningful element of that support given and received during bereavement is manifested as relatives, friends and community meet to act, to mourn and feast ceremoniously together as a typical greater family. From the moment a death is announced until the time of mourning is completed, such support ensures that very little is expected of the bereaved family. Friends, relatives and community undertake to help, to comfort and to

assist the bereaved by performing almost all tasks which they would normally do, as well as those which are necessarily part of the norm in times of death. As much assistance, time and opportunity, therefore, are given to the bereaved to experience the loss and to deal with the pain. For some it is a chance to own and to work through their loss, to express and to explore their experience so as to begin the process of re-establishing their priorities.

It must be particularly noted, however, that allowing such time to the bereaved family in the Afro-Caribbean community should not be understood in terms of 'seclusion', or being left on one's own for the purpose of 'private reflection'. Rather, the sense of community is always evident. That is because the greater the community-involvement and participation there is, the shorter the period of grieving will last. Left on their own grieving becomes much more prolonged, difficult, and painful to deal with for most families.

What is the reason for that factor? Is it in any way related to the personality-trait, or the psyche of Afro-Caribbean people, or is it purely an historical phenomenon?

Whether any of those possibilities is the case or not, it seems evident that Afro-Caribbean people strive better in community. They appear to be very much a people of community. When community support is minimal, especially during bereavement, the tendency is for Afro-Caribbean families to regard it as having been 'abandoned' by others in their time of need.<sup>156</sup>

Family members often feel 'guilty' and 'neglected': interpreting any lack of community-involvement and support as evidence of being 'punished'. They may then undertake to struggle mentally in an attempt to rationalize whether what they envisage as punishment is in response to any previous failure on their part, or on the part of the deceased to 'support' other families during their own times of bereavement.

In most cases, the bereaved persons are unable to find any logical and legitimate rationale why there are not 'more people around', so that they seem to be left 'all alone'. Faced with the consequences of such un-resolved problems, coupled with the reality of their loss, make grieving much more problematic a crisis to cope with.

On the other hand, when there is adequate community involvement, bereaved black families interpret that as having been 'appreciated'. That they are in 'good standing' in their community as so many people have come to their 'rescue'. In this same context, it is not unusual to hear favourable remarks from persons among the attending community such as, 'the family must feel proud'. And, 'they can hold their heads high'.

Also, 'they have nothing to be ashamed of or to feel guilty about: did you see the number of people who rallied behind them?'.  
Such responses and the sense of gratitude which are akin to them, in turn, remove much of the pressures engendered by the shattering storm created in their lives as a result of a loved one's death.

With less stress and strains to deal with, communal solidarity provides freedom to cope with the loss, and helps to explain why rituals of endings like the funeral is such a corporate-extended family undertaking in black church caring. It functions, also, as a positive and meaningful reminder in times of loss and bereavement of the promise of God to be with them: 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you....., and lo, I am with you always' (Heb. 13 : 5., Matt. 28 : 20).



NOTES

1. This history involves a relationship between oppressor and oppressed fuelled by hundreds of years of negative - stereotyped beliefs about the humanity of the oppressed, and the innate virtues and the cultural superiority of the oppressors. For more about that historical relationship, see William B. Cohen, The French Encounter With Africans: White Response to Blacks 1530 - 1800, Indiana University Press, 1980, PP. 1 - 130, also, Fryer op cit., PP. 135 - 146.
2. Some aspects of this are contained in 'religious practices, funeral festivals, folklore and dances', see Melville J. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, Beacon Press, 1972, PP. 110 - 111.
3. Another feature of this is 'great respect for old Age'. For a more developed interpretation of that specific factor, see Bryan Edwards, The History of the British Colonies in the West Indies, Vol. 1, Bk. 4, PP. 98 - 99 and, Joe Hampson, Old Age: A Study of Aging in Zimbabwe, Mambo Press, 1982, PP. 49 - 55.
4. See Franklin E. Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, The University of Chicago Press, 1966, PP. 114 - 224.
5. This concept is in reference to the observable traits of community, and the 'close knit nature' of Afro-Caribbean families. See Wilkinson, et al, (eds.) op cit., P.27.
6. Other possible forms are matrilineal, patrilineal, polygamous, keeper family and faithful concubinage which may be classified as sub-types within the extended family grouping. See M. J. Herskovits, op. cit., PP. 182 - 186, and, M. Horowitz, op. cit., PP. 449 - 456. Black families are represented in all the sub-types. There are some Afro-Caribbean people, however, who see themselves as belonging only to the nuclear family. Some are ashamed of their African origin.
7. See Race and Class Vol. 25 Autumn 1983, No. 2, PP. 51 - 52.
8. Leslie and Winifred Brown, The Christian Family, Lutterworth Press, 1959, P.7.
9. See The Family in Contemporary Society, P S C K, London, 1958, P.60.
10. Horowitz, (ed.) op. cit., P.403.
11. See Lewis and Gibson, A Light in a Dark Tunnel: Ten Years of West Indian Concern, Centre for Caribbean Studies, 1985, P.84.
12. From the Church of God of Prophecy.
13. They were also members of different tribes. The term can be descriptive of people belonging to a linguistic group as well. It can also be used to refer to 'an ethnic and cultural base for a discrete style' in art and dress. For more about tribes, see Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara (eds.) Africa, Indiana University Press, 1977, PP. 223 ff, and Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica, Granada Pub. Ltd., 1967, PP. 117 - 118.

14. There was also the process known as 'acculturation' that the new slave had to undergo as he/she was obliged to cast off his/her African culture to adopt some aspects of the European planter - class culture which were deemed necessary. For more about acculturation, see Horowitz, op. cit., PP. 99 and 174 ff.
15. See A Light in A Dark Tunnel, op. cit., P.46.
16. The New Testament Church of God.
17. Evidence of the extent to which this person may have been indoctrinated into the colonial way of thinking.
18. There are black people who actually use bleaching cream in an attempt to achieve that end. For more on this see Yasmin Alhibai, 'The Child Racists' in, New Society, December, 1987 and also, The Observer Magazine article, 'End of the Bronze Age', Sunday 5 June, 1988, PP. 40 - 44.
19. This book by John Bowlby reflects the opinions of many world experts on the family. It has been written with few 'technicalities' giving the lay reader the opportunity to understand it without too much difficulty.
20. Some of the people who visited Britain from the Caribbean and have expressed their observations about the black family.
21. See John Bowlby, Child Care and the Growth of Love, Penguin Books 1953, PP. 84 - 88.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. In the Caribbean understanding of the extended family matrix, this concept is often inclusive of the homes of aunts, uncles and brothers and sisters of the children with whom they are related.
26. Bowlby, op. cit., PP. 85 - 108.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. See The Family in Contemporary Society, op. cit., P.100.
30. Members of the Jamaica Association in Leeds.
31. In the majority of cases land is communally owned, and each child has his/her 'foundation'. Or, the area upon which to build a house. See Edith Clarke, 'Land Tenure and the Family in Four Selected Communities in Jamaica', and Raymond Smith, 'Land Tenure in Three Negro Villages in Guiana; Michael Horowitz, (ed.) op. cit., PP. 201 - 266. Also, for the Afro-American counterpart, see Frazier, op. cit., PP. 241 - 267.

32. See The Family in Contemporary Society, op. cit., pp. 99 - 100., Young and Willmott, Family and Kinship in East London, Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1957, pp.127 ff., also 'Growing Pains at Crawley', articles on a New Town in The Times, 13 and 14 August, 1957.
33. See Bertram Niles, 'First Impressions of Britain', No. 1. 1982. This article was written during Niles' visit as a journalist in 1981 - 82.
34. From the New Testament Church of God.
35. See Caribbean Christian Challenge, British Council of Churches, 1981, p.37.
36. See A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.59.
37. See Horowitz, op. cit., p.423. For an extended treatment of this see also, Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 3 No. 4, 1955, pp. 121 - 147.
38. A term used to describe those who are baptized-members of the black churches and who do not smoke, dance, drink alcoholic beverages or partake in any pastime considered as 'worldly pleasures'.
39. Member of the First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
40. Member of the Church of God of Prophecy.
41. Lewis and Gibson, op. cit., p.50.
42. The Church of God of Prophecy.
43. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
44. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic. A majority of the groups identify people who have been helped in those ways.
45. The Church of God of Prophecy. For an informed description of the functions of the 'Band Movement', see Stone, op. cit., pp.171 - 176.
46. See Clarke, op. cit., pp. 70 - 74.
47. See Patterson, op. cit., p.159.
48. See Phoenix, op. cit., pp. 11 - 12.
49. Hare and Hare, The Endangered Black Family, Black Think Tank, 1984, pp. 17 - 18.
50. See Policy Studies Institute Survey, 1982. Also, New Society, op. cit., p.11.
51. Hare and Hare, op. cit., p.18.
52. This usually happens when two or more girls are competing for the affection: 'love' and attention of a particular male. One of the competitors may deliberately 'get pregnant for him', as a way of defeating her rivals and claiming the right to have the man for herself.
53. A member of the Afro-Caribbean community.



55. A member of the Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
56. A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.78.
57. See New Society, 4 March, 1983 p.13.
58. Ibid.
59. A member of the Afro-Caribbean community: Not black church affiliated.
60. A member of the New Testament Church of God.
61. See A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.48.
62. See Holden, op. cit., pp. 26 - 33.
63. This relates to the 'controls' which were placed on the number of persons who occupied public housing thereby rendering that aspect of the extended family concept obsolete.
64. A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.64.
65. From the New Testament Church of God.
66. First United Church of Jesus Christ.
67. A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.111.
68. The Church of God of Prophecy.
69. Calvary Church of God in Christ (U.K.).
70. See Lewis and Gibson, op. cit., pp. 111 - 112.
71. See Inheritors Together, op. cit., p.6.
72. The Church of God - Seventh Day.
73. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
74. New Testament Church of God.
75. See Bowlby, op. cit., pp. 87 - 88.
76. Ibid.
77. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
78. The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
79. A member of one of the mainstream Churches - Anglican.
80. See Searchlight, No. 93 March, 1983.
81. That factor is very unnerving to many parents. They see it as having 'lost control'.
82. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
83. This was the major instrument of discipline and all homes with children in the Caribbean had one.

84. See Observer, Sunday 16 Oct, 1988.
85. Searchlight, No. 93 March 1983.
86. See A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., pp. 78 - 79.
87. See New Society, op. cit., p.13.
88. This is believed to be the point in time when their children are about to become adults.
89. See Donald Capps, Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counselling, The Westminster Press, 1981, p.98.
90. Ibid., p.99.
91. See J. E. Adams, Competent to Counsel, Presbyterian Reformed pub. 1972, also, The Use of Scriptures in Counselling, Presbyterian and Reformed pub. 1977.
92. Capps, op. cit., p.99.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., pp. 99 - 100.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
98. See Capps. op. cit., pp. 100 - 101.
99. See Gates (ed.) op. cit., p.85.
100. A Light in a Dark Tunnel, op. cit., p.85.
101. Black parents who make such claims fail to take into consideration what David Sutcliffe has appropriately described as the 'uphill task of doing well' which their children face in 'the education system as being rewarded with a lower-paid job - or no job at all, given the present level of unemployment - allotted by a society that does not wish them well or at best wishes them to gain the least valuable prizes, (and) fill the lowest strata in the labour market'. (p.8). Another way of stating the same thing is to say: the parents may not have taken into consideration the insurmountable number of difficulties which their children face in order to succeed. Consequently, any failure might not be due to the fact that the children have not tried as hard as they could, but also, to other factors as well. For more about this see David Sutcliffe et al, op. cit., pp. 7 - 12.
102. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
103. A related aspect of this is the process known as the 'rite of passage'. It involves certain transitions as part of the cultural expression of some people. For more about this see Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1963, and Victor Turner, The Ritual Process, Aldine Pub. Chicago, 1969.

105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., P.125.
107. The Church of God of Prophecy. See Hampson, op. cit., pp. 49 - 55 and also, Ajayi and Crowder (eds.) History of West Africa, Vol. II, Longman, 1974, pp. 409 ff.
108. Gates, op. cit., P.80.
109. See Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 430 - 431.
110. A striking example of this is when a child decides to live with its grandparents on a temporary basis so as to gain the attention of the natural parents who sometimes think that their child is showing 'more affection' for the grandparents. In response, the parents may use certain privileges, persuasions and even 'bribes' to woo their child back.
111. For a lucid discussion of some of the values and 'strong sense of family purpose' which this other form of family life-style can produce, see Black Initiative and Governmental Responsibility, Joint Centre for Political Studies, Pennsylvania, 1987, pp. 3 - 10.
112. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community - Leeds.
113. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry, Harper and Row Pub. San Francisco, 1983, P.53.
114. See Stewart, The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ, The Church of Scotland, 1961, P.71.
115. For additional information on this see Sutcliffe et al, op. cit., pp. 7 - 9.
116. See M. Stone, The Education of the Black Child in Britain: The Myth of Multicultural Education, Fontana Paperbacks, 1981, pp. 148 - 150.
117. See essay by R. Reid, 'Socialist Sunday Schools - 1892 - 1939' in International Review of Social History, Vol. XI Royal Van Gorcum Ltd. Netherlands, 1966, pp. 120 - 121.
118. Simon, Education and the Labour Movement 1870 - 1920, Lawrence and Wishart, 1965, P.49.
119. See The Young Socialist, Vol. XI, 1911, pp. 970 - 971.
120. See Simon, op. cit., pp. 50 - 51.
121. Stone M. op. cit., P.148.
122. Ibid., P. 149.
123. See Trevor Carter, Shattering Illusions - West Indians in British Politics, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1986, P.93.
124. See Bhikhu: Parekh's article in Colour, Culture and Consciousness, op. cit., pp. 234 ff.
125. Simon, op. cit., P.51.
126. Many of the acquaintances of this writer like Stephen Delsol, Irma



Joseph and Hewlette Andrew: all trained professionals, are very active in the Saturday School movement. Andrew is the director of the Queen Mother Moore Saturday School.

127. See Simon, op. cit., P.51, also S. Harrison, Alex Gossip, 1962 , PP. 13 - 16.
128. Reid, op. cit., PP. 26 - 27.
129. Stone, M. op. cit., P.147.
130. Carter, op. cit., P.95.
131. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community.
132. See Reid, op. cit., P.37.
133. See Stone, M. op. cit., P.173.
134. Member of the Afro-Caribbean community.
135. Reid, op. cit., P.40.
136. Stone, M. op. cit., P.173.
137. Reid, op. cit., PP. 20 - 42.
138. Ibid., P.44.
139. Two of the most recently established schools are, The Shiloh United Church of Jesus Christ - Worldwide School and that by the Harlesden Methodist Church. The increase is motivated also because of the way in which some black people have interpreted a section of the New Education Act.
140. See Stone, M. op. cit., P.174.
141. See Bhikhu: Parekh op. cit., P.232.
142. Member of the New Testament Church of God.
143. This is cause for much rejoicing by individuals and church community alike.
144. Member of the New Testament Church of God. He has lived in England for 35 years and had not taken any steps to improve himself educationally before the Community School was founded.
145. This is a specific unit in the New Testament Church of God. It functions in the capacity in which several auxiliaries like the Victory Leaders Band, the youth groups, the Brotherhood Fellowship or the Women's Missionary Band, for example, perform in other black church groups.
146. This is in many ways the kindergarten for spiritual growth and development.
147. A majority of the present black church leaders have been trained in this way.

148. An additional reference to and use of this is, 'The Pastor's Pounding Booster'. See Stone, J. op. cit., P.211.
149. See Inheritors Together, op. cit., P.17.
150. Member of the First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
151. See Observer Magazine, Sunday 11 Sept. 1988, PP. 37 - 39.
152. The Church of God of Prophecy.
153. Ibid.
154. See Wilkinson, op. cit.,P.17.
155. See Faith in Leeds: Searching for God in Our City, The Report of the Leeds Churches Community Involvement Project, 1986, P.39.
156. In a land where there is no 'such thing as society', where the emphasis is on individualism, and where individual achievement is seen as the highest virtue, Afro-Caribbean people's sense of and reliance on community is being tested to the limits. The extent to which it remains relevant and how many black people continue to fare in Britain will depend on how well the black churches can develop and utilize their method of community as a caring factor.

CHAPTER 6

W O R S H I P   A S   P A S T O R A L   C A R E   I N   T H E   B L A C K  
C H U R C H E S

INTRODUCTION

As a component of pastoral care in the black churches, worship ranks among the highest. One of the primary reasons why worship assumes such predominant pride of place is that it is seen as the act which more than any other, brings the members 'closest to God'.<sup>1</sup>

A basic interpretation of worship from a black church perspective, therefore, consists of a total act of communication and communion with God in which the entire personality is involved. Worship is that all-embracing human endeavour by which persons utilize and bring to bear all their faculties in full reverence to the Almighty: to adore, praise, honour and to give thanks.<sup>2</sup>

That sense of worship is of necessity one which is corporate in nature and function because it involves and caters for the entire worshipping community. It believes that true pastoral care takes place within an active worshipping community of faith in which everyone is a full participant. Hence the freedom of action, spontaneity, enraptured-expressions and the generally high level of involvement which have become the norm of black worship experiences.

When every attribute and characteristic that make us human, body mind, soul and strength, become involved in worship within the corporate and community perspective, then black people believe it becomes possible for them to receive caring, satisfying, fulfilling, building up and liberating responses from God.

It must be particularly emphasised, however, that the building up, satisfying, liberating and caring qualities which black worship possesses are not derived solely from, nor do they remain limited and confined only to community. Rather the personal aspects of worship are also primary features. The reason for that is because it is first and foremost when individuals who, having been liberated, blessed, fulfilled and cared for in corporate-community worship experiences, live those principles in daily action within the extended community of believers and non-believers—the society at large—that they can offer the same to others as the essence of all true worship.

Pastor Martin Simmons who is a black church leader has expressed that belief very appropriately by suggesting that,



Worship is not true and meaningful unless it reflects itself in our day to day relationship and service to our fellow human beings....For he who loves God must love his brother also, no matter to what cultural background he belongs.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most valuable and important contributions which Afro-Caribbean christianity makes to the contemporary religious life in Britain, therefore, is that of making possible the availability of those caring endeavours to the wider community. As the black church members are cared for, they increasingly find themselves 'freed' and 'empowered' to value and to care for others in the wider British society and vice versa. In other words it is very unlikely that a section of the christian family can be satisfactorily cared for without there being in some measure, however small, an effect of that care on the separated members. That is so whether it is reflected in helping to maintain a vibrant christian presence in terms of the image which those christians project by the quality of their witness. Or, by the fruits which are produced in relationship with others, there is caring.

Part of the aim of all worship in the black churches, then, consists of the desire to achieve those caring ends. Firstly on behalf of their members, and then to their brethren in the community as a manifestation of what it means to be a christian and a member of a black church.

We concluded the preceding chapter with an assessment of the role of rituals in the caring process. In both the cases used it was noted that their relevance for pastoral care in the black churches depended upon and was inseparable from the worshipping community-ethos. It would seem, therefore, that rituals — either of beginning or ending—are valuable and essential elements of pastoral caring particularly when they are expressed by, and become part of a corporate community experience.

Such close affinity with and the inextricable linkage between rituals, worship and community is because worship is not only a corporate endeavour, also, there are many components and features of ritual - acts which make up black church worship. Examples of some of those acts are, praying, preaching, dancing, testifying, the clapping of hands, water baptism, speaking in tongues, the observance of the fellowship of Holy Communion, and washing the saints' feet, among others.

This chapter will endeavour to look at some of those particular features of worship in the light of their contribution to the caring process. In so doing we will interpret and present evidence from a number of black church members about worship as the basis for a critical

evaluation of portions of the literature available on black church worship. The chapter will end with a look at the specific concept of 'cultural continuity' as a pastoral caring attribute of black church worship.

#### 1 PRAYER IN BLACK CHURCH WORSHIP

The type of prayer which is used most frequently in the black churches is extemporaneous prayer. This type of prayer is expressed in two ways. They are (a) that which is done by the pastor or any individual who might be called upon during worship to 'take the saints to the throne of grace', and (b) consort prayer, which is done by everyone together. In both cases, because there are no forms of written prayer in the black churches, individuals are responsible for the choice of words used to 'construct' their prayers. And, such prayers are said according to how the spirit gives utterance.

However, since the prayers are constructed 'on their feet', that which is done by an individual, in particular, rises or falls depending on the level of congregational support and the ability of the individual as well.

The two factors of congregational support and individual ability inform and are dependent upon one another for effective praying. For example, if the individual is fluent and has the 'gift of the spirit', he/she will pray using words capable of motivating the congregation. The level of such congregational motivation in turn, has the potential to influence the speaker so that the prayer becomes a deeply inspiring religious experience for all. One of the members put it this way:

Often the prayers are punctuated by fellow believers with groans, sighs, amens, hallelujahs, 'Praise the Lord', 'Yes Lord', 'Thank you Lord' or 'Thank you Jesus'. Sometimes there are travailing groans, screams or even loud fits of laughter - but all in keeping with the spirit of the meeting.<sup>4</sup>

The extent of the congregational involvement serves also as an indication of when the speaker might end the prayer. As long as the involvement remains high the experience may continue. When it falls, the speaker knows it is a hint that the exercise might be brought to a conclusion.

In consort prayer on the other hand, the individual role is replaced by a community endeavour in which each member speaks to God at the same time. By so doing it is possible to convey the impression that the prayers are loud, boisterous and frenzied activities. The word 'consort', however, is defined as the art of 'keeping company', having 'accord', to 'harmonise' and in terms of a 'ship accompanying

another for protection'.<sup>5</sup> It is in those contexts, therefore, that the exercise is understood and expressed in the black churches.

Consort praying is often greatly misunderstood by many people who stand outside the black church experience. What others hear as a consequence of several voices speaking simultaneously to God may indeed sound chaotic, and appear to be disorderly. But that is because to a large extent such a form of praying is stylistically different from the norm of their own religious experiences.

To the initiated, however, there is order, accord and harmony throughout the duration of the prayers. As each person speaks to God, reaching out to God on their own behalf, or intercedes on behalf of others, they find their own expression in God by which they can effectively communicate. They are praying to God. Whether what they may be able to say is expressed only in phrases or words put together without an appropriate verb to convey the meaning, they know they are connected with God. There is conversation and He understands.

As far as the noise is concerned, one observer of worship in a black church had this to say:

I had the impression that if God had dropped a thunderbolt nobody would have heard him because everybody was shouting so badly.<sup>6</sup>

And, it might have been in reference to consort praying that Roswith Gerloff wrote:

These....are often loud-comparable to the noise on a fair ground or a football stadium....They 'commune' in the truest sense....They experience that God in fact is in the congregation of people who support one another.<sup>7</sup>

Consort praying does not only offer support but also provides protection as well. For example, individuals who are less articulate can speak with freedom knowing that God hears. They are not bothered about being overheard by anyone else. There is no fear of intellectual assessment, scrutiny, or of making mistakes. None of the factors which can so often prevent the free expression of many individuals are applicable to black people engaged in consort prayer. Consequently, without restriction they are able to address God and to 'commune' according to the level of their emotion and the extent of the spirit's leading.

In explaining what consort prayer means to them a pastor speaking on behalf of his congregation said,

We believe that prayers call for verbal entreaties to God....We believe that two are more important than one. As several people act together and make their entreaties and petitions to God at the same time asking for the same things, it moves God to act 8



There are those who would claim that the pastor's theology of prayer may not be intellectually credible. For example, it presupposes that individuals can persuade God to respond on their behalf. Such a possibility they may continue, seems to have been refuted by most scholarly works on prayer. For instance, it has been argued that if prayer could persuade God, then we would be able to 'manipulate' Him.<sup>9</sup> But since we are unable to do so, even with our best efforts, prayer is only capable of 'altering the will of the petitioner', and not God's will.<sup>10</sup>

Arguments of that nature do have their usefulness. But the focus of our primary concern here is not about the lack of any intellectual credibility contained in the prayers of the faithful. More than that it is about what the faithful themselves believe about prayer, and the confidence which they have in the ability of their God to answer prayer.

'When we pray', another of those persons informed us,

We may not sound intelligent but God understands and interprets accordingly....When we pray and tears come to our eyes, even if no one around understands, God does and we receive....<sup>11</sup>

Through experience and by the reading of their Bibles, black church members know that the God in Jesus Christ who said 'And everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive' (Matt. 21 : 22), makes good His Word.

Consort praying is one way in which the black churches offer the opportunity for every individual worshipper to ask God for such things 'together', and as audibly as they can. It is their way of allowing every person to approach God on his/her behalf and in articulate expression of their understanding of the true 'priesthood of all believers'.<sup>12</sup> And, as individual priests, to make entreaties, petitions and to offer thanksgivings to God: not only on their own behalf, but also, 'on behalf of all men' (1 Tim. 2 : 1). For them the prayer of the righteous does accomplish much (see James 5 : 16).

Members of the black churches were asked to respond to the claim of the observer cited earlier about the dropping of the thunderbolt in consort prayer. One of the respondents suggested that it was 'just our way of worship'. Some people pray quietly, while others pray loudly. However, 'God is able to hear and to answer the two ways of praying'.<sup>13</sup>

Another member said that 'prayer is a manifestation of the presence and activity of God among His people. God visits and makes himself known in different ways'.<sup>14</sup>

Examples of such visits, activity and manifestation of the Lord might be substantiated by looking at 1 Kings 19: 9 - 12 and Acts 2 : 1 - 15. When the Lord visited Elijah, it does not appear that He came in the 'great and strong wind', in the 'earthquake', nor in the 'fire'. Rather, the Lord visited His servant in the stillness and quietness of a 'gentle blowing' (v.12). That may be likened to the way God visits those who pray in silence.

However, a very different picture presents itself in Acts 2. The disciples were in the Upper Room. When God visited them in the person of the Holy Ghost, it was in the form of 'a noise like a violent, rushing wind' (v.2). Praying in consort is an example of this other way in which God visits His people.

It is the view of this respondent that 'misrepresenting' them of making noise in worship is nothing new. The disciples too were misrepresented and were accused in the same way. It was even said that the disciples were 'full of sweet wine' (v.13). Like the disciples in the Upper Room, 'we have to make noise. Black Pentecostal people are sanctified people. We have been visited from on high....' Therefore, she went on to say,

When you've been visited from on high and sanctified by God, you're not your own. You're only a vessel sanctified for the Master's use....The Holy Spirit is in you. So you must rejoice. You can't keep quiet....We have to make noise. When we pray together it is the Holy Ghost noise we make.<sup>15</sup>

It can be said, then, that consort praying is the black churches way of giving each member an additional opportunity to encounter and to respond to the presence of God's Holy Spirit in public worship. The experience sometimes leads to changed lives in some people. For others it means receiving 'showers of blessings', reassurance, and the enhancement of their determination to continue steadfast in the faith.

'God does drop thunderbolts among us, and we are able to hear them', a deacon said. But that is not in the form which those who accuse them may think.. 'Our accusers seem to forget', he continued,

that God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform....When we pray and God sends His Holy Spirit's Power from on high, burdens are lifted, and souls are brought to the altar, that's a thunderbolt for which we rejoice loudly.... When we preach God's Word and the Word convicts and souls are saved, that's the dropping of the thunderbolt.<sup>16</sup>

The governing principle and the motive for all prayers in the black churches is that praying enhances the spiritual well-being of the

members. Whether the style of praying is in the form of a big shout, or in the form of a 'little talk with Jesus', the people know that He makes it right. And, afterwards, 'it is well' with their souls, they have informed us.

## II PREACHING THE WORD

The place of preaching is second to none in black church worship. Each component and ritual act of black worship service is important. However, the members seem to be unequivocal in their belief that preaching is *primus inter pares*. It is the primary element in worship. 'The singing of hymns reflects the personal experience of the composer!', a member suggested. 'But preaching of the Word about what God has done and wants to do is the core of all worship'.<sup>17</sup> A second person expressed it this way:

We can sing, dance and testify, but the main thing to push us through is the Spoken Word of God. Without the word we can't go straight. The Spoken Word is necessary for the perfecting of the saints....it is the main part of our worship.<sup>18</sup>

Also, this other member said,

When I go to church and don't get the word preached in its power, I'm left at a loss....I can hardly do anything for the remainder of the day.<sup>19</sup>

The reasons why preaching stands out so favourably are manifold. We will assess some of the more plausible reasons which have been put forward in support of the position of preaching in black church worship.

St. Paul seemed to have favoured preaching above other spoken aspects of worship such as speaking in tongues (see 1 Cor. 14 : 5). So that, the contribution which speaking in tongues (part of black church worship that will be outlined more fully as a sub-section of this chapter), makes to worship, appear to be far less significant than the use of 'plain words that speak in simple but positive terms of the love of God', and His myriad mercies that are characteristic of preaching in the black churches.

The outstanding position of preaching is further made manifest in that it appears to have been cited by St. Paul as having been used by God for the salvation of the believer. In that context St. Paul wrote:

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe?  
Where is the debater of this age? Has not  
God made foolish the wisdom of the world?  
For since in the wisdom of God the world  
through its wisdom did not come to know  
God, God was well-pleased through the  
foolishness of the message preached to  
save those who believe (1 Cor. 1 : 20 - 21).

Preaching is important because it also edifies. Indeed, the function of



all worship is for the edification of the saints. That is what St. Paul seems to be suggesting in 1 Cor. 14 : 26.

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

In the same way, Karl Barth in his Church Dogmatics made almost the identical point when he wrote:

It is not only in worship that the community is edified and edifies itself. But it is here first that this continuously takes place. And if it does not take place here, it does not take place anywhere.<sup>20</sup>

The extent to which the black churches are a vital part of that continuous process of edification is articulated in the words of Professor Louis - Charles Harvey. 'The Black Church today in Britain is an exciting place to be', he said,

In most worship services I have witnessed, ...there is a feeling of joy, liveliness, warmth and a pervasive sense that God is a living force with us.<sup>21</sup>

The single most important factor which gives the black churches that pervading characteristic of jubilation and acknowledgement of God's presence with His people, is preaching.

So then, while it is accepted that the entire worship service has the potential to edify and to build up the saints, it is also a truism, nevertheless, that preaching is particularly geared for that purpose because the one who preaches, 'speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation' (1 Cor. 14 : 3). To hear the Gospel News about the love of God and His manifold mercies, to be reminded of what God has done, and to be informed about what He will do in the future - to be assured that God is indeed the all powerful living force whom they can trust and commit their lives to in spite of their difficulties, are all included in the specific function of preaching.

Additional evidence of the function of preaching has been expressed by other black people as that which 'dispels the gloom and the doom' in their lives. Preaching 'reinforces' their determination to go forward and keep alive the promise of the 'glorious hope' of eternal life. Also, preaching is essentially that which 'assists and empowers us to go over and not under in the midst of difficulties'. And, it is 'spiritual food' for the mind. According to this person,

Preaching keeps my mind from being over-powered and over burdened with my problems....it can be counted upon to remind me that Jesus said,

'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My Yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your soul. For My Yoke is easy, and My load is light', (see Matt. 11 : 28 - 30). Listening to that means so much to me....<sup>22</sup>

### Forms of Preaching

There are two distinct types of preaching which are discernible in the black churches. Examples of the two types are (i) call and response and (ii) direct from the Bible preaching. These preaching types are inter-related. They possess certain features which are common to each other. For instance, there is the presence of congregational involvement and participation during the delivery of both. They may consist on the one hand of the continuous reference to specific verses and passages of scripture during which members of the congregation read with, and sometimes for, the preacher. On the other hand, although there may be reference to a particular scripture passage used as the text, there is not any prolonged use of the Bible throughout the duration of the message.

We will proceed by presenting an abridged version of the two types of preaching. Following that we will assess their merits for pastoral care.

#### i. Call and Response

(P = Preacher, C = Congregation responding together or individuals responding alone).

P: Many of us were about our own business. We were out there doing our own thing and the burden of sin weighed so heavily upon us, we were dead in trespass....My God and my Lord....

C: Yes, preach it pastor. Speak it loudly brother. Man of God reveal it to us....Amen. Hallelujah, like sheep without a shepherd we went astray.

P: It was in that state that our loving God called us. When we were lost and still in our sins, He called us. You hear me church?

C: Amen, Jesus, Jesus, Praise the Lord saints.

P: Thank God when He called me I heard. That was twelve years ago, and I have never looked back....There's no regret....There's no turning back.

C: Praise the Lord, Jesus....Preach it. Praise God.

P: And, so, if you're burdened with sin, your load is heavy, or someone tries to pull you down, you've got a testimony....

C: Amen, yes Lord, Jesus, Amen.

P: In spite of what they may say about you, or how difficult life is, you must know in your heart, what you believe....As the song says: 'I know the Lord is with me....'

C: Thank you Lord, Thank you Jesus....I know He is with me Hallelujah, I've proven Him so many times. He is with me all the way.

P: And how do you know Jesus is with you?

C: Amen, Hallelujah....He lives within my heart, Amen.

P: Where does my Jesus live? I didn't hear that Church, where?

C: Hallelujah, He lives within our hearts....Amen, Jesus.

P: When? How often does my Lord live in your hearts?

C: Every moment of the day....Jesus, Hallelujah, Jesus.

P: And, as the sweet song says, 'He lives....

P and C: He lives, He lives,

Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me and He talks with me  
Along the narrow way....You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart'.

P: Saints of God, when you know in whom you believe, and trust in whom you believe....my Jesus will lead you. He will carry your burdens. He will cheer and comfort you all the way to victory, however dark the way....Give Jesus your life now. Give Him a chance and make Jesus King of your life....There will be no regret. You cannot go wrong with Jesus....

C: Amen, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

### ii. Direct Bible Preaching

Topic: Why we Worship

Text: Psalm 150

Introduction: An exploration through The Holy Scriptures concerning what worship is, and why we should worship.

Sermon Content: (The preacher and congregation referring to the Bible throughout. The preacher selecting the relevant passages which are read together, or by individual members, following which the preacher speaks).

P: God is the object of our worship....God is the creator of the heavens and the earth....He created all things. Let us read Genesis 1 : 1 and Isaiah 45 : 12. (They read together).



(P: and Cong. read Exodus 3 : 14) And God said to Moses. 'I am who I am.... sent me to you'.

Preacher (Comments): God is the supreme Being in all the universe. His Name is revealed to no one. There is no other God before Him. All worship must be centred upon Him....

Exodus 20 : 5 You shall not worship them or serve them....Me.

Preacher: Men and women worship idols, they worship other people, they worship themselves.

Men and women worship materialism - the things of this world....but God alone is to be worshipped.

Psalms 2 : 11 Worship the Lord with reverence. And rejoice with trembling.

Preacher: We must worship God at all times, giving Him the glory due to His Holy Name.

We need to worship Him in Holy Array....

Rejoicing yes, but also remembering that God is no respecter of persons....

(The sermon includes a commentary of the following verses: Isa. 6 : 3., Job. 38 : 7., Ps. 15 : 6., Matt. 2 : 2, 2 : 8, 4 : 10., Lk. 1 : 46, 2 : 20 and Jn. 4 : 20 - 24). It continues with Acts 2 : 46 - 47 as follows:-

Acts 2 : 46 - 47 And day by day continuing with one mind.... praising God, and having favour with all people. And the Lord was adding to their number....being saved.

Preacher: The early church observed the practice of true worship by giving all that they had. They worshipped God daily in that way. Because of that the Lord enabled them to increase in number ....The Lord was adding to their number those who were being saved. Are we saving souls for the Lord saints? Are we worshipping Him often enough, in spirit and in truth so that men and women might be saved?

True worship means saving souls for the Master.

The object of our worship is God.

But the purpose of our worship is the saving of lost souls.

When the saints of God worship Him sincerely,

when the Church of God takes worship seriously:  
souls are saved for the Kingdom....It is when we  
worship God sincerely that we are sure of our own  
salvation. How true this saying must be, saints:

'Heaven's gate is not opened to the person  
who comes alone. Rather, it is when we  
worship God, and when we lead others to  
Him so that we have a harvest of souls to  
show to the Master, that we can be sure of  
entering the Kingdom....That's the occasion  
when we are likely to hear, 'Well done,  
good and faithful servant....enter into the  
joy of your master' (see Matt. 25 : 23).

Revelation 4 : 9 - 11 And all the living creatures....the twenty-four  
elders will fall down before Him who sits on the  
throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and  
ever....because of Thy will they existed, and were  
created.

Preacher: In heaven we will still have to worship God, saints.  
That is where worship will be forever. The living  
creatures gave glory and honour and thanksgiving to  
God who sits on the throne and lives for ever and  
ever. They worshipped Him. Anyone who wants to  
live forever, and inherit eternal life with God  
in heaven must worship Him....God is worthy of  
our worship, saints. He sent His only Son to  
ensure that we have the chance to live eternally.  
'For God so loved the world....eternal life'  
(see Jh. 3 : 16).

Revelation 5 : 14 And the four living creatures kept saying 'Amen.  
And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Preacher: Say Amen to that saints. Amen and Amen....  
Say praise the Lord to that Church. Saints of  
God we must go on. We cannot cease from  
worshipping God. He created us to worship  
Him.<sup>23</sup>

Amen

An examination of the two types of preaching in the black churches reveals that the frequent and familiar congregational responses which featured so prominently in the former, seem to be non-existent in the case of the latter. Such a difference, however, is one that has to do with the form of the response only. Congregational responses are present in all black church preaching. It is the conscientious effort and the meticulous care and attention which are employed in searching the Scriptures in direct bible preaching, that appear to restrict the free and spontaneous flow of responses as exemplified in the call and response preaching.

It can be said, then, that what seems to be lost by way of audible responses in direct bible preaching, is gained by means of a more constructive sense of participation as the members study and handle 'accurately the word of truth' (2 Tim.2 : 15).

Direct bible preaching appears to be rated more highly than the call and response type of preaching. One of the major reasons for that rating is that such preaching is equated with the 'Word of God itself', and thus has its authority. The preacher is only the mouthpiece of God interpreting what He wants to be made known.

Direct bible preaching is seen to be an essential characteristic of what constitutes the proclamation of the 'full Gospel' of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Such preaching is not the result of what men think. Rather, it is what the Bible says and the Holy Spirit interprets.

Neither in the call and response nor in the direct bible preaching is a manuscript considered to be appropriate. While there is no written rule against the use of a manuscript, it is seen as something which serves to erect a 'barrier' between preacher and congregation. Manuscripts are supposed to be evidence that the preaching is of one's self, and not an attestation of the preaching of Jesus Christ as Lord (see 2 Cor. 4 : 5). And, if one is not preaching Christ, then he/she is not a 'true preacher' who has been called and anointed by the Holy Spirit . 'Holy Ghost preachers don't write sermons', a member informed us,

They speak direct from the heart. The  
Holy Ghost tells them what to say....Holy  
Ghost preachers are never wrong. <sup>24</sup>

Another informant said,

When I go to church and the preacher reads  
from paper I get turned off. What they read  
is their own words, it's not God's word. What



they preach is themselves, not the Gospel.<sup>25</sup>

Preaching from the heart is equated with the capability of providing food for both body and soul in a way that preaching from a manuscript cannot do. For example, some members say that the Holy Spirit knows the needs of each individual member in the congregation. Consequently, the words which come from the preacher's mouth are the appropriate words which the Holy Spirit gives to the speaker to meet the needs of the moment. On the other hand, if the message had previously been written down, meeting those immediate needs might not be possible.

In further support of their belief, the members contend that in view of the fact that God decided to use 'inadequate' human beings to do His bidding, even if the Holy Spirit does give the utterance, the disposition of the congregation is also a factor in determining the effectiveness of the preaching.

If the congregation is passive and indifferent, then, the preacher can be restricted in the kind of performance he/she is capable of giving. However, when the congregation is active, supportive and appreciative in the sense that they truly want to receive a 'blessing', the preacher can be assisted to rise to the occasion, thereby, delivering a relevant and powerful message reflecting the ethos of that response. In that context, both the preacher and the congregation are better served in a really meaningful way.

The basic presupposition of such argument, therefore, is that the response of the individual worshipper is conditioned by the kind of needs he/she may have. That is, what actually motivates people to react as they do in black church worship is symptomatic of the present needs for which they desire care. Consequently, the fact that the preacher's message is impromptu in nature is influenced by, and does reflect the current mood of the worshipping congregation. In a way it can be said that the message is a product of the needs and vice versa. Needs are being met because both the preacher and the congregation contribute something to the proceeding: an element of which they receive in return.

In short, call and response preaching can be defined as the form of communication and experience in black church worship in which the preacher and the congregation deliver the message simultaneously. The congregation helps the preacher to deliver the message in such a way that the congregation has an input in what is said, and an impact on how it is said. In the case of direct bible preaching it is a collective and diligent searching of the Holy Scriptures, which endeavours to use every reference about a sermon topic that is possible to illustrate it with the authority of the 'infallible' Word of God.

It is the infallible attributes ascribed to the Word of God that also characterize the paramount importance of direct bible preaching to all other kinds. Part of the basic advantage which most black church members seem to derive from such a belief is the divine appeal and the practical religious significance that the preaching contains. For example, they have no difficulty in accepting what their preachers say, and to conduct their lives in accordance with the requirements. Because, as far as they are concerned, what they hear is God's truth spoken through His messengers in simple and meaningful ways that they can understand. In that way there is hardly any problem posed by doubts and uncertainties about what they believe and in whom they trust. They are, therefore, able to go on with their christian lives, holding on to their conviction in the confidence that their God is not only the 'Word', but also, the Words which they hear will never pass away. They are the 'words of eternal life' (see Jh. 1 : 1., Mk. 13 : 31 and Jn. 6 : 68) which they seek through God's own son, and as members of the black church movement.

In essence, therefore, such spoken words are a reflection of the divine Word. They create, nurture, sustain, satisfy, comfort and inform an authentic and vibrant christian community. They provide a trustworthy ground on which the members can meet each other in caring activities that heal and give life.

Any preaching method which is so highly validated by its hearers ought to be a means by which a religious community provides pastoral care that is very effective.

A look at the example of direct bible preaching from another perspective shows that an enormous amount of material has been used. For instance, the preacher began with the book of Genesis and ended with the Revelation. Consequently, that method of preaching has often been derided by many christians from the mainstream churches. They contend that black church preachers try to say too much in one message.

But to 'preach the Bible', or in their interpretation, 'a full message about what the bible says', is the basic intention and purpose of the black churches. To do that is one of the churches' ways of ensuring that everything the bible says is taken seriously. The whole bible contains God's truth. There are times when, in order to see and to express that truth in its entirety, it is necessary to examine certain passages throughout the bible. The reason why we ought to worship God comprises one example of basic biblical truth that has been illustrated throughout the book. A primary role of preaching

they believe, is to 'point to all the evidence concerning such truths'.

Having discussed, at the beginning of this section inferences by St. Paul and the importance of edification in preaching it is important to note that preaching is further enhanced in the black churches because Jesus Himself was a great preacher. Members of the churches believe that Jesus was the most 'influential and inspiring' example of a preacher the world has ever known. They point to Matthew 4 : 17 and 11 : 1 - 5 as references which suggest that Jesus not only preached often in the cities but also that it was during some of those occasions that the poor had the 'Gospel preached to them', and the mighty healing works of mercy were accomplished.

Compassionate acts of healing such as giving sight to the blind, making lepers whole, cleaning the ears of the deaf, and even raising the dead were ways by which Jesus cared for His people. Preaching was an essential feature in all of those endeavours.

Therefore, as faithful followers of Jesus, black church members put an additional premium on preaching. They see it as one of the examples which their master left for them to follow and by which they might care as he had done.

The historical fact that Jesus did not write out any of His messages is interpreted by the members as additional reason why preaching should not be done from a manuscript, but should come directly from the heart. People are more liable to respond to an appeal that is of the heart, to be convicted and healed of sin's diseases, and be delivered unto righteousness. For with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness, and with his mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (see Rom. 10 : 10).

Healing and salvation come from hearing and believing. To hear and to believe there must be an element of faith. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ (v. 17). But it is not always possible to hear or to believe and consequently, to have the necessary faith if there is no preacher. Jesus had been the example par excellence of a preacher who, because he preached from the heart, enabled many of his hearers to believe. People were healed and saved. They placed their faith in Jesus on account of the 'sincerity of heart', which characterised His preaching.

Based further on the ideal example of Jesus as a preacher, one of the major functions of black church leaders is that of preaching. While the leader or pastor is not the only preacher, he/she is expected to do most of the preaching. All the various functions of the pastor are important. But, preaching of the word ranks at the top. It is one



which a pastor 'must' be able to do effectively. He/she is judged by it more than any other function.

As pastor, shepherd, and leading preacher, that individual is also the person who keeps the group together. The extent to which that is accomplished depends on one's gifts as a preacher. So then, the individual who not only makes it possible for the group to 'hold together' and for their needs to be met, but also, helps to provide some of those needs, is the pastor. The role of preacher and the function of pastor complement each other. The pastor-role gives credence to and enhances the importance of preaching in the black churches and vice versa.

### III THE TESTIMONY IN BLACK WORSHIP

As is the case with preaching, so too is the testimony a form of verbal expression in black church worship. The testimony has many functions. For example, it functions as a medium of expression through which individual worshippers share with other members of a congregation some of the joys, sorrows, failures and achievements which they have experienced during any given week. Featuring very prominently in such sharing is information about how those persons were able to gain certain 'victories' in the Lord. The way in which the Lord enabled them to overcome, how many more problems they may still have, or how close they are to resolving them, are made known.

As members share information about their problems and weekly life-experiences, those who may be going through similar difficulties are helped to gain victories as well. They are duly motivated, inspired and encouraged to endure. 'Testimonies give me a helping hand and a lift', one of the members said.

When I listen to each one's testimony,  
it pushes me to go further and to  
overcome.<sup>26</sup>

Another member had this to say:

When I'm feeling down I become lifted up by  
another's testimony....Somebody will say  
something to lift me up. I'm lifted up by  
the knowledge that others are going through  
the same trials....Testimonies give me an  
insight into how others get over and I  
apply it to my own situation.<sup>27</sup>

Some testimonies also take the form of giving thanks to God for progress made on the 'spiritual' journey, thereby distinguishing them from concerns which may seem to be purely physical and material. One such testimony is this from a young girl reflecting on her conversion experience.

I want to thank God that my soul can look back.  
I want to thank God because it's when we have  
reason to look back on where we've come from  
that we can appreciate how we've been brought  
to this sweet and sacred place with Him. When  
I remember where I'd been one year ago....  
where and what I'm today, I just have so much  
to thank God for....words will not suffice.  
I'm determined to press on. Please pray for  
me while I pray for you.<sup>28</sup>

The majority of black church testimonies begin and end with a familiar expression. An example of the ending-expression is the one used by the member above. Sometimes, instead of the words 'pray for you', the speaker may use 'do the same for you'. In which case, the expression would be, 'please pray for me while I do the same for you'.

'Praise the Lord saints', or 'shall we say Praise the Lord saints?', are two of the regular types of expressions used for beginning purposes. Expressions of beginning are usually repeated several times before the speaker proceeds to tell his/her story.

Such repetition serves a useful purpose. It is a way of gaining the attention of the audience, and to invite responsive participation. It is based on the principle of reinforcement to ensure that much of what is being said might be retained.

The black churches use of repetition in this context is most likely a carry-over from the cultural expression of the Caribbean. That factor is particularly true in the process of verbal communication such as story telling. Before telling a story in the Caribbean, for example, the speaker may repeat several times an expression such as, 'Me say crick', to which the audience responds, 'Me say crack'. In that way the audience becomes 'connected' to the story-teller for effective communication as well as mutual rapport.

In the same way, as the person who is testifying says, 'shall we say praise the Lord saints?', and the congregation responds by saying, 'Praise the Lord', there is connection. They then proceed to communicate lifting up the audience with what is being said. At the same time, the spokes-person does not only have the attention of his/her audience, they lift him/her up as well with their responses amid the process of group support and solidarity.

The role of the testimony in black church worship, therefore, is sometimes misunderstood by observers. A member expressed that factor this way: 'Some descriptions of the testimony', she said,

are often demeaning, inaccurate and esoteric  
as these pronouncements are made by people  
outside the black experience.<sup>29</sup>

Evidence of such 'descriptions' which can be cited are those by the social anthropologist Malcolm Calley, the sociologist Clifford Hill, and the medical doctor Ari Kiev.

In his book God's People Calley suggested that,

The spoken testimony ranges between the gabbled recitation of a fixed formula and a long harangue exhorting members to be faithful to God.<sup>30</sup>

Also, Clifford Hill in the work Afro-Caribbean Religions said,

Most of the testimonies are of a fairly stereotyped pattern giving the impression that the speaker has said it all many times before....<sup>31</sup>

And, Ari Kiev in his article entitled 'Psychotherapeutic Aspects of Pentecostal Sects Among West Indian Immigrants To England', is of the opinion that,

The testimonies of regular members ('saints') consist of expressions of....boasts about following Jesus by the good life and citations of divine intervention in everyday life.<sup>32</sup>

Not everyone who has written about the testimony in black church worship, however, sees it in the way that Calley, Hill and Kiev have. David Sutcliffe and Carol Tomlin, for example, described the testimony as a means through which the spoken-form of black people is 'superbly' demonstrated. In that context, 'one can hear', they suggested,

highly poetic language, expressive language, symbolic speech, a singing-talking tonal effect and group interaction. In testimonies one can also hear the shift, particularly among the older members, from English to Creole, especially when the person who is testifying becomes more intense and emotionally involved. Thus Creole is often the medium of expression for the deep-seated feelings of the heart.<sup>33</sup>

So then, what has been described as a 'fixed formula' by Calley is really an 'event in itself' which climaxes to provide as much spiritual and emotional experiences as the worshippers may desire. To enable their members to obtain such high points of spiritual and emotional developments is very much in keeping with what it means to care in the black churches.

As the level of spiritual well-being intensifies and the joy of the worshippers also increases 'in the Lord', a speaker may repeat one of the previously mentioned expressions, or call the name of the Lord twelve to fifteen times consecutively, more or less, depending on the Spirit's leading.



It is such an experience that may well have been interpreted as if it had been said 'many times before'. Or, more probably, very often in testimony, a speaker might be sharing an event in which the Lord has given a 'great and mighty blessing'. The sense of gratitude is so overwhelming that the individual sometimes mentions it several times over. In such cases, it is possible for an unempathetic observer to see that form of expression as if it were a 'long harangue'.

So too, the reference to a 'gabbled recitation' could be what someone who is unfamiliar with Creole dialect, 'Afro-Lingua or Nation Language',<sup>34</sup> hears, especially when it is spoken in the context of a peak religious exercise.

As far as the members are concerned, however, none of the speeches which they hear or those which they make are considered to be lengthy, misplaced, 'gabbled' or confusing. Rather, they are characteristic of expressions that are audible, meaningful, honest and in order. God has been good to them. Consequently, they take every opportunity to make that fact known as often and in the most effective way they can.

The desire to say what God has done for them personally, together with what He can do for others gives the testimony a special attraction of its own. It consists of a compulsion that informs what cannot be easily kept quiet, but must be told verbally. It is a combination of those endearing and related factors that is part of the potential of the testimony in black church caring.

To answer Kiev's criticisms, it must be remembered that the knowledge of the 'saints' (those who usually testify in the black churches) about their bibles can hardly be disputed. They know, for instance, that their salvation is by the Grace of God through faith, not of themselves or by good works so they must not boast (see Eph. 2 : 8 - 9). The members are aware, also, that in order to be inheritors of that salvation it is incumbent upon them to continue to follow Jesus no matter how difficult it may be. For no one who, having 'put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God' (Luke 9 : 62).

They are aware, too, that any such boasting would have an element of vanity about it which, as saints they try not to promote. Boasting would be contrary to their aim to live and 'walk by the spirit'. Such boasting would be tantamount to the issuing of 'challenges' to one another which might lead to envy by those who may be less successful in their christian lives than the ones who boast (see Gal. 5 : 25 - 26).

In the light of those affirmations, therefore, to interpret the rejoicing of the saints about how they managed to 'get over' the many

difficulties which they encounter, how they assess their progress in following the Lord, and how they are supporting others to do the same, as 'boasting', is to miss an essential purpose of the testimony in black church worship.

#### IV SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Of all the features which combine to make up what constitutes worship in the black churches, the role of speaking in tongues appears to be the one about which the churches seem to be less certain. Some of the groups claim that speaking in tongues is a 'supernatural gift from God' who alone can interpret it. Consequently, they ought to crave for such a gift in order to be fit for God to use them to reveal what is His will for their church.

For others, speaking in tongues is not a craved-for gift because it should be accompanied by 'human interpretation in a public place'. And, since there is hardly ever anyone with the necessary ability to do the interpreting, it is only valuable for one's own edification. Speaking in tongues is not something which is beneficial and conducive to public worship unless there is a 'discerner of spirits' present.

'A discerner of spirits', a short leaflet from the New Testament Church of God reads:

was a spiritual gift enjoyed by certain in the apostolic age. This enabled its possessor to judge from what spirits the utterances they hear proceeded, whether it is the Holy Spirit, human, or demoniac spirits: thus preserving the church from misled influences (see 1 Cor. 12 : 10).<sup>35</sup>

However, such individual 'power' to allow one,

to distinguish between true and false prophets or to discern the real and internal qualification of any person for an office or to discover the inward working of the mind by the Holy Ghost, as Peter did those of Ananias (Acts 5 : 3),

does not seem to be available to us today in the same way.<sup>36</sup>

One example of a possible 'misled' influence which has been mentioned is insanity. In support of that particular reference, the members refer to St. Paul's suggestion that when the church is assembled and all the members proceed to 'speak in tongues' without appropriate interpretation, any unbeliever who enters might get the impression that the church is mad. To safeguard the church's integrity, thereby ensuring that there is no such accusation made against it, it is better that speaking in tongues be confined to private meditation. It is the gift of prophecy which should be coveted and promoted because of its usefulness in public worship (see 1 Cor. 14 : 23 - 28).

The churches which advocate that speaking in tongues as the spirit gives utterance is a legitimate activity in public worship contend that it is, 'physical evidence' of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Such utterance is a 'verbal gift' and a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit's baptism which comes only to those who have previously been baptized by water. It is a clear and unmistakable sign of christian maturity and spiritual growth as the logical steps which are sequential to one's initial conversion, water baptism, and sanctification experiences. But, a bible tract from The Church of God of Prophecy entitled 'Important Bible Truths', appears to have taken a different point of view. It reads:

When a person is sanctified wholly he is eligible for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This indwelling is a definite and instantaneous experience described in the Scriptures by the word 'baptism', and always accompanied by the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance. It has no reference to water baptism, regeneration or sanctification.<sup>37</sup>

Individuals who crave the gift of tongues do so, however, because they are of the opinion that if one has been baptized by water, and there is no subsequent gift of tongues as proof of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then, one's spiritual life has not grown. Also, to be 'wholly' sanctified, they continue, and to have a 'clean temple' in which the Holy Spirit may dwell, there is need for the cleansing exercise that water baptism can sometimes bring about. But as the above quotation has stated, there is no relationship between 'water baptism', sanctification and the gifts of tongues or spirit.

So too, speaking in tongues as the spirit gives the utterance seems to be separate and distinct from the 'gift of tongues', which is seen as one of the nine-gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12 : 4 - 11). That gift can be had by anyone whether a person has received water baptism or not (see Acts 10 : 44 - 48). Here the gentiles who listened to Peter received the gift of the Holy Spirit before they had been baptized with water. The gift was neither dependent on, nor was it as a consequence of water baptism as some black church groups seem to advocate.

The problem is not helped by the very literal interpretation which those groups seem to give to the relevant factors. Part of the problem as identified is: the difference between speaking in tongues as physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the one hand, and whether the 'gift of tongues' can also be a sign or evidence of the Holy Spirit's baptism. If not, how does the gift of tongues manifest itself?



If so, to whom is it a sign and what is its role in black church worship?

Members of the First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic, one of the group which accepts the latter, claim that it is a sign only for believers.<sup>38</sup> In Mark 16 : 17, for example, 'speaking with new tongues' is a sign which will 'accompany those who have believed'. Therefore, as believers speak in tongues anyone who hears them can say, 'they have received the gift of the Holy Ghost'.

'That speaking with tongues seems to be a sign for those who believe', they continue, appears to be further evidenced by an interpretation of the incidences in Acts 2 : 1 - 4, 10 : 44 - 48 and 19 : 1 - 6. The disciples in the Upper room know, for instance, that when they began speaking with other tongues it was a sign that they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. That was the 'Helper' whom Jesus promised they would receive from the Father to bear witness of Him (see John 15 : 26). Also, as Peter spoke in Acts 10 : 44 - 48, the Holy Ghost came upon the gentile listeners.<sup>39</sup> As a sign of having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, they began to speak with tongues. That particular development served as conclusive evidence to all the circumcised believers that the gentiles ought to be baptised. The same development appears to be the case in Acts 19 : 1 - 7. While Paul was in Ephesus he met 'some disciples' or believers who had not 'even heard whether there (was) a Holy Spirit' (vv. 1 - 2). But, after Paul had laid his hands upon them the 'Holy Spirit came on them.' Here too, the sign which seemed to have conveyed to Paul as well as to the believers, (approximately 12 men), that they had received the Holy Spirit was that they 'began speaking with tongues'.

It is on the basis of the biblical evidence of that specific incident (Acts 19 : 1 - 7), that they baptise believers only in the 'Name of the Lord Jesus', the members informed us.<sup>40</sup> As far as worship is concerned, 'when we worship', they concluded,

there are times when everyday language of communication becomes inadequate to express how we feel....Experiences of the high level of elation and ecstasy and the deep mystical communion we have with God are inexplicable.... Speaking with tongues is a way of receiving genuine communal relationships with God. It is our way of making joyful noises in the Lord as an expression of how we feel. It is heavenly language for the earthly rejoicing and identification of the saints....an indication of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.<sup>41</sup>

V MUSIC AND SINGING IN BLACK CHURCH WORSHIP

1. The Use of Song

The majority of songs which are used by the black churches are of a redemptive and eschatological nature. The songs speak mostly of experiences that are 'other worldly', and stress belief in the possibility of the timely rapture of the saints. An example of one such song is this favourite entitled 'Higher Ground'. It says:

I'm pressing on the upward way,  
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day  
Still praying as I onward bound  
'Lord plant my feet on higher ground'

Chorus

Lord, lift me up and let me stand  
by faith, on heaven's table-land  
A higher plane that I have found  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

My heart has no desire to stay  
Where doubts arise and fears dismay  
Tho' some may dwell where these abound  
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.

I want to live above the world  
Tho' Satan's darts at me are hurled  
For faith has caught the joyful sound  
The song of saints on higher ground.

I want to scale the utmost height  
And catch a gleam of glory bright  
But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found  
'Lord, lead me on to higher ground'.

Or,

Bring me higher up the mountain  
Into fellowship with thee  
In thy light, I see the fountain  
And the blood that cleanseth me.

And,

I'm bound, I'm bound for higher ground  
I'm seeking a golden crown  
Can't remain in ordinary plain  
I'm bound for higher ground.<sup>42</sup>

By singing songs and choruses like those the people are able to rise spiritually above the painful effects of their miseries on this earth, and focus upon heavenly places. 'With the use of such songs', a member has informed us :

the burdens that weigh us down can  
be made lighter and bearable....as  
such songs express our hopes, dreams<sup>43</sup>  
and beliefs about God and heaven....

In his book Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology,

James Cone expressed some of that same sentiment about singing in black worship. 'Through....songs', he wrote:

we transcend societal humiliation and degradation  
and explore heavenly mysteries about stary crowns  
and gospel shores....In worship we can....sing,  
shout and sing songs of Zion according to the  
rhythm of the pain and joy of life....<sup>44</sup>

The ability to sing very well in worship has rightly been described as one of the activities in which Afro-Caribbean people 'excel'.<sup>45</sup> A very significant part of the reason for such excellence has to do with the meaning which the songs have for the people who sing them. Such songs are rooted and grounded in their consciousness about themselves and how they know God helps them to deal with some of the oppressive forces which they encounter in this world.

The words and tunes of a number of the songs which black people sing in their churches may be no different from those used by the mainstream churches. In fact many of the songs are composed by Europeans. However, in terms of meaning and 'variation', there is a difference when black people sing these songs. That difference is manifested in the way black people are able, says James Cone in The Spirituals and the Blues,

to take one of these hymns and sing it in such a voice that it will seem more than a 'European Composition, picked up and served up again with slight variations', for (they) can run up and down the scale, make side trips and go off on furloughs, all in time and in such perfectly dazzling ways as to bewilder the uninitiated.<sup>46</sup>

Songs in black church worship reflect what has been referred to as the 'contrite or confident'<sup>47</sup> belief of black people in their God. The God whom they know can make a way where there is none. The God for whom 'trouble does not have the last word'. So that, by singing joyfully unto Him they know they will 'understand it better by and by'.<sup>48</sup>

## 2. The Use of Musical Instruments

Music is a sound event in black church worship. The drum, tambourine, electric guitar and other sound systems used for worship in the black churches in Britain, can be traced back to two major sources. The sources include one in which slave worship and their 'African past plays a full part'.<sup>49</sup> And the other is the subsequent development into modern Pentecostalism of Afro-American 'jazzy-swingtime'<sup>50</sup> gospel music which 'emerged during the 1920's'.<sup>51</sup> The familiar movements such as clapping the hands and the swaying of bodies that have become common in the black



churches are all related to those developments in music-forms of worship.

However, the primary influence for the use of such musical instruments as part of worship in the black churches in Britain, has been the members understanding of the Biblical injunction in Psalm 150. The members firmly believe that they must 'praise' the Lord as the Psalmist has suggested,

with trumpet sound,  
Praise Him with harp and lyre.  
Praise Him with timbrel and dancing  
Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe  
Praise Him with loud cymbals  
Praise Him with resounding cymbals  
Let everything that has breath praise  
the Lord (Psalm 150 : 2 - 6).

Secondary motivations such as 'music makes worship lively', without the right kind of music 'worship is dead', or, 'music is the heart of worship' (views which one hears black people express very often), while those are not so strong as the Biblical injunction, they are also important factors in determining the type of music which features in black church worship.

Singing and the kind of music which accompanies it helps in the process of enhancing one's awareness and evaluation of black life. 'For there too', a black leader has stated,

the 'isness' of the individual is expressed - not what his 'masters' try to make him - but who he really is. Music and singing help to heighten the mystery and awe and give the worshipper words and rhythm to express his thoughts and feelings for which he might have lacked verbal expression. Music removes the invisible screen and allows the worshipper to enter freely into an atmosphere of liberty.<sup>52</sup>

Music in black worship is not only a liberating experience, it is also an expression of the essence of the people's deep religious feelings. 'Worship with music', a black member informs us, 'reflects how you feel in the heart about life, about Christ and what you know about your salvation'.<sup>53</sup>

Such a state of knowing in worship can be defined as 'ineffability'. The term conveys the same meaning as that which defies 'verbal expression'.<sup>54</sup> It is arrived at during some of the ecstatic or peak religious experiences which are akin to black church worship as caring features.

The playing of musical instruments in the black churches provides an opportunity for young people to develop their talents. Some of the young musicians play as often as three times per week. Those include two sessions on Sundays/Saturdays and at least once during the remainder of week when there are mid-week worship or choir practice meetings.

The time spent in those ways is considered to be 'given to the Lord'. It is also seen as a means of staying out of trouble, and not 'getting into bad company'. That is being said particularly about the largely black male youngsters who play the instruments. They are representatives of the very ethnic group in British society who are seen as a 'source' of certain social ills.

In his book The Logic of Racism, Ellis Cashmore has suggested that on any probable 'scale of disreputability, black youth would rank at the bottom'. They are ascribed the role of being 'the social problem par excellence'.<sup>55</sup>

The fact that some of those very youngsters are in the black churches playing musical instruments and developing their talents, however, is proof that not everyone is socially disruptive. There are exceptions to the general category of social deviants in which black youths have been placed. The opportunity which the black church movement offers them in that context is one way of caring for them.

### 3. Rhythm and Dance

A considerable amount of black church worship involves dancing. Ira Brooks put the time given to 'dancing', singing, playing musical instruments and hand clapping at 90%.<sup>56</sup> Out of those related features of black church worship dancing alone takes up about 20% of that time.

The general consensus among black church members about why they dance in worship has been its practice according to the 'Holy Scripture'. Two such references which are cited are that 'David danced before the Lord', and the Psalmist's request that they should praise the Lord's name 'with dancing' (see 2 Sam. 6 : 14, and Ps. 149 : 3).

It is possible to suggest, however, that a pertinent and motivating factor for such dancing has to do with what rhythmic music means to Afro-Caribbean people. As early as the slave plantation system, dancing to the rhythm of the drum beat was one of the very few activities which had been encouraged by the masters. The reason for that partial encouragement of self-expression allowed to the slaves was that when they danced, there was a general feeling of euphoria expressed which the masters interpreted as a sign of happiness among them.

Dancing served as a therapy for both mental and physical relaxation. After each dance-encounter the slaves were more productive in the work which they did. In that context, therefore, dancing served two major purposes simultaneously. On the one hand it had been a means of bolstering

the economic prosperity of the master-class. On the other hand it functioned as a mechanism for slave survival.

James Cone expressed some aspects of that very factor from the Afro-American perspective. In his Spiritual and the Blues, he suggested that black music had been vital for 'identity and survival'. The people 'needed' it, he maintained,

to express their moods and feelings,  
their joys and sorrows....to refresh  
their spirits in the sound and rhythm  
of black humanity.<sup>57</sup>

Rhythm has been described as the 'pulse-beat' of Afro-Caribbean people's soul.<sup>58</sup> It is a matter of spirit. It is consistent with that which helps them to be human in their struggle for existence and liberation.

There is a close affinity in the black churches, therefore, between rhythm in music and an understanding of the movement of the spirit in worship. It is rhythm which induces the action and it is the Spirit of God who is the power unto salvation. The two factors combine to help to improve the quality of life lived here on earth, while signifying a foretaste in the hope of a better quality of life in the hereafter. It is that combination and what it signifies which entices people to dance in worship. One of the members put it this way:

It's not only the music that makes me want  
to dance, it's the Spirit of God and what  
I know he's done for me and he'll do for me....<sup>59</sup>

The relationship between rhythm and Spirit produces the activity which is often referred to as 'dancing in the spirit'. At such times 'it is not unusual', another member said,

for us to clap our hands, stamp our feet to  
the rich rhythms, body shaking, head rocking,  
lips-stammering, tambourine beating, guitar  
strumming, drums thumping, organ rolling,  
shouts - laughter, dancing, wordless cries  
are all part of the expressions coming from  
enraptured hearts that are exposed to the  
flow of the Spirit's energy.<sup>60</sup>

Here we have one more example of the amalgamation of rhythm and spirit producing results which have been expressed in a most remarkable way. That amalgamation has always been an influence for good throughout the people's history. Just as their predecessors on the sugar plantations in the Caribbean seemed to have been better equipped physically and more disposed mentally to 'hoe the hard row' after they had danced, so too, this contemporary group of black people in Britain know that by dancing in their churches on Sundays/Saturdays they are recharging their spiritual



and physical energies in preparation for another round of hardship in the fight to get by.

It is certainly the case, therefore, that in some black churches what constitutes worship on a few occasions is nothing else but dancing in spirit to the rhythm of gospel music and the clapping of hands with shouts of thanksgiving to God. On such occasions the people would attend church expecting to worship the Lord utilizing all the customary contributing aspects of their worship. But sometimes, during the singing of the opening hymn, for example, it might just happen that the music becomes so overwhelming, and the blessings so appropriate that they may continue to dance until the worship ends. Satisfied with only those limited features of worship the participants become equipped and freed in every way that is necessary to enable them to make it through any storm.

Dancing in black church worship is not only equipping, it is also enabling as well as a form of reminding. It functions as a practical reminder that the God whom they worship is able and does supply what is 'sufficient' for their needs (see 2 Cor. 12 : 9).

#### 4. Clapping And The Chorus

The clapping of hands as well as the chorus are sound events with many functions in black church worship. For example, the clapping of hands is a form of music-expression which accompanies and backs-up congregational singing. It is also a sign of the vitality of the congregation as well as a sign of the heart's joy. It invites everyone to identify with it, thereby reawakening the worshippers sense of belonging to one another as true children of God.

That sense of identity and belonging is manifested in the belief that by clapping their hands together in a certain way while singing to the Glory of God, the worshippers see themselves as truly a 'united people of God'. They see themselves as a united people who believe that what the Psalmist said and Jesus prayed for hold good for them. So that they must clap their hands and 'shout to God with the voice of joy. For the Lord Most High...is a great King over all the earth'. He is the God in Jesus Christ who prayed that those who believe in Him 'may all be one' (see Ps. 47 : 1 - 2 and Jn. 17 : 20 - 21).

People clap in the black churches to, as one man put it, 'give God a hand'.<sup>61</sup> Examples of this can be seen when there is evidence that the Lord has demonstrated His greatness in 'giving a victory', or by providing for a particular need. On those occasions the individuals concerned would testify, informing the church about such gracious acts

and goodness of God. Then in corporate solidarity, recognition and appreciation for what God has done, there is clapping.

Therefore, the same principle by which people are motivated to applaud those whom they believe have done well in group-activities, are observed in black church worship. One major difference seems to be based on the understanding that God is entitled to be applauded much more than any individual because He is the creator of everything. It was in reference to that particular belief that one of the leaders said, 'People clap their hands at shows and games to the gods of this world - why not to the God who made this world'.<sup>62</sup>

Clapping in the black churches is to worship God with the hand. It is done with the conviction that the God who created this world making each member in His own 'image' according to His 'likeness' (see Gen. 1 : 26), fully intended that every organ of the body should be used to worship Him.

Worshipping God with the hand is most effective in black church worship during the singing of choruses. This is the time in worship when all hymn books, for example, are closed, placed on benches or pews, and hands are left free to be used for clapping. That allows for individual freedom of expression in which hands, feet, mouths and musical instruments blend to produce the pulsating rhythm which is characteristic of chorus-singing in the black churches.

The role of the chorus is another of the worship forms in the black churches which has been mistaken by some observers. An example of such mistaken assumption is this one by Malcolm Calley. In his book God's People, Calley suggested that,

The chorus is used to fill in gaps in the service when nothing else is happening, and to punctuate the various testimonies and sermons.<sup>63</sup>

The chorus has its own distinctive function in black church worship. It has very little to do either with filling in 'gaps', or to 'punctuate' any other aspect of the total worship service. The chorus is no substitute for anything else. Rather, chorus-singing is one of the moments when, so often, caring is at its most effective. That is the time which seems to surpass all others with what pastor John Andrew described as, 'ecstatic instances and unscheduled contributions'.<sup>64</sup> It is the moment which greatly intensifies, heightens and increases the solidarity of worship according to the spirit's bidding and the people's needs. So that, as evangelist Allan Edwards expressed it in an address to a youth group, 'all constraints give way to impulsiveness and propriety yields to the release of physical and psychic energy'.<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps the only appropriate analogy outside the black church experience itself which can be used to adequately depict and to fully comprehend the effect and the role of the chorus in worship, is this story told by an old Afro-Caribbean man.

The man informed us how, during the days when ships relied mostly on wind and sails for power he used to accompany his father on fishing trips far out into the ocean. There were times, however, when the wind would die down and they became almost motionless. But on those occasions they persisted in keeping the sails on, because, when it seemed that nothing else was happening below - at the surface, there was always a current up there 'we do not know how, that connected with the sails and propelled us slowly towards home'.<sup>66</sup>

So too, it can be said: when it seems that nothing else is happening in black church worship - at the surface level, the chorus contains the current of caring which connects the people one with another and collectively with their God.

In that context, it helps them to appreciate more fully the fact that every day with Jesus leads them closer to their heavenly home up there. They are made aware how: if their fellowship in worship below is so sweet, the 'heights of rapture' they will know when they meet Jesus face to face in their heavenly abode.<sup>67</sup>

## VI THE LORD'S SUPPER AND WASHING THE SAINTS FEET

### 1. The Lord's Supper

All the black churches subscribe to the belief that The Lord's Supper is a 'solemn and mystical act', and that it is a sacred and 'holy ordinance instituted by Christ'<sup>68</sup> for the entire church militant and triumphant. They differ about its function and on how often the celebration ought to take place.

On the one hand, there are those who hold the view that the Lord's Supper is a celebration which serves to 'bring Christ alive' among them. Consequently, all born again christians who have examined themselves, can partake of the elements (see 1 Cor. 11 : 28). The New Testament Church of God and the Wesleyan Holiness Church are examples of the groups in that category.

On the other hand, there are those who contend that only the 'saints', members of their group who are 'sinless' and 'consecrated christians', who have been admitted to the sacred councils of God, are eligible to partake of the supper. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic and the Church of God Seventh Day, are examples of two groups which



postulate such a view.

The latter go on to say that the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated only 'once' every year. They maintain that it is a re-enactment of the Jewish Passover meal which was taken annually as exemplified by what Jesus did (see Exodus 12 : 1 ff., Matthew 26 : 17 - 29., Luke 22 : 17 - 20). Also, when Jesus said, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God' (Luke 22 : 15 - 16), he was explicitly stating that christians should not celebrate the event many times during the year.

For those reasons, therefore, while the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's death, it ought to be seen in the context that He was the Passover Lamb (see 1 Cor. 5 : 7).

The group also believes that the symbols of bread and wine used in the celebration of the meal are so sacred and mysterious that they contain certain medicinal properties. Persons who are the saints, and have 'sealed orders' from God to partake of the meal can be healed of diseases by so doing. Conversely, those who take the elements unworthily (including saint-members who eat any of the left overs after the ceremony is completed), are liable to become weak, sickly and may even die (see 1 Cor. 11 : 29 - 30). Meticulous care is taken and due attention given, therefore, to ensure that all remaining bread and wine are thoroughly destroyed. That is done by pouring the wine into a wash-basin which is then flushed, and by burning the bread. The ashes are also flushed away to achieve its complete destruction.

The black churches which celebrate the Lord's Supper more often - once every month purport that such frequency is necessary because meeting together in that way is a means of 'nourishing' christian growth. Every time they meet at the Lord's Table they are providing the support and creating the environment needed for individual christian development and maturity.

Meeting regularly at the Lord's Table is a way of enhancing their offer of pastoral care in community. The nourishing spiritual food, and the physical support which such coming together engender are being constantly supplied when the fellowship takes place at 'regular intervals'.

Also, when they meet in such frequent fellowship it is done in response to the request of Jesus that they do so 'as often' as they would in remembrance of Him (see 1 Cor. 11 : 25). As far as the concepts of the re-enactment and continuation of the Passover meal are concerned, Jesus made it clear that what He was doing when He ate bread and drank

wine with the disciples was the institution of a 'new covenant' relationship (see 1 Cor. 11 : 24). That is the new relationship between Himself and all His followers which has subsequently taken precedence over the observance of the annual Jewish Passover celebration.

What christians do at the Lord's Table, and what the Jewish people seem to do are the same only as acts of remembrance namely:

(a) the Jewish people are called to remember the day that God (Yahweh) delivered them from Egyptian bondage and,

(b) christians are to remember that Christ delivered them from the bondage of sin through the sacrifice of death on the cross (see Ex. 12 : 24 - 27., Phil. 2 : 8, and Acts 10 : 39).

The former is in no way 'binding on christians to observe', they conclude.

## 2. Feet Washing - A Mark of The True Church

A majority of the black churches are in agreement about the need for and the practice of washing the saints' feet in worship. The only exception to this general rule is the Wesleyan Holiness Church. This group represents the Evangelical stream of black churches as opposed to the Pentecostal and Apostolic streams and consequently, seem to observe this tenet of faith and practice in a way that appears to be more in keeping with mainstream christianity.

Feet washing is a legitimate part of the celebration of the Lord's Supper in all the other groups. It is observed as a way of demonstrating the presence of an endeavour of common service and social equality among members.

The practice, they claim, was instituted by Jesus on the night of the Last Supper (see Jh. 13 : 4 - 17). The primary reason why Jesus instituted the act was to show the 'servant role' which He played and which His followers should imitate. Because of that they are instructed to observe the act each time the Communion is taken.

It is a rite that 'governs the faithful execution' of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they further claim. In that context, James Stone in his work The Church of God of Prophecy wrote:

To have a congregation of people practicing anything less or anything more than authorized by Scriptures....and the washing of feet is never provided is to have a congregation that cannot be the true congregation of God.<sup>69</sup>

The teaching of the groups concerning the observance of feet washing and the servant role which is akin to it is not shared by some Biblical scholars. For instance, R. Tasker in his Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John suggested that it is 'inadequate to regard' feet washing as

an example of the 'nobility of serving others'. Rather, it could have been the dissension which arose among the disciples at the Supper Table regarding who was the 'greatest', that prompted Jesus to wash the disciples feet as a way of emphasizing the truth of his words....'but I am among you as one who serves' (see Lk. 22 : 24 - 27).<sup>70</sup>

Also, G. Macgregor in his book The Gospel of John agrees with (Meyer, 1875), that when Jesus asked the disciples to 'wash one another's feet', he was not enjoining them to perpetuate the act as a way of serving others per se, but rather, its 'moral essence' in the context that the 'act itself came to be regarded as typical of all charity'.<sup>71</sup>

However, in the early church feet washing appears to have been a condition of christian service by which not only a genuine christian congregation might be identified, but also, individual members as well. St. Paul recommended the washing of the 'saints' feet' as one of the examples of 'good works' which determined whether a widow deserved to be placed on the church's charity list or not (see 1 Tim. 5 : 9 - 10).

It would seem, then, that feet washing is a process upon which endeavours of service and acts of charity can be structured for the common good of all. Indeed, if Jesus who was 'Lord and teacher' served His disciples by washing their feet (see John 13 : 14), all His followers ought to see that endeavour as an example for them to imitate. By so doing they are serving others as a way of caring for them.

If feet washing was instituted by Jesus, observed by the disciples and 'continued in various forms' in the church during the Middle Ages<sup>72</sup>, one might ask, why is it not practiced in any regular way by mainstream christian churches today? Apart from the limited and symbolic cases done by some Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches annually on Maundy Thursday, by and large, the practice is not a feature of mainstream church worship.

Part of the reason for the apparent discontinuation of feet washing might be due to the nature and composition of our various church congregations. Numbered among those congregations are many which are structured along dividing lines of class, status and gender. Such divisions seem to be antithetical to genuine christian values that are capable of uniting people. Consequently, they function to keep certain individuals at convenient distances.

Even in the black churches where the practice of feet washing is observed regularly an element of that division is evident. The procedure in those churches is for men to wash the feet of men, and for women to wash the feet of women. When the reason for such a seemingly-strict gender approach is solicited, the response is that there is no particular theological or doctrinal restriction but only a matter of 'convenience'.



That is, the members think it is not convenient or appropriate for persons of the opposite sex to be seen washing each other's feet. Rather, it is 'more decent for brothers to wash brothers feet and sisters to wash the feet of sisters', they claim.

One of the obvious outcomes of adhering to such a rigid approach in worship for the sake of modesty could be that of failing to be the open, self-giving and united communities of care which the churches perceive themselves to be. That in turn presupposes a limitation on what worship is and on their ability to care fully.

In the case of the mainstream churches, a very prominent minister gave the following as the reason why his denomination does not practice regular feet washing. 'Feet washing is not considered', he said,

to be a practice given to be effected in perpetuity in the life and witness of the church as it is in the context of Baptism and The Lord's Supper. It appears in the Gospel According to St. John as an illustrative lesson of the qualities involved in the ministry of Jesus to be climaxed in His death.... Whereas John has allusions to both Baptism and The Lord's Supper, the act of their having been instituted is absent. It would be strange, therefore, that feet washing is regarded as instituted in John while the Lord's Supper and Baptism are not. On the other hand, Baptism and The Lord's Supper have multiple attestation in the New Testament along with numerous allusions to their practice as part of the liturgy of the early church. The same cannot be said for feet washing.<sup>73</sup>

Also, lay members of those churches used terms such as, 'feet washing is not part of our tradition. We wouldn't like it....it is just not practical'. 'It's too time consuming....there's no real need for it'. 'It's too embarrassing for others to see my feet' and, 'we wouldn't allow it here', as additional evidence why the practice is not observed.

It would seem, then, that feet washing calls for a degree of intimacy and personal knowledge about individual members together with a measure of congregational consent which is possible on a limited scale only in the black church movement. Perhaps that is because the churches are usually smaller and membership is confined to the 'saints' who are themselves the ones who are generally allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper which precedes feet washing.

With regards to a majority of the mainstream churches, however, membership seems to be more loosely defined. That is so especially in the context of recent moves in the area of ecumenicalism, so that, it is possible for a person who is affiliated to one of the mainstream

churches whose parent denomination is party to the ecumenical movement, to visit a congregation of another denomination and be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, although the visitor is not a member of the relevant congregation. The same kind of fellowship may not be possible in most of the black churches.

In spite of that, however, as far as those black churches are concerned, they have no doubt that what they do is adequate for caring. Feet washing is an aspect of christian worship and practice that singles them out not only as followers of the 'true faith', but also, gives an indication of the measure of their christian fellowship and service. To the christians who do not attach any such importance to the practice of feet washing, they echo their firm resolve in song:

Together we walk  
Together we talk  
Together we wash one another's feet  
Many people say we have no need  
But we are only obeying the Lord's command.<sup>74</sup>

## VII FAITH-HEALING IN BLACK CHURCH WORSHIP

All attempts to heal in the black churches are based firmly on the authority of holy Scripture. The members believe the pages of the Bible contain ample evidence to show that God has made provision for the healing of humankind's physical ailments. For example, they point to Psalm 103 suggesting that it makes reference to the fact that the healing of diseases constitutes one of the 'benefits' which God gives to all who believe in Him (see vv. 2 - 3). Such healing is possible without the aid of doctors, medication or surgical procedure. Jesus who was the Suffering servant mentioned in Isaiah 53, makes healing possible through the 'wounds' inflicted upon Him on the cross (see Is. 53 : 4ff; Matt. 8 : 17 and 1 Pet. 2 : 24).

Two related factors are vitally essential for healing to take place. The factors are (a) the gift of healing and, (b) faith. The gift of healing is seen as one of the nine gifts of the spirit (1 Cor. 12 : 9). Black pastors are endowed with that gift by virtue of their positions as spiritual leaders. Those leaders in particular together with other individuals like elders and deacons (to a lesser degree), perform healing endeavours in black worship.

When any member requests healing, the pastor, assisted by the deacons or elders use olive oil to anoint them. The process includes the laying of hands upon the sick and prayer in the Name of Jesus. Such practice done in faith can make 'sick' people well again according to

James 5 : 14 - 16, they have suggested.

### The Role of Faith

Failure to effect a cure in black church healing is often attributed to 'lack of faith'. Members sometimes cite evidence from the Scriptures to explain the reasons why in the majority of cases, no physical healing is achieved.

For example, they point out that the disciples who had been specifically commissioned by Jesus to 'heal those....who (were) sick' (Luke 10 : 9), failed to do so whenever there was a lack of faith. One such instance of failure was the epileptic boy in Matthew 17 : 14 - 20. Here Jesus informed the disciples that it was because of the 'littleness' of their faith that they had failed to heal the boy.

The need to exercise faith for healing to be realized is a three-dimensional one. Those who do the actual healing, any individual who is healed, and the witnessing congregation must all have faith.

The fact that success for the healer depends to a very large extent on the other two, has enabled some pastors to claim that there was no healing because of the lack of faith on the part of either the sick person, the congregation, or both. They seldom attribute any such failure to their own lack of faith.

Other reasons why healing may not take place are that the healer 'lacked' the power of the Holy Ghost at that specific time, or an 'unsaved' person, usually a visitor, is present.

In order to assist the healer and to enhance the possibility of their own healing, sick members are urged to pray. They may also 'get in the spirit', or fall in trances. Those individuals try to muster up as much faith as possible in the firm belief that they will be healed. Such behaviour is symptomatic, therefore, of an endeavour to ensure that the presence of any unbelief which might serve to frustrate the healing process, is not their own.

Faith relating to the third kind, that which is exercised by the congregation on whose behalf it can be said healing is done, is called 'vicarious faith'. The term is used in relation to faith which is exercised on behalf of others. That type of faith has biblical relevance. It was exercised by the centurion on behalf of his servant, by the Syrophenian mother on behalf of her daughter, and by the father with the epileptic son (see Matt. 8 : 5 - 13., Mk. 7 : 24 - 30 and Matt. 17 : 14 - 18).

In each of those examples, there was healing despite the fact that none of the individuals who had been healed expressed any faith. They were healed because others had faith and believed that it could be done.



The same principle is applicable in the black churches. Prayers are offered for the healing of sick members who are at home or in the hospital. Those persons are seldom aware that they are being prayed for. Consequently, they are not always in the position to respond with faith. There have been times, however, when healing took place, and it was afterwards that the healed persons knew that they had been prayed for.

One example of such possible healing in that particular context, is that of a member who said she had been admitted into a hospital for an operation to remove what the doctors diagnosed as an infected appendix. It was subsequently decided, however, that she should be monitored for a few days before the operation. During that time her church met for worship, prayer, and fasting. The group prayed for the healing of their sick member.

After they had prayed and prior to the scheduled time for the intended operation, Sis. Jones was examined. And, to the apparent surprise of the medical team, it was found that there was no longer any need for an operation.

It might very well have been the case that there was never any actual need for surgery in this particular instance. And, part of the reason why the doctors made the decision to monitor the patient before an operation was embarked upon, was to clarify some doubts pertaining to the accuracy of the original diagnosis. In which case, whether the church had prayed for her healing or not, the decision would still have been taken against an operation. But, in view of the fact that the members did pray, Sis. Jones and her religious group ascribed the end result to the healing power of the prayers of their church.

A professor of surgery was asked to give his opinion on the relevant issue. His response was that 'surgery works on a process of elimination'. For example, 'there are times when a doctor tries to remove what is there before opting for surgery....' There is also the need to be certain that surgery is necessary before it is undertaken. It could have been that 'what was there settled itself down', hence the eventual outcome. On the other hand, 'I do believe in these things', he continued, 'I believe prayer works....it could also have been due to prayer'.<sup>75</sup>

There have been numerous testimonies of other examples in the black churches linking healing with prayer and faith. Such testimonies include some which are of the vicarious type (as the one above), and those that are related to the healing of individuals who were present and had requested it.

An example of the latter is that of a member who informed her

congregation how much she had been ill on a particular Saturday night. It was only her 'faith and love for Jesus' that enabled her to 'pull' herself together to attend worship the following Sunday morning. It was a 'blessing' that she had decided to attend the service, because, having requested healing she subsequently became well again.

Running up and down the centre aisle of the sanctuary, she demonstrated how very fit she had become. Indeed, it could be said about such cases that the members truly believe that what they experience is genuine. No matter what the situation may be, presenting it to Jesus with a little talk in faith, 'He puts it right', they claim.

There seem to be times, however, when not even Jesus Himself can put things right if the necessary conditions of faith are inappropriate. A visit by Jesus to Nazareth provides us with what looks like an example of this. St. Matthew informs us that Jesus did not perform 'any miracles....in His home town' - including that of healing, because of the people's 'unbelief' (see Matt. 13 : 54 - 58). They had no faith in the ability of Jesus as a healer.

In their functions as worshipping communities of care, however, the members of the black churches seem to exercise much faith. In that context, they have the capacity to care with enormous potential for healing. That is possible to the extent where it has been the case that when the right attitudes and conditions of faith are applied, such worship brings healing, offers freedom, and leads to the deliverance of many black people. When those factors are neither right nor applied, very little happens as in the case at Nazareth.

#### VIII FREEDOM AND DELIVERANCE

An aspect of the freedom which worship offers is the opportunity to glorify God as the members wish without having to fear what others might say. In that sense they can express themselves without wondering whether what they do might appear that they are out of their minds, or whether they may be contravening conventional methods of worshipping God.

That freedom which the black churches offer their members is unlike that which pertains in some of the mainstream churches where, as one young girl put it, black people are looked at as being 'funny'<sup>76</sup> when they express themselves loudly in worship. So too, in some of those churches black people are sometimes 'laughed' at, and ministers and congregations often 'complain that, 'All that black people are interested in is worship'.<sup>77</sup>

It is the freedom to worship without fear about which James Cone said,

In worship we try to say something about ourselves other than what has been said about us by the white church and the society it justifies....Our church is the only place we can go with tears in our eyes without anyone asking, 'what are you crying about?....In worship we can be who we are as defined by our struggle to be something other than what the society says we are.<sup>78</sup>

In worship black church members can 'fill up' and recharge their spiritual energies to encounter life in a society which depreciates them. They are provided with a sense of perspective by which they know who they truly are and are happy to be.

Freedom in worship is to have 'nothing that makes me feel ashamed for being black or sorry for wanting to be a christian', a young man said.<sup>79</sup> Instead of being sorry, worship is an activity that most black people 'enjoy not endure', because, as a deacon expressed it: 'worship is enjoyment in God Himself'.<sup>80</sup>

Such sense of enjoyment is to have fellowship with God and with fellow saints who strive to be of the 'same mind' in pursuit of a common set of objectives (see Phil. 2 : 1 - 2). To maintain that fellowship is a primary aim of all black church worship. That important endeavour of worship was most likely what an observer discovered in part, and what motivated him to say:

I was worshipping one Sunday at a Pentecostal Church with one of my black colleagues. It was the first time that I had shared in the experience with my family. So naturally, I tried to explain to our 11 year old what I thought it was all about. I said, the experience is like a river with many currents. On the surface is Pentecostalism; then there is the black experience,....underneath is an emotion which always makes me want to cry. ('Cry then', the congregation called back when I admitted this). Deeper still is a common life which is shared in worship, prayer, eating together, and in practical concern for hurt and deprivations bravely carried. And, under it all, there is our common humanity as people: black and white together. The <sup>81</sup> experience was one of warmth and welcome.

In that observation Tony Holden tries to empathize. By so doing he makes appropriate mention of the shared life of common fellowship which is akin to black worship. He has also recognized part of the emotion which goes with it. But while that emotion only makes him 'want to cry', black people go further than that. They actually cry in worship as he was advised to do. By crying they make use of an invaluable outlet



for the release of pent-up emotions and stress caused mostly by hurt, 'deprivation', and the many other social problems which they experience. Instead of carrying those problems, black people place them at the feet of Jesus. With tears in their eyes they allow Jesus to take their burdens away. As He does so there is release, freedom and deliverance.

It is at that level and in such ways that black church worship is consistent with an 'upper connecting current with God', which Holden does not mention in this account. He recognized and made mention of a 'surface' current, together with one that is 'underneath' and another which is 'deeper still'. However, while it is accepted that God is actively involved with His people in all the areas cited, black people equate worship with a current that propels upwards. That is where they believe God is, and where they hope to be with Him in the future. In that sense, therefore, worship is an endeavour which offers to black people a continuous upward look to the 'beautiful city of God'.

Worship in the consciousness of most black people, then, is a multi-purpose event. It is about fellowship, emotional release, about earthly concerns and heavenly rewards. It is to give God the very worst of those earthly concerns in exchange for the very best, which is the nature of Christ. To fully attain that nature is to be delivered completely from this sinful world into a new life with Him. Black church worship is a preparation and constant looking-up for the coming of Christ. It also serves as a means of looking outwards to the Caribbean where many members would like to retire to await the return of their Master.

## IX WORSHIP AS CULTURAL CONNECTION AND CONTINUITY

Afro-Caribbean people in Britain have retained links with their native islands through many different ways. Such links ensure that vital cultural connections with their roots are maintained.

In this section we will look briefly at some of the vehicles in which certain facets of the culture have been transported, retained and continue to survive in Britain. Following that we will endeavour to assess the role of worship as one of the leading channels for Afro-Caribbean cultural transmission and continuity.

### Writers And Language

A very eloquent and influential sector among Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Britain during the decade 1950 - 60 were writers. Included among those writers were, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, E. R. Braithwaite, Wilson Harris, Michael Anthony, Andrew Salkey and

Edgar Mittelholzer.<sup>82</sup> They immigrated with what John La Rose called the basic 'West Indian culture from which they have written their work'.<sup>83</sup>

The primary tool which gave expression to that culture was the language they used. Sometimes referred to as West Indian Literature, patois, creole, dialect or 'nation language',<sup>84</sup> they wrote about customs and practices in the Caribbean which enabled many black people to identify with their homeland as if they were actually there in person.

Because of that opportunity to identify, they had something specific, tangible and meaningful about their homeland to hold on to. And, to have had that at the time was crucial in the context of the transient ethos which defined Afro-Caribbean immigration to Britain. It was never conceived of as being permanent. The majority of the people believed they would return after having acquired enough materially in a country which they regarded as their mecca and mother land of unlimited opportunity.

The children and grandchildren of those immigrants, some of whom have never been to the Caribbean, often 'identify with the islands to the extent of evolving their own dialect'.<sup>85</sup> They have been assisted in that endeavour by such music and cultural forms like Reggae, the lyrics of which are essentially Afro-Caribbean.

Rastafarianism in its many forms, social, religious and 'popular',<sup>86</sup> also serves as a means of identifying with the Caribbean. For some people it is a source of pride and a medium through which they can retreat from time to time in their endeavour to belong.

However, it is worship in the black churches more than any other single component of the various cultural expressions which seems to be best placed in the endeavour of connecting black people with the Caribbean. For example, there are those who may not be able to read, those who do not have the time to read, together with others who, because of religious teaching or for personal preference do not identify with Reggae music, or with Rastafarianism, who go to a black church instead.

By going to a black church there is connection with the Caribbean in two major ways. Firstly there is connection which takes place because some of the members return to the Caribbean as often as they can. That is done either for vacation purposes or as a necessary way of remaining in touch.

In keeping with the caring ideal of the black churches, when any member decides to return to the Caribbean they endeavour to inform their pastor and church community. Such an undertaking ensures that their absence does not occasion cause for concern among the general membership. In that way, the church knows the reason why those individuals may not

be present at worship. Consequently, there is no need to be concerned about whether they might be ill, experiencing difficulties, or any similar disability requiring immediate attention.

Prayers are offered on behalf of members who are about to travel to the Caribbean. They go with the blessings of the churches here and with christian greetings to the home congregations. Upon their arrival they endeavour to inform the churches in the Caribbean about developments among the brethren in Britain.

When those individuals return to Britain they undertake to communicate to the churches here some of the things which are taking place back home. That is done through testimonies and by talking to the churches assembled for worship. As a result the entire community is able to benefit from that means of cultural transmission and continuity.

Continuity is maintained in the sense that culture is never a dead or static concept. Rather, it belongs to living people and is always growing. Because of that factor, what is new both here and in the Caribbean is inclusive of the pattern of transmission employed by the black churches. During the time that the members are in the Caribbean, for instance, they strive to re-adjust themselves to the old and familiar while at the same time ensuring that they get as thorough an insight as possible about some of those things which are new.

Things of a religious nature feature very prominently, not only in the context of what may be both new and old, but also, in so far as they form an essential part of what Afro-Caribbean people interest themselves in. Consequently, the churches serve as effective vehicles for cultural transmission and continuity since religion as a form of cultural expression is so indelibly linked with, that it is never removed from black life. The two factors are akin to each other in ways that are meaningful and compensatory. As Melville Herskovits put it, 'religion is deeply integrated into the daily round' of black life to the extent of assuming the most predominant place.<sup>87</sup>

That helps to explain, therefore, part of the reason for the natural interest and the keen desire of a large number of black people, to want to know what may be happening in their churches. They endeavour to make it their business to know because, for many, the church is truly what life is about.

Secondly, there is the sense in which cultural connection and continuity is basically spiritual. This must not be understood purely from the perspective that the term culture can be defined in its spiritual context as distinct from its material features. So that, it includes those physical necessities like tools, implements and other domestic



utensils which form part of the everyday life of all societies. Or, solely in its religious sense, that certain primary worship-forms, beliefs and practices which might have been used by their forefathers in the Caribbean, have been transported to Britain and are therefore in continuous usage by this contemporary group of black people here in Britain. Nor are we to interpret spiritual culture only in the sense that it may consist also of those principles which are conceived to be beneficial to a society as opposed to those which might be deemed to be unprofitable.

When we speak of culture as being spiritual in the black churches, however, we are referring to the process whereby the members who cannot return home physically, for example, are enabled to do so in spirit. They are able to return to the Caribbean spiritually, when, in worship they receive information from those who have gone there physically.

The fact that part of the information received is sometimes put into practice to improve the life of the church here, and also, because it connects them to the Caribbean in ways that mean very much in terms of individual happiness and well-being, makes it spiritual. In those contexts, the black church movement functions not only as a forum for the continuing of the culture but also, in doing that, it provides a level of care which is vital, meaningful and real.

#### The Impact of a Recollection

Some idea of how much that caring is meaningful, real or otherwise, can be obtained by relating and then assessing an incident which took place in one of the black churches.

One Sunday two members shared with the worshipping community what they had experienced in the Caribbean as a result of a joint visit. During the exchange an elderly gentleman was seen to be smiling appreciatively. Then, all of a sudden, tears began to roll down his cheeks. After the service he was asked to explain what had happened to him. The reply in part was this:

I couldn't resist the emotional impact that the experience had upon me....What the saints said made me laugh. There was joy because I've seen my own island home in their words.... I cried when I remembered I've little or no hope of ever seeing it again.<sup>88</sup>

As far as the member was concerned, the experience brought a mixture of joy and sadness. He was joyful because by some swift glance of the mind he was transported to the Caribbean. During that time, assisted by what was being said, he had been able to recollect some of the

'pleasant events' with which he was once familiar. In addition, there was sadness, because, even then, he realised that he may never go there again.

Bro. Joe is not alone in feeling that way. Other old people who are members of the black churches as well as many who are not, have such feelings. Vivienne Coombe expressed the plight and consensus of those black people by putting it in this way:

The reality may well be that they will never return, but because they do not feel a sense of belonging in this country, they need to have an escape route in psychological if not in real, terms.<sup>89</sup>

The people who are members of the black churches do seem to get some of that 'escape' in worship. In the experience of the gentleman above, it appears to have been effective enough to elucidate both joy and tears. Such expressions of emotion, when they follow each other, sometimes have the effect of being therapeutic which is certainly a form of pastoral caring.

When they stand alone, one of them, the shedding of tears, for example, may be said to be neither therapeutic nor a form of caring. That factor is so, however, only to the extent that the shedding of tears is done purely in response to experiences of sadness and pain, for instance, with no accompanying joy.

It may be possible, then, that those black people who cannot return to the Caribbean physically, and who have no black church to worship with, may have little of that joy but much more of the tears and sadness to contend with. The presence of 'saints' to connect them culturally, spiritually, or 'psychologically' to the land of their birth, to make them laugh in the process, even if it is only for a brief moment, is one of the caring assets which those who do not belong to the black churches seem to lack. Those who belong are provided with such experiences as part of the many benefits which come from worship as pastoral care in the black churches in Britain.

NOTES

1. Pastor Jones of the Church of God Seventh Day.
2. For more about worship, see Scott Brenner, The Way of Worship: A Study in Ecumenical Recovery. The Macmillian Company, New York, 1944 and, Hoyt Hickman, A Primer for Church Worship, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1984, especially P.33 ff.
3. See Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.29.
4. Ibid., P.28.
5. See The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, op. cit., P.208, and The Oxford Paperback Dictionary, op. cit., P.130.
6. A member of the mainstream churches who is a student of Theology.
7. See Partnership in Black and White, Methodist Home Mission Division, 1977, P.15.
8. Pastor Thompson of The Church of God of Prophecy.
9. William E. Hulme, Pastoral Care and Counselling, Augsburg Pub. House Minneapolis, 1981, P.134.
10. See Donald Capps, 'The Psychology of Petitionary Prayer', Theology Today, 39 (1982): 130 - 141.
11. Member of the I.N.C., Pentecostal City Mission Church.
12. Martin Luther arrived at this doctrine partly by means of his exposition on Romans 5 : 1 - 2 ff. See Romans 5 : 1 ff., for St. Paul's teaching on Justification by faith into the Grace of God.
13. Member of the Church of God of Prophecy.
14. The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
15. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
16. The New Testament Church of God.
17. The Church of God Seventh Day.
18. The New Testament Church of God.
19. The Church of God of Prophecy.
20. See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, transl. by G. W. Bromiley, IV/2 Edinburgh; T and T Clark, 1958, P.638.
21. See Racial Justice: Spring 1987, Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice, 1987, P.23.
22. The Mount Zion Pentecostal Church-Apostolic.
23. The two sermons were preached at The Church of God Seventy Day, and The Church of God of Prophecy.



24. The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
25. The New Testament Church of God.
26. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
27. The Church of God Seventh Day.
28. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
29. The New Testament Church of God.
30. Calley, op.cit., P.77.
31. Gates (ed.) op. cit., P.76.
32. Ari Kiev, 'Psychotherapeutic Aspects of Pentecostal Sects Among West Indian Immigrants to England', British Journal of Sociology, March, 1964 Vol. 15 P.132.
33. Sutcliffe and Wong, op. cit., P.22.
34. Ibid., P.30.
35. See Leaflet: 'Spiritual Gifts and their Use in Love'. The New Testament Church of God.
36. Ibid.
37. See Bible Tract: 'Important Bible Truths', The Church of God of Prophecy, P.4.
38. See 1 Cor. 14 : 22 Where St. Paul seems to have suggested that 'tongues are for a sign', not for believers but for unbelievers. See also, Isaiah 28 : 11 - 12 and C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on The First Epistle To The Corinthians, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1968, PP. 323 - 324, for an interpretation of Paul's suggestion.
39. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
40. Members of The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic. This group is sometimes referred to as the 'Jesus Only' church.
41. Ibid.
42. Taken from song sheets of The Church of God of Prophecy, I.N.C., Pentecostal City Mission Church, and The Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
43. The Church of God of Prophecy.
44. Cone, op. cit., P.130.
45. See Gates, op. cit., P.76.
46. James Cone, The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation, The Seabury Press, New York, 1972, P.10. See also, John Work, The Folk Song of American Negro Spirituals. Fisk University Press, Nashville, 1915, PP. 29 - 30.

47. See Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.10.
48. Cone (1986) op. cit., P.141.
49. See Melville Herskovits, op. cit., P.207.
50. Ibid., P.211.
51. See Don Gwinnett's Article, 'The Gospel Sound', Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.24.
52. Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.29.
53. The Church of God of Prophecy.
54. For more about this see article by Stephen Crites, 'The Narrative Quality of Experience', The Journal of Religious Education, Vol. 75: Nov. 1980 - March, 1981.
55. Cashmore, op. cit., PP. 111 - 112.
56. See Brooks, I. op. cit., P.133.
57. Cone (1972) op. cit., P.1.
58. See 'Caribbean Contact', Nov. 1974, pub, The Caribbean Conference of Churches.
59. First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
60. See Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.29.
61. The Church of God of Prophecy.
62. See Christian Action Journal, op. cit., P.29.
63. Calley, op. cit., PP. 84 - 85.
64. The New Testament Church of God.
65. The First United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic.
66. Member of the Afro-Caribbean Community, Brixton, London.
67. See The Methodist Hymn Book, The Methodist Pub. House, 1933, No. 745 for a hymn which appears to express a similar ideology.
68. For more about this concept see L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Eerdmans Pub. Co., Michigan, 1939, PP. 578 - 617 and Stone, J. op. cit., P.90.
69. Stone, ibid.
70. See R. Tasker, Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, P.154.
71. G. H. C. Macgregor, The Gospel of St. John, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1928, P.277.
72. See B. F. Wescott, The Gospel According to St. John, Authorised Version with Intro. and Notes by John Murray, 1898, PP. 193 - 194.

73. The Baptist Church.
74. First heard at the Church of God Seventh-Day, and then at the New Testament Church of God.
75. A professor of Surgery - Leeds General Infirmary.
76. See Walton, et al., op. cit., P.28.
77. Ibid.
78. Cone, op. cit., P.130.
79. The Wesleyan Holiness Church.
80. The Church of God of Prophecy.
81. See article 'God and Different', by Tony Holden, D.R.S. News, Autumn 1985.
82. For a comprehensive description of these writers and their work, see James Livingston (ed.), Caribbean Rhythms: The Emerging English Literature of the West Indies, Washington Square Press, N.Y., 1974, PP. 17 - 128, and West Indian Narrative: An Introductory Anthology, compiled by Kenneth Ramchand, Nelson, London, 1966, PP. 37 - 205.
83. John La Rose, The New Cross Massacre Story, The Alliance of Black Parents Movements and The Race Today Collective, 1984, PP. 15 - 28.
84. Sutcliffe and Wong, op. cit., P.103.
85. See Vivienne Combe and Alan Little (eds.), Race and Social Work: A Guide to Training, Tavistock Pub. London, 1986, PP. 71 - 75; N. Foner, Jamaica Farewell: Jamaican Migrants in London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, and also, V. K. Edwards, The West Indian Language Issue in British Schools, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
86. For more about these divisions, see La Rose, op. cit., PP. 24 - 25.
87. See Herskovits, op. cit., P.207.
88. The New Testament Church of God.
89. See Combe and Little, op. cit., P.74.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored and assessed various categories of pastoral care and counselling from the standpoint of the black churches in Britain. It is caring which reflects the spirit of the churches in terms of a quality of simplicity in approach to religious life that is practical, fulfilling and satisfying. One of the categories which is featured is acceptance. A primary and essential way in which that has been accomplished is by means of worship of a particular kind. For example, worship in the black churches allows each individual the opportunity to participate in and to contribute to the proceedings without fear of being ridiculed or criticised. Whether such participation is articulated in the form of a prayer, a testimony or an interpretation of the Word the inputs are accepted as given. They are 'reaffirmed' in ways which indicate that whatever the nature of the individual contribution - simple or complex, intelligible or unintelligible, the contributions are deemed to be legitimate parts of the total worship experience. Some of the ways in which such reaffirmation takes place is through spontaneous shouts of 'Amen', 'Praise the Lord' - a hug, handshake, clapping of hands, calls for repeat performances, and by means of occasional enactments of the process referred to as 'cultural connection and continuity' (see Chapter Six).

The combined effectiveness of all those contributory factors in worship, we have stated, is the building-up of individual self-confidence, self-esteem and self-acceptance (pp. 18 - 24, 41 - 42). One of the reasons why such virtues and values are necessary and why the black churches are seen as caring agencies - providing these for their members is because of the peculiar colonial experience of a majority of the members. It was a colonial experience, for example, which effectively discouraged self-expression in Afro-Caribbean people and made them believe that what they had to offer was of an inferior quality to that of the colonial rulers. Some features of those negative factors continue to be part of the experiences of black people in Britain today. Ways in which the black churches play a positive role within the specific context that is of immense importance and invaluable worth, were also discussed.

Another important aspect of acceptance in the black churches for the caring process is relationship. Such a relationship it has been shown can be meaningful or meaningless, it can be broken and be ineffective. However, the most significant feature of black church relationship is its emphasis on brotherly and sisterly love as a condition for relationship with God. In that way the members do not only strive to ensure that they are indeed 'brothers and sisters in the Lord', but also, in most of their endeavours what affects the individual affects the group and vice versa. There is cohesion in relationship which makes for healing, growth and the creating of new individuals. An example of this is seen in the case of Robert (pp. 62 - 68).

In essence then, such relationship is two-dimensional. It is between individuals but it is first and foremost between individuals and God. This two-dimensional attribute of black church relationship constitutes the major difference between the caring obtained in secular institutions such as the pubs, for example, and what is obtainable in the black churches. For instance while it is true that there is caring in the pubs through acceptance as is the case in the black churches, caring in the former is one-dimensional. It is between participating individuals only. In the black churches the caring relationship is enriched with an added dimension providing possibilities for an enhanced relationship as a future heavenly reward. But part of the reasons given for that is because pub patrons do not as a rule invoke God in their relationship as black church members do in worship.

Just as there are differences between the caring relationships in the black churches and those among black people in the pubs, so too it is with black people who are members of the mainstream churches. In the mainstream churches black members seek acceptance as a means of attaining social values. For example, such persons strive to foster relationships with the largely middle-class individuals who form the majority group in these churches. One of the reasons for this is because some black people still see the native middle-class as examples of the 'success' that they wish to attain. That too, is in keeping with the fact that many Afro-Caribbean people continue to see the historic churches as churches for the 'rich and successful'. Consequently, some continue to maintain relationships and to seek



acceptance in these churches because it is one way of keeping alive the hope that they might eventually achieve some success in due course. For others, such membership is a way of signifying that they have done well for themselves in Britain.

Membership in this sense, does not consist of the desire to fulfil the more 'spiritual needs' as is the case in the black churches. That is, membership is not a means of satisfying purely spiritual needs as a compensatory device for a general lack of social and material rewards. Rather membership is a way of attesting to the belief that they are still on track to accomplish social and material success in Britain as motives for having come here. That is so even if allegiance to, and individual faith in the doctrinal teachings of their churches have also been cited as reasons why a number of Afro-Caribbean people have retained membership in the historic churches (pp. 47 - 61).

In all the examples cited - whether it is in the black churches, the pubs or the historic mainstream churches, the role of acceptance is crucial to the caring endeavour. Therefore in their own ways the various groups seem to find what they seek from the places they visit or attend and the individuals whom they relate to so they can achieve their desired ends. Even so there are basic weaknesses and limitations of acceptance as it has been featured. Such acceptance, for example, requires that persons are 'accepted as they are'. However while doing that seems to present less problems in the case of pub patrons who are not obliged to change anyone the same is not true with regards to the black churches. The churches' emphasis on evangelism, which presupposes a change from who people are to whom they can potentially become in Jesus Christ, has been problematic as far as the members are concerned. While they are required to accept people as they are that cannot be done fully if they have an obligation to convert them as well.

However, acceptance as caring in the black churches is at its most effective in relationships between the initiated - those who belong and are members of the community of worshipping believers who are already within the fold. In that context the fact of change is already assumed. It is here that they are 'One in Christ', and where individual personalities do not seem to matter.



When such acceptance is extended to outsiders - those who are categorized as 'sinners' and 'non-believers', the religious duty to convert them limits the role of acceptance as a caring process in those churches. Such persons are not cared for in the same way. That difference, however, does not appear to prevent black church members from attempting to care for outsiders through their desire to evangelize. That motivation was the reason why they approached the pub patrons with reference to the cases in point.

We have seen also, especially in Chapter Two, the extent to which pastoral caring is ineffective when it is done on the paternalistic model. One of the examples used to demonstrate that is 'standing under'. Evidence of this is shown in the case of black people who receive care from persons in the Social Services sector as well as in the mainstream churches. Part of the reason for the apparent inadequate caring is because of cultural differences and dissimilar life chances between carers and cared for. Basic to these factors also are the existing practices and behavioural patterns which combine to effectively relegate most black people to the bottom of the social, economic and political strata in Britain. Effective caring for persons who are placed in such positions comes from those who understand because they are party to the same experiences, it was affirmed.

The location of the majority of black people at the bottom of the various strata of society continues to reinforce colonial attitudes and to promote basic stereotypes about them, we have seen, as well (pp. 78, 92 - 95). For example, there are members of the mainstream churches together with persons in the society in general who still hold the view that black people are incapable of serving as leaders. Part of the reason for that is because throughout the colonial experience, and even in the contemporary situation, leadership roles are exercised by persons who belong to the dominant ethnic group in the society.

In most mainstream churches then, black members are given only marginal roles. For example they may be communion stewards, property stewards or ushers, but very few are church secretaries, treasurers, society stewards, catechists and deacons which are more substantial roles in the leadership positions of those churches. Because the church mirrors the society in many ways we have seen that such stereotyping of black people and the subordinate roles which they play continue to provide poor role

models for their youngsters. That in turn contributes to the identity crisis among young black people in Britain.

Ways in which the black churches provide caring to redress those problems were articulated. One of the ways for instance is the fact that in their churches black people are in control. They are the leaders who provide positive role models. Also, in the black church experience there is opportunity for youngsters to express themselves particularly in music-forms and other peculiar cultural styles of worship. When those factors are assessed in the mainstream church context, it is seen that very little attention is given to reflect the cultural ethos of the black members thereby restricting not only the variety and enrichment of the worship services, but also reducing the amount of caring which is possible. Because of that many black members in mainstream churches remain unfulfilled after they have worshipped. It is in that context we were told that some complain of a feeling of 'spiritual hunger' in mainstream churches. And the major reason for that is because of a lack of understanding of the spiritual needs of those worshippers, it has been established.

In the black churches on the other hand, there is caring because of understanding referred to (Chapter Two) as 'fore-knowledge' or the shared ability to know. That we have seen to be so not only among the members but also among members and pastors: they share the same life-styles and educational achievements. In the area of pastoral training for ministry in the black churches, for example, it was noted that even if there are training institutions, the basic means of training is still 'in the field' (pp. 103 - 108).

Informed by a sense of call, such patterns of ministerial training do not seem to create barriers between pastors and members in the black churches who are not educated. It seems to be the case in mainstream churches - as far as the black members are concerned, and where a college training is still a major criterion for the exercise of pastoral ministry, that it limits the caring received by the black members.

A potential problem which the black churches will have to deal with in the near future however, is the extent to which pastors who are trained in the field can effectively minister to a younger generation who are inclined to question and to be more assertive than their elders. It would seem that the method,



content and scope of the training will have to be re-structured to accommodate an enquiring younger membership. At present, however, the pastors appear to be able to cater to the needs of all their members in a satisfactory way.

Understanding in the black churches is based not only on the concept of foreknowledge but also it includes God as a third-party dimension in the caring process. It is the inclusion of God as party to the caring endeavour that is one of the distinguishing features between pastoral caring in the black churches and that which takes place in the more 'professional' methods of caring. That is so especially with reference to caring of a counselling nature. An example of such caring which is presented is the one offered by Bro. Thomas to Sis. Sandra (pp. 113 - 120).

A basic weakness of the caring method is that it seemed as if Mr. Thomas was actually telling Sandra what to do. Consequently instead of empowering her to take control of her situation and make confident choices, he was only assisting her to become more dependent upon others. That however was not the case. On the contrary, Mr. Thomas was applying the counselling method known as 'guiding' which is not in any way that of directing or coercing others, but a different type of counselling. By using it, he helped her to clarify her situation: to choose an option of trust and confidence in God as part of the package of positive outlooks which she needed to have had at that time.

Additional categories of pastoral care in the black churches which have been assessed include the more practical forms of caring as exemplified in the context of housing, employment and the black family (Chapters Three, Four and Five). For example, we have seen that the majority of black people in Britain are located in the inner cities (pp. 125, 178 - 179). Some of the reasons for that historical development are because of the availability of housing in those areas, stringent financial means and the influence of settlement patterns as a result of immigration. An instance of this was the practice whereby newly arrived immigrants went to live with relatives and friends who had been here before them.

The existence of discriminatory practices was also cited as a reason for such location. That was the case especially during the earlier phase of immigration. There seems to be some evidence of this even now despite the fact that private housing associations and local authorities - including the Leeds City



Council, do not accept that their policies in allocating houses are discriminatory.

Having lived in the inner cities for most of their lives many black people have developed fond attachments to these localities. They do not wish to leave. Among them are those who regard it as an opportunity to live in the inner city because it offers them the chance to witness where they are as an expression of their understanding of evangelism. Others would not leave the inner cities for fear of isolation and possible racial harassments. For example the belief is that if they were to go to areas where there are not many other black people to relate to, then they would become unhappy. Also, the new locality to which they go may be one of the growing 'no-go' areas for black people which are developing in Leeds and other parts of Britain. Examples of such areas in Leeds are: Burley, Gipton North and Lincoln Green, we have seen (pp. 135 - 136).

As a way of assisting members who experience housing difficulties the churches' caring takes the following forms. These are: self-help endeavours - building and repairing, the offer of furniture - items and paint for decoration. We mentioned also (Chapter Four) that where most black people now live depended on where they had been able to find jobs. That factor in turn had a role to play in the growth and development of black churches in Britain. Churches were founded in order to meet the spiritual needs of black people wherever they settled in search of jobs. That was the case not only when there was high employment and persons were moving to other cities because they could easily change jobs, but also, when they were forced to move because of unemployment difficulties.

Pastoral care was given by the churches to those who had no jobs as well as to those who even if they were employed, experienced frustrations in being overlooked for promotion. Persons who had lost their jobs were assisted in making the transition from wage earners to non-wage earners. Those who had jobs but experienced frustrations, for example, found in the black churches the relevant context where they could deal with their frustrations. They were provided with an alternative venue and an atmosphere where people cared. For both groups the black churches were places where the dignity which was lost by being unemployed, and the devalued feeling of being overlooked and unrecognized could be addressed in appropriate terms - with meaning and restoring of purpose for those concerned.

Such caring is enhanced by means of the extended family character of the black churches. Aspects of that character were prominent as early as the slave system as sustaining values for survival (Chapter Five). These included the bonding of persons together in such ways that it was difficult at times to distinguish clearly those who were blood-members from persons who were not, in most Afro-Caribbean societies. Also we outlined and assessed the role of such bonding in terms of the network of support systems which are akin to it, and used the plight of the un-wed mother as one example in which caring is provided by the Afro-Caribbean community in general and the black church movement in particular.

We saw too, that the children of un-wed black parents are usually reared by the maternal grandparents. The fact that the practice seems to be misunderstood in Britain and the extent to which some parents and grandparents are sometimes forced to 'do battle' with local authorities in order that their children are not taken into care, are factors which have been cited as well (pp. 233 - 234, 255).

Just as parents, grandparents, relatives and even friends undertake to exercise concern and to seek the welfare of each others' children as a legitimate aspect of the extended family character, so too, it is in the black churches. Church members undertake not only to provide homes when necessary but also endeavour to look after one another's children as if they were their own, we have seen (pp. 242 - 254).

It is in those and the other examples which were cited that the black churches are characterized as agencies which effectively nurture and maintain what we referred to as 'primary virtues and values of the Afro-Caribbean extended family life in Britain'. Basic to all of this is the sense of community that is evident. Consequently it is by means of that community ethos that we have assessed, outlined and interpreted black church caring within the specific ambit of rituals of beginnings and endings (pp. 273 - 278).

It was in the context of the community ethos also that we have cited earlier during the course of this conclusion, that a majority of the black church members have developed a positive regard for the inner city location where they live. An additional reason for such regard is the opportunity to be active in those localities where the sense of community is manifested in every respect. In that context however, a considerable amount of



time is spent in doing church work. Some of this work involves evangelistic services, prayer meetings and Bible study classes. And because these are held during week days when many members of other ethnic groups seem to be gainfully employed, there is bound to be a question mark against a system of caring which utilizes such vast amounts of time in doing nothing else but voluntary church-related activities. For example, is it positive and helpful caring to encourage people to seek purely spiritual fulfilment on occasions when such persons could be agitating for changes in their social and economic conditions which, if achieved, might well serve to reduce some of the apparent dependence on spiritual satisfaction to compensate for such lack?

Another related question which must be raised is the validity of a caring endeavour where, as we have seen in the chapter on employment, for example, pastors had actually encouraged some members to stay in their jobs especially those who were unfulfilled in what they were doing. Such attempts at caring could be seen as counter-productive with the result of sustaining them in their conditions instead of enabling them to take initiatives and to generate the quality and strength of character so they could deal more creatively with their difficulties.

Having made those observations however, it is equally helpful if they are placed against the background of what was discussed in Chapter Four with reference to the then contemporary situations in the Caribbean, and the fact of rising unemployment here in Britain. For instance, if any of the persons involved had given up their jobs there was never any guarantee that another would be found - either here in Britain or in the Caribbean. And it was those who took the counsel of their pastors to retain such jobs who are now receiving pensions or hope to do so in the future.

So it is within the context of that apparent tension between what looks at times to be negative aspects of caring which results in some positive benefits and vice versa, that a feature of pastoral care in the black churches must be assessed. Therefore in the chapter on the black family for instance, one gets the impression that despite the many positive values and virtues that the churches' caring provides, there is evidence of what amounts to a negation of responsibilities on the part of some church families. That is so especially with reference to the way in



which those families indicated that they would have tackled a situation like the one involving Harry and his sister (pp. 168 - 171). For example the predominant approach would be to do 'what the pastor said'. In other words they would simply allow the religious group to deal with the problem. Akin to that is the embodying sense of resignation which seems to be implicit. If, for instance, the conflict persisted after the intervention of the pastor or the group, the majority response would be that since they had asked God to resolve the situation then they are 'leaving it up to Him'. In His own way and time He will 'intervene and do what is necessary', they have informed us.

Again the pertinent question that is raised here is whether such an approach towards resolving potential crises that the church groups encourage is a way of enabling people to take control of their situation or whether it is not one which promotes dependency on others. And, as such, fails to raise consciousness by involving and empowering people in a dramatization of their own experiences so they can benefit through personal growth and development initiatives.

Similar reactions about that aspect of black church caring can be further justified in the sense that in many ways it is also geared only towards the preparation of persons to survive now while they are waiting for 'the rapture'. That is the time when God will come to take them to their heavenly home - a factor which is also consistent with belief in a coming 'redemption' as a means of enduring the pain of the present. Caring in this respect seems to be devoid also of the promotion of a consciousness that would motivate them to agitate for social and political action to improve their conditions. These include the very conditions which are fuelled by economic suffering which causes them to seek relief in an emotional and simple faith. But it has been their simple faith and ardent trust in God - allowing Him to control every facet of their lives-that is the essential ingredient which sustains many black church members.

One of the other reasons for not promoting caring that would equip for action to effect changes toward political justice and equality of opportunity for all in Britain is that 'the Church should not be involved in politics'. The belief is that involvement in politics equals sin. Consequently any aspect of church life and action that is not in keeping with what is conceived to be 'spiritual and Christian', is looked at with

However, failure to promote political action for example, is to limit the extent and potential of their caring. It is caring which equips people to act politically for themselves that consists of the best possibility for enhancing the low social standing and to improve the precarious economic conditions which affect so many black people in Britain. In other words it is such caring that can lessen the reliance on obtaining spiritual fulfilment as a compensatory alternative for what they lack socially and economically. It also serves to inform that people without economic and political power must not always of necessity resort only to the spiritual dimension to manifest their condition but they can opt for political action as well.

In a real sense however, even if the black churches do not envisage this to be the case what they do is in effect essentially part of a political process. For example they mobilize, and there is sufficiency in and motive for their action. There is solidarity, and a strong sense of identity is derived as important aspects of their caring. There is a political process then which is expressed in worship and other forms of church life and practice but not through the medium and subdivisions of secular partisan politics. In other words it is a political process which seeks the need to integrate God's role as participant and co-worker with strategies which stress personal piety, individual salvation and future hope rather than concrete social action in the present.

The belief is that if they were to diverge from their purely religious pursuits to that of a party political nature they would become so engulfed or marginalised as to lose the identity which they have come to cherish as separate religious entities. It must be emphasized once more however, that it is precisely because such beliefs are held and practised that they effectively limit the extent of the pastoral caring which the churches could offer to individuals who are not members of their groups.

Another example in which the churches' caring is limited with respect to their biblical-evangelical form of Christianity is that it is consistent with the adherence to certain strict moral codes of doctrines and behaviour. That is the reason why, for instance, as we have observed earlier on in this conclusion, acceptance as a caring paradigm is at its most effective among the initiated and core community of faith. Those who deviate from the conventional norms and practices are not so readily accepted and are not recipients of such levels of caring. The



same would be true concerning those who may have queries about the more abstract and theoretical aspects of prayer, preaching, faith, doctrine and any other factor which the churches believe ought not to be pursued or questioned.

In this thesis we have been provided with a comprehensive and pervading indication of what pastoral care and counselling in the black churches in Britain is, and the purposes which it serves. That is consistent with caring which begins as early as the inception of the black church movement to the present. The present is one in which the black churches are at a cross-roads in their evolution and development. What course their future development will take and the continued relevance and effectiveness of their caring cannot be determined with much accuracy at this time. However there are three primary and pertinent factors each with the potential to influence the future caring patterns of the churches that are discernible. These are:

(a) the extent to which they are able to attract and are willing to accept 'outsiders', particularly those with critical and challenging viewpoints

(b) how effectively they will succeed in catering adequately to the increasing demands of and frustrations experienced especially by the younger generation in whose hands the churches' futures lie, and

(c) the degree to which existing conditions that affect black people economically, socially and politically are improved.

In the sphere of economic improvements, for example, the churches must recognize the need to become much more involved in the economic development of the black community. Because black people of Afro-Caribbean descent lack an economic base in Britain it is essential that the establishment of black business enterprises and initiatives become a key factor in the future strategies of the churches. In that way their caring would not only provide ways and means to enable them to ensure that the future relevance of their churches is positive, but also, be more representative of the holistic needs and realities of the people whom they may serve instead of what appears to be basically a wholly spiritual concern at the moment.

Another pertinent aspect of the thesis which ought to be looked at is the areas which can be identified as possibilities for further research. The intrinsic merit of and rationale for this can be articulated in two ways. One of the ways is consistent with the position whereby it is accepted that even if the



particular areas have surfaced in one form or another, it was not feasible either to delve sufficiently into or to interpret them at any length as part of the thesis. The other is that identifying and outlining them at this juncture not only enhances further the research potential of the thesis, but also broadens the scope and increases the breadth of contribution which it might make to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

The first related factor which ought to be mentioned, then, is that of secularization. The negative effects which it continues to exert on a number of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain is considerable. Some of the people who are thus affected include many who had lost their faith during the initial stages of the immigration years as a consequence of the 'reception' which they received. Although some reference was made to those who frequented the pubs, for example, it would be of much value to know more about other ways in which they receive care in the absence of a relationship with mainstream christianity in general, and the black churches in particular.

An equally important factor to be included is the doctrinal tenets of black church christianity. A summary of these doctrines is as follows:

- (a) The verbal inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture
- (b) The Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity)
- (c) Repentance as a pre-requisite for Salvation
- (d) Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ
- (e) Sanctification through the Word of God as a pre-requisite for Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- (f) The gift of tongues as evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- (g) Abstention from worldly pleasures
- (h) Baptism in water as an outward expression of inner faith
- (i) Divine Healing and Anointing with oil
- (j) The Lord's Supper and Washing the Saints' feet
- (k) The Second Coming of Christ
- (l) Eternal salvation for the faithful
- (m) Eternal damnation for sinners

Especially in the chapter on worship, we saw that there are some differences pertaining to baptism (name), the frequency in which the Lord's Supper might be celebrated, and speaking in tongues. The consensus is that apart from these differences,

by and large, the doctrines above are shared by all the black churches.

To what extent can one be justified in asserting, therefore, that strict adherence to most of the doctrines appears to foster negative aspects such as:

- (i) a convenient beatitude syndrome
- (ii) docility
- (iii) a dampening of the revolutionary will of black christians, and
- (iv) a prevention of persons from joining in collective struggles with their fellows in society against their common exploitation?

Are those doctrinal tenets the ones from which a relevant black theology of liberation for Britain is likely to emerge? Would more emphasis on a 'Social Gospel' enhance caring in the black churches?

Finally, the status of black churches (if there is to be any) within the new religious organization that is to replace the British Council of Churches, should also be a vitally important area for future research endeavour. How would full membership, for example, in that national grouping affect the present structure, character, growth and development of black churches in Britain? Would they lose their peculiar identity and distinctiveness? To what extent would membership serve to enhance or to reduce in any way the level of caring which they provide? Would membership change some of the attitudes of mainstream christians toward the black churches?

These queries can only be answered adequately by means of additional research undertakings informed by, and drawing from, the reservoir of information about caring in the black churches which this thesis has made possible.

APPENDIX 1

Informal Discussion Questions

What is pastoral care?

How is your church caring for unemployed members?

Should the black churches provide employment for their members?

How do you cope with being unemployed?

Should the black churches provide homes for their members?

How is your church caring for members with housing difficulties?

What does it mean to care in the black churches?

How is your church caring for the family?

What are some of your views about the black family?

What does going to church mean to you?

What aspects of your church life do you enjoy the most?

Are you cared for:

Emotionally?

Socially?

Spiritually?

Why do you go to this particular church?

Would you say black christians were accepted by the mainstream churches?

Were black people understood in those churches?

Are there any changes?



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