

AFRICAN PIONEERED CHURCHES IN THE WEST: LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, we have witnessed an increasing frequency of scholarly comments on the rising cross-cultural mission praxis of Christians from the global south in the global north. In Britain, some of the key players are African missionaries, and their presence has led to an increase in the numbers of African Pioneered Churches (APCs) across the country. However, their corporate failure in engaging white British community is highly evident. Hence, this qualitative research which was aimed at recognising the factors that limit the cross-cultural effectiveness of these African pioneers and their churches in Liverpool. I interviewed five African pastors in Liverpool, they were chosen by homogenous sampling. The research also sought to identify creative possibilities that can help them overcome the limitations and

rethink their mission praxis so as to enable them to engage other ethnicities in evangelism. The study revealed significant shortcomings in their mission strategies (including an outright refusal to contextualise their ministries and the prevalent racial prejudice they encounter when they try to engage others in mission). On the other hand, it proposed that an intentional synergy with British Christianity that embraces the uniqueness of both expressions of Christianity is needed in the current context of Britain's increasing multiculturalism.

Key Terms: Cross-cultural mission, African Pioneered Churches (APCs), Contextualisation, Racism

Introduction

Mission has never been the exclusive preserve of any group of people. Whether it is the practical work of mission or the scholarly exploration of its theology or history, contemporary mission can only make sense when approached in a multicultural and multi-perspectival manner. Historically speaking, the apostles who were discipled by the Lord in Palestine blazed the missional trail, making possible 'the crossing of Christianity's first cultural frontier into the Hellenistic world.'² A few generations later, the heartland of Christianity moved to the gentile territories of Syria, Iraq and Egypt. Onwards, the centre of gravity of Christian mission shifted to the Western Europe and remained there for a long while, perhaps long enough for Christianity to begin to actually look like a Western religion. The last quarter of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first have progressively revealed the error in such a misconception. Christianity in the West has progressively declined as the foothold of modernity and the Enlightenment in their domain has increased. According to the British Social Attitudes survey of 2016, 53% of the

British public now describe themselves as having “no religion”—a 5% increase from the 2015 statistics.³ The report further revealed that while 30% of the British public identified as Anglicans in 2000, that proportion has been halved as of 2016.⁴

The unrelenting decline in the fortunes of Christianity in the West has given a contrasting visibility to the shift in the frontiers of global Christianity from the global north to the southern hemispheres of Africa, Asia and Latin America and a concomitant reversal in the direction of mission from being southwards to becoming northwards as well as being from everywhere to everywhere.⁵ In Europe, this is especially visible in Britain, given its ever-increasing multiculturalism. For instance, ‘a 14 percent ethnic minority made predominantly of (African) migrants [accounts] for 60 percent of church attendance in a global city like London’⁶ as African, Asian and Latin American countries become the key players in sending out missionaries to Europe and to North America. These migrant churches are not only multiplying, they are also experiencing tremendous growth among themselves. This readily brings into focus a Yoruba adage: *‘Onile nje pongila, alejo ni oun yoo gbe orun’* which translates ‘The host is living in hunger, yet his visitor insists on staying for five days.’ In the communal life of the Yorubas in the south-western part of Nigeria from where this adage originated, hospitality is a principal virtue—it is deemed at being a core expression of humanity. However, even for such a naturally welcoming people group, it is problematic when a guest could sense that his host is in lack and yet insists on staying as a guest for the proverbial ‘five days’. Such insistence could only mean either of two things: the guest is blatantly insensitive and inconsiderate, or he very well could have something worthwhile to contribute to the host family that could ameliorate their standard of living. To apply this to the current reality of the British Christian space, indeed, current statistics on British Christianity readily depict a Christianity that is now proverbially insufficient to go around. The ‘host’, indeed, is living in ‘hunger’. Yet, in the same scenario, the growth of migrant

churches and their seeming insistence on staying for the proverbial 'five days' makes the group a fascinating research focus. Are they being insensitive, or do they have something worthwhile to contribute to British Christianity? This researcher will argue for the latter in the latter part of this article.

African churches in Britain have been identified by different names over the years in scholarship including 'African-led churches'⁷, 'African Independent Churches' (AICs)⁸, 'African and African Caribbean churches'⁹, 'African Churches'¹⁰, 'African Immigrant Churches'¹¹, and 'Black Majority Churches'.¹² Currently, 'Black Majority Churches' (BMCs) seems to be the preferred term with a near-consensus usage by commentators in the field¹³. However, in this article, the preferred identifier for these churches will be 'African Pioneered Churches' (APCs) for a few reasons. First, 'BMCs' as a label has been criticised for its racial innuendo and divisiveness.¹⁴ Alternative terms such as 'migrant churches'¹⁵, 'African Churches' and 'African-led Churches' all seem to give an outsider's label on the community as though their constitution and membership is (meant to be limited) only to people of their kind. It only makes sense that 'African Churches' in the West are the churches meant for 'African migrants'¹⁶ in the West and an 'African-led Church' seem to call to mind the picture of a church that will be exclusively and perpetually led by Africans. 'African Pioneered Churches' (APCs) on the other hand suggests explicitly that the churches being referred to are 'pioneered', 'initiated' or 'planted' by Africans but also implicitly suggests that the same churches may not necessarily be perpetually led by an African. They were only *initiated*—not (intended to be) exclusively led—by Africans. 'APCs' as a label also emphasises the pioneering endeavour that planting a church as an African in a contextually different and complex multicultural setting as Britain entails. Leaders of APCs are not just church planters—they are ground breakers blazing a trail and venturing into something radically significant to the global landscape of Christianity.

To this end, the history of many APCs can be traced in some degrees to strategic mission initiatives majorly from Africa and the West Indies to Britain usually characterised by a ‘mandate to re-evangelise Britain’¹⁷ and restore her to her former Christian ethos. Where this has not been the case, the unrelenting decline in British Christianity has shaped the missionary intention of the immigrant Christians. However, their success in this regard has been highly criticised in literature—and understandably so—for if their mission is ‘to the Western church’¹⁸ then the question arises, ‘is an African migrant evangelising other African migrants in Britain evangelising Britain?’ The answer to this is not an outright ‘no’, nor a confident ‘yes’ but more like ‘no and yes.’ To get an honest answer to this question, and in the process, recognise the challenges limiting the mission work of APCs, and identify possibilities for overcoming the barriers, this research employed the direct participation of five African pioneers in the British mission space.

Methodology

This was a qualitative research¹⁹ in the sense that it was ‘an empirical, socially located phenomenon.’²⁰ It employed an ethnographical design that involved interviewing five pastors of APCs in Liverpool.²¹ The interviewees were all founders and incumbent leaders of their respective churches. They were selected by a homogenous sampling of church planting initiatives in Liverpool from 2003 to 2015. They were chosen partly because of how long they have been resident in Liverpool, partly because of their ages to have a range of ages between 30 and 65 to explore any possible shifts in ecclesiological emphasis with respect to age, and partly based on existing relationships. Four out of the five selected pastors are Nigerian immigrants and one is a Ghanaian national.²²

This was an insider research on a plurality of levels. First, the researcher is involved in the pastoral leadership of a Liverpool-based

APC—albeit, in an assistant position—which regards Britain as a ‘mission field’ and considers itself an agent for the re-evangelisation of Britain.²³ In the same vein, the researcher has witnessed how the missionary feats of his African denomination have only succeeded in replicating ‘migrant churches’ in the United Kingdom. This foreknowledge informed some of the probes introduced in interviewing the respondents. Besides, the researcher considers himself an African Pentecostal Christian, and this is the expression of Christianity that is shared by all the five participants. Hence, the researcher has a reasonable grasp of the worldview that has shaped the cross-cultural missionary initiative of these pioneers. Lastly, the researcher shares his Yoruba ethnicity with three of the five research participants—an ethnicity that emphasises respect for elders and which shaped how these (elderly) respondents were approached and guided the general course of the conversation. By implication, while these three Yoruba respondents were interviewed, care was taken to ensure that the researcher did not appear unnecessarily formal as that would have nuanced the response that would be gotten from the respondents—if any at all—as the researcher could have been viewed as an uncultured Yoruba man in diaspora.

The interviews conducted with the five pastors were semi-structured—consisting of six guide questions probing each congregation’s history, ethnic distribution, level of community engagement, ecclesiological and liturgical distinctives, and the gap between the envisioned imagery of what ‘church’ each of these pioneers set out to plant (bearing in mind their ‘White Majority’ community context) and what kind of ‘church’ they currently lead. Responses to these guide questions raised follow-up questions to explore interesting issues raised. While not very much could have been said prior to the study about what the data collected would look like, the researcher did have some anticipated ‘broad descriptive categories’²⁴ that could emerge from the research. Interestingly, while some of these anticipated themes proved consistent with the data collected (Reverse Mission,

Church Pioneering in UK, African Pentecostalism, and Racism), a good number of unanticipated themes emerged (including Women's Involvement in APCs, Ministry Partnerships, ICT Usage among others).

Table 1: About the Participants and their Congregation

PASTOR	NATIONALITY OF ORIGIN	INDEPENDENT OR AFFILIATED TO AFRICA?	ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF CONGREGATION		
			% WHITE	% BLACK	% OTHERS
PASTOR 1	GHANA	AFFILIATED	10	90	0
PASTOR 2	NIGERIA	AFFILIATED	10	80	10
PASTOR 3	NIGERIA	AFFILIATED	2	90	8
PASTOR 4	NIGERIA	INDEPENDENT	NA	NA	NA
PASTOR 5	NIGERIA	INDEPENDENT	41	50	9

What follows is a discussion of two of the major limiting factors identified and their implications.

Contextualisation

For the pastors interviewed, it was evident from the data that the most difficult barrier to negotiate in the missionary praxis of APCs is contextual ignorance. They are struggling to understand their context in order to formulate an intentional mission strategy and an ecclesiology that fits their situation. Pastor 4 rightly asserted that “Christianity is a cultural engagement”²⁵ and that missionaries need to “become a part and learn the nuances of the community they seek to evangelise.”²⁶ He continued, “While you are talking to [a Briton] from the cultural point of view of your African-ness, he is responding to you from the [enlightened] understanding of his British-ness.”²⁷ The know-how required to navigate this cross-cultural context of the African pioneers interviewed remains largely missing. Indeed, there is still a lot to discover for Africans who are interested in doing any meaningful and trans-generational mission work in the West.

The expressions of contextual ignorance amongst these pioneers are as varied as their approaches to overcoming the same. Beginning with the former, there is a conflicting idealisation of what a ‘church’—more so, a new church—should be, both in the superficial sense of infrastructures and the deeper sense of community and organisational structure. In narrating his pioneering experience, Pastor 1 recalled,

When we started...we were meeting in my living room and... some people won't feel comfortable being part of a church that is meeting in a 'house'. They'd rather want to see a 'proper church'... Personally, I feel that a lot of people expect the church to be in a certain way.

After a while, the small congregation moved from meeting in a living room to meeting in an office space but that did not yet make up for the idea of a ‘proper church’ as many of their (potential) white members still did not like the idea. Pastor 1 cited an example: “I remember, one day some white people came (on invitation) and while they were driving there (to the venue), they were expecting to see a building, but it was an office space... They were disappointed.” Back in Africa, even though there is an increasing intentionality that goes into picking out a meeting venue for the ‘new generation churches’,²⁸ it is still not unthinkable for a church to start off by holding meetings in a living room (usually of its pioneer). In the British Christian space, however, the mainline British churches have shaped the infrastructural ideal of what a church (building) should look like to the locals as every parish has an unmistakable infrastructural similarity. This partly explains the motivation for partnerships between some APCs and the CofE so that, amongst other things, they could worship in the facility of the CofE, and in cases where the APC is financially buoyant, they would attempt to buy the CofE structure.²⁹ As such, Church 1 and Church 2, after changing meeting venues a number of times (a phenomenon which is common to all the five participant churches), now meet in a CofE facility. Speaking about the day they

moved to their current meeting venue, Pastor 1 remarked, ‘the people entered the church building and many of them were like, “oh I love this!” (laughs) and, you know, I just kept my thoughts to myself.’ When asked about those thoughts he kept to himself, Pastor 1 associates his personal understanding of ‘church’ to the image of the first century church as portrayed by Luke and Paul³⁰—an image that reflects that church is not a building, but a people.³¹

This leads directly into the second index of the conflicting idea of what a church should look like in terms of the community and its organisation as pointed out by Pastor 2 who said concerning the locals (in contrast to Africans), “they see church as a community centre that caters for the needs of their immediate society...”³² Again, this can be traced to the institutionalisation of the link between the church and the community by the *established* church, the Church of England.³³ However, the point here raised underscores part of the criticisms of African Christianity, where, for the most part, the explosive growth of Christianity is neither proportionate to accountability in leadership across board nor to assisting the needy in the society. As Danny McCain rightly pointed out in his scholarly prediction of African Christianity in the twenty-first century, “[t]he African church in the twenty-first century must understand that the church has to do far more than just sponsoring worship services and conducting funerals and weddings. It must be very much involved in identifying and meeting the needs of the society.”³⁴

Akin to the conflicting idealisation of church amongst the locals and African pioneers is also the conflicting ideas of what a pastor (or church leader) should look like. Admittedly, this is not limited to a white/black dichotomy as it also occurs both in Africa and in Britain and, in fact, across denominational lines. In identifying some of the indices that disqualified him from ‘fitting’ the pastoral figure image of the locals, Pastor 1 recalls, ‘[f]irst of all, [I am] young and... [I was] not married.... So, it’s like there are a whole lot of negatives associated with [me] all of a sudden.’³⁵ In other words, age and marital status are

some of the factors that (dis)qualify a pastor (to-be). But the big issue in this regard is gender. Pointing out the gender-factor, Pastor 1 submits,

My assistant is a woman and there is also that problem with women... In this country, they also have their own idea concerning women ministers and a lot of people even when they walk into a church and there is a woman ministering, that's it, (they say in their minds) 'I'm not coming back, forget it'.

Pastor 5 is a relevant case study in this regard being a woman herself. In her own words,

I have been insulted when the religious folks come here. In fact, there was one that my members had to walk him out from here because he didn't believe that a woman should talk or say anything in church.

Again, this image of an ideal pastor in the minds of some of the locals can be attributed to the representation the mainline churches have given for centuries. However, that construction is changing. In the CofE, for instance, the ordination of women as deacons (as opposed to deaconesses) began in 1987, followed closely by the ordination of women as priests in 1994. By 2010, more women were being ordained than men as priests.³⁶ Five years later, the first female bishop was consecrated.³⁷ This evolution of gender-inclusion in church leadership has not been without opposition and such opposition persists in some quarters³⁸ as the narratives of Pastors 1 and 5 corroborate.

Other expressions of the lag in contextualisation exhibited by pioneers of APCs include how they regard Government Policies and

their general (un)acknowledgement of the difference between the systems and worldviews of the Western world and Africa. For instance, in Liverpool, an APC leader was heavily criticised in the media in the latter part of 2017 for the church's prayer pattern and much more for offering a "dangerous" therapy to "cure" homosexuality.³⁹ The prayer pattern here criticised is the same prayer pattern that had made the same denomination attract millions of followers on the African continent. Such criticism of the African expression of Christianity in the British Christian space is indicative of an educational lag in the cross-cultural mission praxis of these African pioneers. As Catto rightly observed, 'Western culture is taken for granted in these mission efforts [of APCs]; it is as if no special training is thought necessary to work within it.'⁴⁰ While none of the five pastors interviewed had an educational qualification that was less than a Masters' Degree, only three of them (Pastors 1, 3 and 4) pursued postgraduate studies in the fields of Biblical and/or Pastoral Theology. Pastor 4 was closer to the description of the kind of training African pioneers need—a form of training that transcends systematic theology to foster an understanding of the missional distinctives of planting a church in Britain. In his words, 'if we Africans come and we start a church and we think that the church will go on 'business as usual in Africa', we will not be able to do much'.⁴¹

However, the last decade has witnessed an increasing plurality of programmes and initiatives that are targeted at bridging this gap if only African church leaders will avail themselves of such resources. Not only are more African scholars in Africa and in diaspora taking ownership of African scholarship thereby making African Christianity conversations more stimulating, but also, some institutions of Higher Learning in the UK are beginning to incorporate modules that could be very resourceful to pioneers of APCs into their programmes.⁴² Besides, organisations that are offering special training in cross-cultural missions at a professional level are on the rise. These

include the Centre for Missionaries from the Majority World⁴³, ForMission⁴⁴ and Missio Africanus.⁴⁵

A context-aware African pioneer, therefore, will understand that building a relevant APC goes beyond some of the contextualisation attempts gathered from the respondents, including being more time-conscious, giving women more participation and reducing the volume of their public address system (as African church services are generally loud and exuberant, relative to British Christianity). Besides, (s)he will understand that assembling a few people to start meeting as a church in his or her living room should not be the first step in church pioneering. Pioneering a contextualised church begins with an intensive mapping of the spiritual, social, cultural and economic terrain of their target community, leveraging on such resourceful organisations and/or academic programmes earlier mentioned. This should, then, inform the description of the kind of church they are hoping to plant and what that would look like both in terms of infrastructure, community life and organisational structure while continually engaging with the ever-changing dynamics of Christianity in the West as church leaders in the West rethink, renew and reform these different aspects of church life. Thankfully, the established church is also gradually engaging with these issues as they are beginning to rethink not only their church buildings—acknowledging their ‘need to fashion appropriate buildings for 21st century ministry’⁴⁶—but also their church leadership in the light of the relentless decline plaguing Western Christianity and the increasing age profile of British clergy.⁴⁷

Racial Prejudice

Racism is still deeply entrenched into the cultural fabric of the global north, perhaps only modernised and cloaked in newer language.⁴⁸ This is, in fact, the biggest challenge to cross-cultural mission in the

opinion and experience of Pastor 1. He recalls an experience he had shortly after he arrived in the UK,

I attended this white [majority] church and [this] person asked me, ‘Oh, so have you also found some churches of, maybe, black people?’ It was difficult for him to say actually, but he ended up saying it anyway. Instantly, I was like ‘yeah, there are a couple of them I’ve found.’ I answered him, but later on I was thinking about it. I was like, ‘Why? Why did he ask me that?’ Is it that I’m not welcomed here, or is it their way of saying ‘Well, go and be with your own people’?⁴⁹

This is not an isolated case in literature. Kugbeadjor narrated a similar experience he had in Birmingham when he visited a local congregation of the CofE.⁵⁰ Kwiyani’s narrative of his experience in North America reiterates the same experience.⁵¹ His observation that ‘[you] have to be of the right colour, subscribe to the right theology, wear the right clothes, speak with the right accent, have graduated from the right school and know the right people before you can be considered for inclusion’⁵² is mirrored in Pastor 1’s narrative—and such prerequisites exclude a typical APC leader. As Pastor 1 affirmed, ‘racism is (still) very real in this environment’⁵³ and the fact that he is the only one that spoke extensively on it as a limitation to their mission work confirms the suggestion of Kugbeadjor and Kwiyani that it is a commonly avoided subject of discussion which the church in the UK needs to talk about more openly both at the institutional and individual levels.⁵⁴

Pastor 1 explains,

For an average white person—not all and I must be frank—but for some of them, it could be difficult to receive the gospel from a black person, and this could be for many reasons. ...I think some white folks might feel like ‘I’m better than this

guy' because of our skin colour. It plays in many people's minds whether they will accept it or not... I remember a local that I was evangelising. At a time, I was just giving him reasons and answers towards certain issues and he could sense that he was wrong but to a degree it felt like it was difficult (for him) to admit his error because it was pointed out to him by a black person that he's wrong.

Ihewulezi recounted similar stories of Western Catholics who would not be under the leadership of a person of colour nor receive communion or homilies from such⁵⁵ on the assumption of their superior race. And the same could be said of black immigrants who would not want to have anything to do with the whites nor live in white-majority territories. Pastor 1 highlighted an example in support of the notion that the racist party can as well be the black person, viz: "K.C. Price [talked] about a black person who came to church and was ushered to sit next to a white person and the black person says 'no, I want to sit next to a black person'". This white-black dichotomy in fact defines to a great extent the mission outreach approach of African pioneers. Pastor 1 described this best by saying "sometimes, we [African pioneers] want *our own* [fellow Africans], we want to have *our* people but, yet, we also want to have *them* [white British] to become part of *us*."⁵⁶

The five pastors are exploring racial inclusivity in their congregations in different ways. Pastors 1 and 2 are partnering with the CofE by worshipping *in* CofE cathedrals. The congregation of Pastor 2 takes that further by worshipping *with* the congregation of the CofE once a month such that at least once a month, the 'church' looks highly multicultural. Every other Sunday, the congregations are separated back into their respective racially-shaped congregation. Pastor 3 employs a vision that makes evangelising Africans his church's primary goal and evangelising the British locals a secondary result. He reasons that if African immigrants are reached out to and disci-

pled into an active Christian living, the congregation will then reach out to the white British locals in their neighbourhood, at their workplace and in the community. Pastor 4 is doing this by renting out a multipurpose hall within the church building for free to anyone in the community (white or black) that has a special event and by hosting weekly free events with a global target (with free inter-continental dishes served) while Pastor 5 is being intentional about singing un-African songs and organising un-African programmes to attract non-Africans—not leaving out providing coffee at their services. In her own words, “here, there is no African music... We sing the kind of music that the people of this environment are conditioned to... [Also,] whereas in Africa, when we finish the church service, we don’t do anything else, here we have tea and coffee before and after the service...” As a result of this, she recalls “... we’ve only got one Nigerian ... In fact, Nigerians don’t stay obviously because we don’t create an atmosphere for them to stay.” Her narrative thus affirms the possibility of having an APC that becomes so ‘un-African’ in its ecclesiology that Africans find it unattractive and unappealing as suggested by Pastor 1.⁵⁷

While all the five pastors are managing the tension of racial prejudice (un)consciously in different ways, none of them is doing this adequately (as the ethnic distribution of their weekly attendance seemed to reflect). However, this is a tension that can be managed via a newer approach which is gaining increased acceptance in literature and in the public arena: *Multiculturalism*. This is ‘a recent phenomenon where dominant and minority cultures interact respectfully as whole others and enrich each other in the process.’⁵⁸ The concept of multiculturalism recalls the Yoruba adage earlier mentioned and applies the adage in the light of the guest also having something worthwhile to contribute to the host and thus ameliorate the living standard of both parties. To balance that adage with another Yoruba adage; the Yorubas will say ‘*ajoji owo kan ko gberu dori*’ which means ‘no stranger’s hand successfully lifts the load to the

head.' In other words, when a stranger offers a helping hand to lift one's burden to his head (the Yorubas usually carry loads on their head), such a stranger will never be successful without the person being helped supporting the stranger's helping hand with his. The emphasis of the wisdom in the adage is in the necessity of partnership for successful burden bearing. If African missionaries will successfully bear the burden of the relentless decline in the fortunes of Christianity in the West, two things are necessary: they need to be willing to stretch out their African hand in help, and the hosts need to support these God-sent helpers by adding their British hand. In doing this, the colour of the hands of the stranger or the host is irrelevant; the focus is on the burden that needs be lifted—each party needing each other. An apt metaphor for this is a salad bowl where all the ingredients collaborate without losing their respective flavours or Paul's allegory of a body with different members working together. While this strategy proposes a unique beauty in diversity and a high appeal and suitability for Britain's highly multicultural context, it will warrant an intentional willingness to accept the immigrants by the host and the immigrants' concomitant appreciation for the uniqueness of their 'strength' wrapped in their culturally shaped theology. An African pioneer can receive multicultural training in this regard from any of the aforementioned training organisations as the issues of ethnicity and race (and faith) will continually be rethought in the light of twenty-first century globalisation and the reality of Western Christianity which—from all indications—will increasingly become non-white in ethnicity as we go deeper into the century.⁵⁹

Possibilities

There is a need to bridge the knowledge gap in contextualisation. Another Yoruba proverb says *onile a te'le jeje, ajoji a te girigiri*, which translates, 'the host threads softly, the stranger threads roughly'. The proverb is cited as a means of calling the stranger to an intentional awareness of his/her 'ignorant' status. In cross-cultural mission,

APCs (and by extension, global-south churches in the UK) need to embrace an awareness of their need for knowledge and be intentional in ‘studying to show themselves approved’ unto God and unto the (multicultural) community of their situation. An avenue for doing this is by building genuine interactions, collaborations and partnerships between the APCs and the indigenous churches. The partnership between Church 2, CofE and the Iranian church is a step in the right direction—but only the beginning. All congregations must be willing not only to share but much more to learn from and intentionally listen to each other as they embrace and explore the interrelatedness of church, identity and culture. This will consequently and progressively evaporate the ‘elephant in the room’ status of racism in intercultural dialogues⁶⁰ as more and more churches come together to combat the ideology from the root alongside social injustices. This, in fact, needs to become an agenda embraced by all churches regardless of denomination or culture.

Secondly, there is a pressing need to rethink, unpack and publish ‘Black Theologies’—rediscovering and reinterpreting the Bible in a post-modern, post-Christian and racially prejudiced context with a view to asserting God as being real in African lives in the diaspora.⁶¹ The African Christian community in the UK (and elsewhere in the West) is on a journey towards developing a theology of cross-cultural mission and repositioning mission and evangelism from either ends of meeting spiritual or material needs of the people to meeting both. While there is an onset of such theological reasonings being published,⁶² there is yet a ‘writing gap’ that needs to be filled by ‘black’ theologians who are both scholarly sound and practically immersed in the pastoral or leadership praxis of African Christian communities in the diaspora. These writers must be willing to unpack the theological tangents of collaborative mission with the indigenous churches, multiculturalism, social and community engagement, healing and deliverance ministries, missional leadership and other distinctives of the various expressions of African Chris-

tianity in the diaspora. And this must be done in a contextually relevant deliverable way—as Kwiyani rightly posits, ‘every theology is a contextual theology’.⁶³

Conclusion

With the combination of a growing perception of ‘spiritual need’ in the West, the increasing prominence and expansion of Christian immigrant communities as well as the increasing number of autonomous missions from the global south, APCs (and other non-Western churches) will need to rethink their strategies for contextualisation so that, as Pastor 3 feared, the next generation (children of African members of APCs who grow up within the British contexts) will not replicate the displeasure with and exodus from the church as has been the experience of many mainline indigenous churches in the West. To this end, APC leaders will do themselves a lot of good by maximising the available resources for such training as is relevant for their church planting initiatives while acknowledging the differences in the system upon which the government and the society is being run in the West as opposed to their African contexts of origin. This will translate into being intentional about adherence to government policies and adequate disciplines. In the same vein, the West will increasingly become pro-women and so women’s involvement (and ordination) will help churches be relevant to the West’s re-evangelisation. Each APC leader will need to understand and fully embrace the specifics of his or her calling (as Pastor 3 modelled) but within an intentional framework that aims at fulfilling the ultimate requirements of the Great Commission in the multicultural context of their situation. Besides, rather than hiding behind political correctness or outright denial, church leaders across the board need to engage in discussions about racial discrimination within the church and onwards into the community. This will equally translate into meaningful partnerships between churches preceded by sincere and intentional relationships amongst church leaders. From all indica-

tions, government policies will remain in favour of charitable ventures that engage with the community. Thus, APCs will need to embrace these provisions and leverage them to be more intentional in their community engagement initiatives and partnerships or alliances with mainline churches and ecumenical bodies.

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 2. Andrew F Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), p. x.
 3. *Natcen's British Social Attitudes Survey: Religious Affiliation Among Adults in Great Britain* (The National Centre for Social Research, 2017), pp. 1-2 <<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1469605/BSA-religion.pdf>> [accessed 6 December 2017].
 4. "British Social Attitudes: Record Number of Brits with No Religion", *National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)*, 2017 <<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/>> [accessed 6 December 2017].
 5. This phenomenon has been broadly described as 'Reverse Mission' which sounds intelligible in the context of the change in the direction of migration (and so, mission) but is not quite an appropriate terminology given the fact that the mandate for mission at its core is supposedly from anywhere to everywhere.
 6. Harvey Kwiyani, "Can the West Really Be Converted?: A Non-Western Reflection on The Newbigin Question (Part 1 of 2)", *kwiyanifiles*, 2017 <<https://harvmins.com/2017/10/28/can-the-west-really-be-converted-a-non-western-reflection-on-the-newbigin-question-part-1-of-2/>> [accessed 1 December 2017].
 7. Gerrie ter Haar, *African Christians In Europe*, 3rd edn (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001), p. 14.; Afe Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora* (New York: Continuum, 2013).
 8. Even the term AIC has also become ambiguous as the 'I' can mean 'indigenous', 'initiated', 'independent', 'instituted' or 'international'. See Mark R Gornik, *Word Made Global* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2011), p. 28.
 9. Roswith Gerloff, 'The Significance of the African Christian Diaspora in Europe with special reference to Britain' in M. L. Daneel, *African Christian Outreach* (Menlo Park, South Africa: Southern African Missiological Society, 2001), pp. 165-85.
 10. Afe Adogame, 'African Churches in the Diaspora' in Ogbu U Kalu, *African Christianity* (Pretoria: Dep. of Church History, Univ. of Pretoria, 2005), pp. 494-515.
 11. Harvey C Kwiyani, *Sent Forth: African Missionary Work in the West* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014).

12. Andrew Rogers, "Being Built Together: A Story of New Black Majority Churches in The London Borough of Southwark" (Roehampton: University of Roehampton, 2013) <<https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/globalassets/documents/humanities/being20built20togethersb203-7-13.pdf>> [accessed 6 July 2017].
13. Ibid., 45. Hence, the title of Olofinjana's book: 'Partnership in Mission: A Black Majority Church Perspective on Mission and Church Unity.' Israel Olofinjana, *Partnership in Mission: A Black Majority Church Perspective on Mission and Church Unity* (Wartford: Instant Apostle, 2015)
14. For an extensive discussion on this, see Arlington Trotman's article titled 'Black, Black-led or What?', in Joel Edwards (ed.), *Let's Praise Him Again: An African Caribbean Perspective on Worship* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1992), pp. 12-35.
15. See Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perceptions of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe: Bringing Back the Gospel* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 35-6.
16. Claudia Währisch-Oblau's position in acknowledging 'migrant churches' as being a possibly appropriate label on the basis that such "congregations have been founded by people with recent migration background, are led by them, and have a majority of members from such a background" does make sense at least on that basis.
17. Babatunde Aderemi Adedibu, "Reverse Mission or Migrant Sanctuaries? Migration, Symbolic Mapping, And Missionary Challenges of Britain's Black Majority Churches", *Pneuma*, 35:3 (2013), 407 <<https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-12341347>>.
18. Matthews Ojo, 'Reverse Mission', in Jon Bonk, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Missions and Missionaries* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 381.
19. Alternative terms include: Ethnographic, Case Study, Humanistic, Naturalistic and /or phenomenological research. See Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1990), p. 10.
20. Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1986), p. 10.
21. Besides being home to one of the first APCs in Europe (Pastor Daniels Ekarte's African Churches Mission established in 1931 and demolished in 1964), Liverpool is home to the oldest Black African community in Britain, dating to at least the 1730s. Some black Liverpoolians can trace their ancestors in the city back ten generations. Ray Costello, *Black Liverpool* (Liverpool: Picton, 2001).
22. The reality is that most of the APCs in Liverpool are actually pioneered by pastors from either of these two countries. According to data culled from Black and Multicultural Churches website (run by the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Department at 'Churches Together in England' which encourages free registration of Black and Multicultural churches and organisations to facilitate becoming the largest and most accurate listing of black and multicultural churches and supporting organisations in the UK), of all the ten Liverpool-based BMCs listed on the website—and there are definitely more than ten BMCs in Liverpool—only one was not pioneered and led by a Nigerian. See "Liverpool « BMC Directory", [blackandmulticulturalchurches.co.uk](http://www.blackandmulticulturalchurches.co.uk), 2017 <<http://www.blackandmulticulturalchurches.co.uk/?s=liverpool&cat1=>> [accessed 9 August 2017].
23. While this is clearly reflected in the 'About Us' page of the Church Website of the

- UK Mission of this denomination, the link is withheld according to the anonymity provisions of the research.
24. Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, p. 64.
 25. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
 26. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
 27. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
 28. In an attempt to be more attractive from the outset besides other mixed motives such as competition and desire for visibility, many new generation churches will start out from hotel conference rooms, multipurpose rooms at eateries, town halls, event centres or even from a rented shop converted into a church space. For how this plays out among the African Churches in China, See Heidi Østbø Haugen, "African Pentecostal Migrants in China: Marginalization and The Alternative Geography of a Mission Theology", *African Studies Review*, 56.1 (2013), 81-102 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2013.0010>>.
 29. Hence, Burgess *et al* suggested that the quite close ties that a good number of RCCG branches have with the Church of England is based on an informal agreement between them whereby the CofE first offers to sell its church buildings to the RCCG before putting them on the market. Kim Knibbe, Richard Burgess and Anna Quaas, "Nigerian-Initiated Pentecostal Churches as A Social Force in Europe: The Case of The Redeemed Christian Church of God", *Pentecostudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on The Pentecostal And Charismatic Movements*, 9.1 (2010), 97-121 <<https://doi.org/10.1558/ptcs.v9i1.97>>.
 30. Acts 20:20, Romans 16:5, Philemon 1:2, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15
 31. Hence, Snyder notes that 'Christians did not begin to build church buildings until about A.D. 200'. Howard A Snyder, *The Problem of Wine Skins* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p. 69.
 32. Personal interview with Pastor 2 (Liverpool, 2017).
 33. Edward J Eberle, *Church and State in Western Society: Established Church, Cooperation, and Separation* (Ashgate Publishing Group, 2011), p. 2.
 34. Danny McCain, "The Church in Africa in the Twenty-First Century", *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 19.2 (2000), 105-130. (p. 128)
 35. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017). Can you explain why these were negatives?
 36. Martin Beckford, "More New Women Priests Than Men for First Time", *The Daily Telegraph*, 2017 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9060296/More-new-women-priests-than-men-for-first-time.html>> [accessed 22 September 2017].
 37. Phil Noble, "After Turmoil, Church of England Consecrates First Woman Bishop", *Reuters*, 2015 <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-religion-anglican-women/after-turmoil-church-of-england-consecrates-first-woman-bishop-idUSKBN0KZ0Z820150126>> [accessed 22 September 2017].
 38. See Robert Pigott, "BBC NEWS | UK | Synod Struggles on Women Bishops", *BBC News*, 2009 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7889946.stm>> [accessed 22 September 2017].
 39. Josh Parry, "ECHO Goes Undercover at Gay 'Cure' Church Offering 'Dangerous' Therapies", *Liverpool Echo*, 2017 <<http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/echo-goes-undercover-gay-cure-13468107>> [accessed 15 September

2017]. See also: Josh Parry, "Who Are The Mountain Of Fire And Miracles Ministries?", *Liverpool Echo*, 2017 <<http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/who-mountain-fire-miracles-ministries-13468115>> [accessed 27 September 2017].

The fact that this happened few weeks after the CofE's General Synod released a public statement to condemn gay conversion therapy as being 'unethical, harmful and (of) no place in the modern world' amplifies the contextualization disparities in operating that APC in the UK. See Mark Woods, "Church of England's General Synod Condemns Gay 'Conversion Therapy' | Christian News on Christian Today", *Christian Today*, 2017 <<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.of.englands.general.synod.condemns.gay.conversion.therapy/110544.htm>> [accessed 27 September 2017].

40. R. Catto, "From the Rest to The West: Exploring Reversal in Christian Mission in Twenty-First Century Britain" (unpublished Ph.D., University of Exeter, 2008), p. 121.
41. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
42. Olofinjana reported his facilitation of 'African Pentecostals in Britain' at School of Oriental African Studies (SOAS). See Israel Olofinjana, *Turning the Tables on Mission* (Watford: Instant Apostle, 2013), p. 35. He also mentioned that Springdale College in Birmingham was to start teaching 'Reverse Mission' as a module in its Masters in Missional Leadership degree. Israel Olofinjana, *Partnership in Mission* (Wartford: Instant Apostle, 2015), p. 39. Kwiyani confirmed by word of mouth to this researcher that this programmed has commenced, however, the module was named 'Cross-cultural Missions' and not 'Reverse Mission'. Finally, Liverpool Hope University is in the process of designing provision for a new MA African Christianity programme—a programme design in which this researcher participated. The programme is scheduled to kick off in February 2019.
43. This is a training hub that aims to 'prepare, equip and encourage pastors and missionaries from the Majority World in Britain as well as help indigenous British Christians and churches understand Christians from the South.' "About", *Centre for Missionaries from The Majority World*, 2017 <<http://www.cmmw.co.uk/about/>> [accessed 27 September 2017].
44. ForMission is a mission organization with an educational outreach (ForMission College) which equips Christian Leaders to transform their communities through 'accredited training, thought leadership and missional support'. "Our Vision", *Formission College*, 2017 <<http://college.formission.org.uk/vision/>> [accessed 27 September 2017].
45. Missio Africanus is a cross-cultural missions initiative being carried out by the Missional Innovations Inc. in London, UK. It is a missions training project that helps missionaries and Christian leaders from around the world to 'understand and overcome the cultural barriers they encounter in their work in the West'. "Who We Are – Missio Africanus", *Missio Africanus*, 2017 <<http://missioafricanus.org/who-we-are/>> [accessed 27 September 2017].
46. *Our Growth Conversation: Bigger Church, Bigger Difference* (Liverpool: Diocese of Liverpool, 2016), p. 8. (Does this work have an author?)
47. It was reported in 2017 that about 40 percent of incumbent parish clergy are due to retire before 2027. See John Bingham, "Church of England Cannot Carry on As It Is Unless Decline 'Urgently' Reversed - Welby and Sentamu", *The Daily*

- Telegraph*, 2015 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11340590/Church-of-England-cannot-carry-on-as-it-is-unless-decline-urgently-reversed-Welby-and-Sentamu.html>> [accessed 22 September 2017].
48. Koutonin argued in an article in *The Guardian* that there is a racist reason behind referring to 'white people' who travel to other countries to reside for a period as 'expats' while 'Top African professionals going to work in Europe are not considered expats. They are immigrants. Period.' Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, "Why Are White People Expats When the Rest of Us Are Immigrants?", *The Guardian*, 2015 <<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration>> [accessed 2 October 2017].
 49. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
 50. William Doe Kugbeadjo and Harvey Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges Faced by African Missionaries in Britain: The Case of The Church of Pentecost", *Missio Africanus Journal of African Missiology*, 1.2 (2016), 4-15.
 51. Kwiyani, *Sent Forth*, 198-200.
 52. Kwiyani, *Sent Forth*, 175.
 53. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
 54. Kugbeadjo and Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges," 10.
 55. Cajetan Ngozika Ihewulezi, *Beyond the Color of Skin* (South Carolina: BookSurge Pub., 2006).
 56. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
 57. Pastor 1 suggested this possibility when he said, "[W]hen you try to create an environment that a Nigerian [or] Ghanaian or British can flourish in, someone can come into the church and say, 'oh, you're being too white!'" Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
 58. Harvey C. Kwiyani, *Mission-Shaped Church in A Multicultural World* (Oxford, UK: Grove Books Ltd, 2017), p. 8.
 59. Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), p. 293.
 60. Kugbeadjo and Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges," 10.
 61. This was first raised as a recommendation from workshops at the WCC Consultation in 1995. See Roswith Gerloff and H. Van Beek, *Report of The Proceedings of The Consultation Between the World Council of Churches and African And African-Caribbean Church Leaders in Britain, Leeds, 30 November-2 December 95* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), pp. 36-42.
 62. So, Israel Olofinjana, *African Voices: Towards African British Theologies* (United Kingdom: Langham Global Library, 2017).
 63. Kwiyani, *Mission-Shaped Church*, p. 17.

