

‘Stronger Together – Weaker Apart’

A National Summit for Black and Minority Ethnic Church Leaders

20th October 2005

Emmanuel Evangelical Centre, Marsham Street, London

REPORT



**Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs
Churches Together in England**

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Thanks too to the Reference Group of the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs (MECA) department for providing oversight of the planning and delivery process that led to a successful National Summit.

Finally, our appreciation to all who attended and especially to the chairpersons, speakers and workshop leaders on the day. These were:

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Revd Dr Jerisdan Jehu-Appiah, Resident Theologian
Revd Ruben King, Workshop Leader
Ms Shola Lana, Workshop Leader
Dr Doreen McCalla, Speaker
Dr R David Muir, Speaker
Revd Dr Albert Odulele, Co-Chair
Mr Muyiwa Olarewaju, Workshop Leader
Mr Raj Patel, Workshop Leader
Revd Nezlin Steling, Co-Chair
Bishop William Wood, Workshop Leader

The Planning Group

MECA Reference Group delegated responsibility for the planning of the summit to a sub group, the members of which were:

Bishop Dr J D Aldred (Chair)
Ms Dionne Gravesande
Bishop James Larby
Revd Janet Murray
Ms Edith Steele (PA)

Remit of Planning Group

The Planning Group was given the following remit for the summit:

Stronger Together – Weaker Apart aims to facilitate the coming together of leaders in the churches popularly known in the Britain & Ireland as 'Black-led' or 'Black-majority Churches' and other Minority Ethnic churches. This unique event will provide a great opportunity for networking, praying and discussing together about the major issues facing us in Britain & Ireland today. The Summit will work towards developing a strategy for action for the Black and Minority Ethnic Church in this country, to be pursued over the coming years.

Executive Summary

The National Summit of Black and Minority Ethnic Church Leaders took place on Thursday 20th October 2005, in London. The Summit was attended by 100 leaders from across the country from a wide range of Christian denominations and agencies. Some national leader who were unable to attend sent representatives. The Summit was called at this time against a background of phenomenal numerical growth among Black-led Churches, decline in mainstream churches, and growing complexities and challenges in terms of adverse media coverage concerning allegations of malpractice, amongst other issues. A key aim of the event was to set an agenda for the BME churches in this country for the next five to ten years.

The Summit was co-chaired by Revd Nezlin Sterling and Revd Dr Albert Odulale. It included worship, workshops, plenary discussions and theological reflections. Six themes were chosen for workshop, namely Doctrine, Economics, Environment, Media, Politics and Social issues.

A keynote presentation was delivered by Dr R David Muir on the 'Contributions to British Christianity and Society of BME Christianity'. The Summit received the result of a survey of BME leaders by Dr Doreen McCalla. The statistics below are drawn from this survey. Theological Reflections were provided by Revd Dr Jerisdan Jehu-Appiah and Revd Celia Collins.

Key findings were:

Doctrine and Theology

- BME churches have a wide range of doctrinal/theological traditions. The growing genre of theological works by BME writers/theologians need to be made more accessible
- The flagship Black Theology: An International Journal, published here in Britain, is little known and subscribed to by BME church leaders (17%)
- Work needs to be done to scope the generic doctrinal/theological positions of BME churches on a raft of topics such as family life, sexuality, finance, ecumenism, et al
- BME church leadership is overwhelmingly male (83%) and middle-aged (80% between 40-65)
- BME church leaders believe overwhelmingly that homosexuality is a sin (98.7%)
- A majority of BME church leaders believe abortion is wrong 'in every circumstance' (54%)
- BME Church leaders believe cloning is wrong (88%)
- BME Church leaders believe marriage is permissible after divorce (66%)
- BME churches are encouraged to work together better, with smaller independent churches encouraged to seek the 'cover' of more established ones
- Many BME church leaders wish to develop their understanding of other faiths

- A higher percentage (78%) of BME church leaders wish to develop closer links with mainstream churches training colleges than those (54%) who wish to set up a central Black-led theological training college
- Many BME churches work ecumenically within and across ethnically and denominationally defined boundaries

Economics

- Over a third of BME church leaders had experienced difficulties when attempting to acquire church-owned buildings
- BME churches are wealthy but there is a lack of a corporate national economic strategy
- BME churches have a wealth of resources in talented, gifted and committed people. These resources need to be harnessed for the greater good
- BME churches should develop a policy to use its resources to keep young people out of prison
- There is a high level of self-help programmes
- BME churches could work better with major international aid agencies
- A change of mind is required by BME churches in their approach to economics: e.g. accessing funding, wealth creation, and utilising existing resources more effectively

Environment

- BME churches are weak on environmental issues
- There are many opportunities for BME churches to engage with the green agenda through recycling, pollution control, etc
- Caring for the planet is as much BME churches responsibility as others.
- There is no national environmental strategy for BME churches

Media

- There is massive under-reporting by BME churches of their good work
- The press misrepresents BME churches by stereotyping, generalisations, even racist reporting
- Adverse publicity has had the effect of portraying BME churches as unsafe for children
- BME churches need to make better use of the media and press through modern technology
- BME churches should publish more to lead public understanding and perceptions
- There is an absence of a national BME churches media strategy

Politics

- BME churches have several public advocates, but lack co-ordination
- Some BME churches pursue a political agenda e.g. the Incitement to Religious Hatred Bill, but others appear uncertain this is appropriate
- The various elements of BME churches, e.g. Asians, Africans, Caribbean, Black-led, Mainstream need to better align themselves for greater political impact

- Racial and social justice matters need to move higher up the engagement ladder in BME churches through engagement in Racial Justice Sunday for example
- BME churches have lost some of their key people to mainstream, which weakens them if strong links are not maintained

Social Issues

- Many social issues such as education, employment, youth culture, crime, justice et al impact BME churches adversely
- BME leadership should lead in consciousness raising and finding solutions
- BME churches as spaces of social and educational engagement should be promoted
- BME churches should celebrate more their pioneers and high achievers
- Having been tenants of mainstream churches' buildings, BME churches are now themselves landlords and hosts too
- The Nation of Islam has not turned out to be the 'threat' to BME churches as has been reported and supposed

Key Recommendation

Appoint Working Groups for the six areas of work identified: **Doctrine and Theology, Economic, Environment, Media, Politics, and Social Issues**

Funding

Since the Summit, it has been suggested that funding could and should be sought to fund a co-ordinator for each of these six Working Groups. The Secretary for Minority Ethnic Affairs in Churches Together in England will be exploring this option with key partners

Introduction

The issues facing us all in contemporary Britain are many and varied. These are local, national and international, multi-faceted and ever changing in their complexity and affects. No sector of society is exempt from their impact; and our responses to these issues are as varied as the issues are different.

The church, both in its general and localised, mainstream or minority expressions, is challenged to understand the issues of our day and their impact upon society and formulate appropriate responses based upon the values we as Christians consider important. 'The children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do' (1 Chronicles 12.32), seems an appropriate biblical text to accompany us on this journey.

Being cognisant of the above, the Reference Group of MECA authorised the convening of a Summit of national leaders from within the Black and Minority Ethnic Christian community in Britain and Ireland. A sub-group of the Reference Group was formed and set about planning such an event. The sub-group met several times in London and successfully pulled together the various strands of the Summit. These included, securing funding, finding an appropriate venue, identifying relevant topics and speakers, commissioning a small scale research into attitudinal perspectives within the BME Christian community in the country, engaging the BME Christian leadership and the press, et al. The response to the research was low, however it was felt it still fell within acceptable margins for error to be a representative sample of views and trends.

On the day, the Summit attracted an attendance of one hundred of the country's leading Black and Minority Ethnic church leaders, representing the main 'historic' and Black-majority churches. The meeting took place at the heart of the capital of England, symbolically close to the houses of parliament. Leaders prayed, networked, and discussed many of the major issues facing the church and wider society today.

The day began with Revd Sterling proclaiming, 'Let diversity reign. We need to present one united voice to the government and to the people.' Also, we had a visit from Paul Goggins MP, government minister for Race Equality and Faith Communities, who affirmed the work of the churches in encouraging social cohesion and emphasised the government's determination to support faith groups. He announced the setting up of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to assist in this regard. Further information about this fund can be found at the website: www.cdf.org.uk or by emailing: fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk

A key aim of the summit was to begin the process of discerning an agenda for the coming 5-10 years. The discussion that ensued is presented in this report under the six workshop themes of: doctrine/theology, economics, environment, media, politics and social issues.

Doctrine/Theology

BME churches come from many different traditions and denominations. Below is a mere sample of matters touched upon at the Summit. This in no way scopes the breadth of doctrines and theologies embraced by these churches. And the order in which they are presented here does not indicate any priority.

i) Apologetics

Dr Muir in his opening presentation expressed the view that we needed to find ways of highlighting the sociological and theological resources of BME writers that have been made available in increasing quantities during the past twenty years in particular, but some of which, like the writings of Olaudah Equiano, go back centuries. There was clear recognition that the theological and doctrinal positions of the BME Christian community is diverse and dynamic. It is therefore necessary to make available all known literary resources in order that we can inform each other of what we believe and contribute to a holistic doctrinal and theological picture for BME Christianity in Britain.

Two types of doctrinal and theological writings were identified: that which focuses upon individual churches' positions, and another that seeks to theologise on a BME-wide or holistic basis. Concerning the latter, recent books by Mark Sturge and Joe Aldred, among others before them, have helped to correct misconceptions that the Black Church is just about exuberant congregations with lots of lively singing. It was felt that whilst these were positive signs that black theological reflection is in progress, more needs to be done to write our own histories and theologies.

Several other topics emerged in workshop for further theological exploration, including church finance, the nature of truth, relativism, conflict, church and politics, church growth, multiculturalism, witchcraft, demon possession and exorcism, the afterlife, the future or eschatology, family life including co-habiting, marriage, divorce, the children, relationships, sexual orientation, marriage, boy/girl friend, contemporary lifestyles, dealing with difference, valuing difference, unequal distribution of wealth and poverty, Christology, theology, anthropology, forgiveness and reconciliation, the Bible being the Word of God, the trinity. All these and more need examining for their impact upon lifestyle, moral and ethical integrity.

ii) Partnership

It was significant that 100% of respondents to the research of BME leaders said they work in cooperation with other churches; 90% indicate a desire to work in partnership with mainstream churches and about half already belong to ethnically mixed fraternals. This way of working represents a significant ecumenical development for BME churches and will benefit from an under girding ecclesiology.

The survey reveals a high proportion of ecumenical activities in BME churches. However, if BME churches are serious about ecumenical involvements this must be seen to go beyond simply the occasional 'pulpit swapping' and 'building sharing arrangements' to the redistribution of

resources and ministries. Where certain ministerial gifts are in surplus or redundant in a particular local church but in demand or in short supply in another local church, ministerial redistribution of resources should be considered.

A further expression of partnership desired by 80% of BME leaders is for a National Black Majority Church Convention

iii) Oversight/Cover for Independent churches

The credibility of independent churches depend significantly on credible leadership and proper controls, these may be bolstered by linking up with organisations already operating successfully. Over half of BME Churches provide cover or oversight for other churches. Correspondingly, a similar proportion reports that they receive such cover or oversight.

iv) Inter-Faith

The majority of BME Churches view people of other faiths as objects for their evangelistic endeavours. This raises questions about relations between BME Churches and people and institutions of other faiths. According to the research, 85% of leaders would like to further develop their understanding of other faiths. BME leaders could do with pondering on questions such as 'are all religions equal?' And just how do we live in partnership with people of other faiths and none?

v) Leadership/Theological Training

The survey revealed that 85% of BME churches require ordained leaders to have undergone some form of ministerial training, while 78% actually provide leadership training themselves. Although the level and quality of such training is not known, this challenges the received wisdom based on previous research that claims that Black Pentecostal leaders do not require official theological training for ministry.

For ministerial training, 78% of BME leaders are keen to explore partnering with existing mainstream training colleges; this is even higher than the 54% who want to set up Black-led ones.

Workshop discussion raised further questions concerning the need to raise the level of leadership and theological training amongst BME churches. Such education and training should focus *inter alia* on the nature of leadership and leadership development.

The survey revealed a vast gender differential in senior leadership: 83% were men and only 17% were women. Yet, there are more women than men in the membership of BME churches. The overwhelming majority, 80%, of BME Church leaders are between 40-65 years, with only 3% being under 40 years. Clearly, young people need to be encouraged to enter the ministry, and it was recognised that some practical steps need to be considered such as how they will support a family when they go into ministry.

vi) Black Theology

Black Theology: An International Journal (formerly, Black Theology in Britain: A Journal of Contextual Praxis) has been published twice yearly since 1998. However, the research shows only 17% of BME Church Leaders are aware of its existence. Clearly, much work needs to be done to change this picture of disengagement with the journal which may be symptomatic of BME churches' and leaders' attitude to *Black Theology*, if not theology, in general.

vii) Sexual Ethics

There is near consensus among BME leaders, 98%, that homosexual practice is sinful. Abortion received a less unequivocal condemnation, with 54% believing it is wrong in 'every' circumstance. 88% believe cloning is ethically and morally wrong, and 66% believe the bible permits remarriage after divorce.

There was a plea not to collapse doctrine and theology into a preoccupation with sexual topics like homosexuality and abortion, whilst leaving matters such as ageism, employment etc untouched.

Economics

Several economic issues surfaced during the day, from various sources. They are represented below under appropriate headings.

i) Purchasing Buildings from other Churches

An area of concern for BME leaders is the acquisition of buildings from mainstream churches, with 40% saying they have encountered difficulties. It was felt that the free market practice of selling to the highest bidder flies in the face of the expectation that another church organisation should receive preferential treatment as part of the church family. Some BME leaders hold a suspicion that sometimes there may be resistance to sell to certain types of churches, especially those that are perceived as noisy and numerous, likely to disrupt quiet neighbourhoods.

ii) Economic Strategy

It was agreed that an economic strategy for the BME Churches as a whole and in part is important and urgent. This was thought to be financial wisdom as a means of harnessing and maximising common resources to reach and benefit the community. The parable of the steward was cited.

BME churches needed to get into 'village mode' in developing a strategy, and need to consider whether a capitalist or socialist model was appropriate. The question for BME churches is, 'how do we make best use of the finances and resources we have?'

A high percentage of leaders, 80%, support the concept of Council of Black Led Churches. These could facilitate ecumenical and economic collaborative schemes, for the sake of the councils themselves as well as the local community they operate in.

iii) Resources

Attempts to identify BME resources came up with such as; finances, people, buildings, talent, skills, knowledge, wisdom, time, networks, faith, prayer, employment.

iv) Tapping into Resources

To maximise resources of BME churches we could create enterprises, and sponsor children in foreign countries, for example. Somehow, BME churches have to break 'through the walls' of economic constraint and conservative thinking.

v) Utilising BME economic and social capital to get to keep our people out of prison?

There are too many black people in prison. BME churches should engage in multifaceted approach to remedy this situation. For example, engage our Christian lawyers and other legal and economic brains to examine how to better run our churches as a business entities in addition to being worship centres to raise standards and aspirations of the many individuals and families left behind. More BME Christians should consider becoming magistrates,

school governors, councillors and other types of engagement with 'the system', thereby building BME social capital.

vi) Self Help

Self-help activities are high on the agenda with some of the larger national BME churches having established social and economic self-help programmes. However, the general level of strategic social, economic and political programmes in BMEs is low, at 32%.

vii) Aid Agencies

Probably because of the high level of BME churches with international connections through which aid can be channelled, few, only 37%, have established strong relationships with Aid Agencies like Christian Aid, Tear Fund and CAFOD. Whilst many BME churches do provide overseas relief through mission projects, their postage and packaging costs could be further reduced or abolished if links with aid agencies were established. This could lead to increased numbers of paid and voluntary employment of BME members.

vi) Ways forward

How can the BME churches in England move purposefully forward ecumenically? Six specific ideas were shared: the first is a change our mindset, from dependency to independency. Secondly, BME churches should set up a separate business/economic arms of the church. Thirdly, actually register these as separate organisations. Fourthly, become better at accessing funding. Fifthly, encourage more entrepreneurs to set up businesses. Sixth, in economic terms BME churches need to be aggressive, relevant, militant, timely.

Environment

The topic of the environment does not feature prominently in BME Churches. This fact was evident at the summit in that environmental issues only surfaced in the workshop specifically dealing with the topic. Here, the central theme was 'the role of BME churches in caring for the planet'. The issues that surfaced during the workshop are represented below under appropriate headings.

i) Main environmental issues for BME churches

Among the key environmental issues identified was land, space, noise, parking, planning restrictions, r used for gift aid envelopes, edestrianisation of city centres, public transport, energy.

ii) Main environmental issues for British society

Among the key environmental issues in British society were racism, crime and social issues.

iii) Main issues effecting BME communities

Among the key issues affecting the BME community were noise pollution, poor housing, unemployment, 'fair but not equal' society, services for senior citizens, litter, poor street lights, drainage.

iv) What is the church doing?

The BME church response to environmental issues include youth clubs, Saturday schools, education, Public Relations. It was thought that BME churches needed to get involved in schools, campaigning, and to educate our senior leaders about environmental matters.

Media

Several media issues surfaced during the day, from various sources. They are represented below under appropriate headings.

i) Un and under-reporting

In his presentation, Dr Muir highlighted the inadequacy of BME churches in their dealing with the media. It was stated that because BME churches are bad at public relations, much of their good work goes unreported. As a consequence, their presence is still marginally felt and known in the public domain.

ii) Misrepresentation in the press

In the survey, almost all BME Church leaders believe that press and media representation of their community is inadequate. The workshop identified stereotyping, access to the press, effective use of the media as major issues. BME leaders were concerned about the manner of reporting issues like alleged child abuse in the form witchcraft, demon possession and child sacrifice. Generalisations and mis-, even mal-reporting were thought to be rife in the media. Some thought some reporting to be anti-Christian, even racist.

It was felt that this phenomenon seemed impervious to BME churches response. After some pastors complained, MECA put out press releases, gave interviews, African theologians responded, the MET rebuffed; even then the press rarely if ever retracts misleading reporting.

iii) Adverse Effect

It was acknowledged that one effect of negative portrayal in the press and media, which often introduced and reinforced negative stereotypes, was the perception of the BME Church as a dangerous place for children. Leaders were at pains to point out that this was not the case.

iv) Electronic communications, e.g. email

Many BME churches either do not have email facility or do not use it frequently. This is a key means of communication for MECA and other agencies, and unsurprisingly many do not benefit from MECA's e-forwarding of important information. The way we communicate needs to be kept under regular review.

v) Publications

It was thought an imperative for BME churches to write and publish their histories. So far, according to the survey, only 34% of Black churches have written their history and only 29% have a national publication. BME Church leaders are unanimous in believing that there is not sufficient information and literature in the public domain about their churches. This is partly due to the lack of Black Church publication.

vi) Directory of Black Majority Churches

In an attempt to raise awareness and encourage networking, two issues of a directory had been published to date in 2000 and 2003/4. From the research,

over one-third of BME Church leaders were unaware of the directory – though they are listed in it! Further work needs to be done to make the directory better known, used and frequently updated.

vii) What do we do?

Several possible interventions were identified as being open to BME churches. These include being more ready to send out press releases, receiving and providing media training, employing press officers or PR company expertise. Also, BME churches could become generally more proactive and build relationships. Get to know local editors, councillors and local authorities. Get the good news out there, invite local dignitaries, and remember that news is not just about crisis; it's about Christ!

Politics

Several political issues surfaced during the day, from various sources. They are represented below under appropriate headings.

i) Political Voice

One delegate stated, to general approval, 'We need a voice for the black majority and ethnic minority churches, so is there a plan for such an organization?' It was suggested that BME Churches should be encouraged to join existing BME and mainstream ecumenical structures rather than create a new 'voice' for BMCs.

ii) Political Involvement

The workshop identified some key political issues such as having effective political voice, civic involvement, lobbying, terrorism and 'religious' legislation such as the Incitement to Religious Hatred Bill. To affect these, it was thought important that BME Christians join political parties, vote and challenge political candidates on the doorstep over relevant issues. BME voters need to know what candidates stand for and be prepared to work with those that further the Christian cause.

BME churches have to wrestle with big questions such as; should religion and politics mix? The view of the workshop was, 'yes'. How do we change things? The workshop's view was, 'by participation'.

iii) Partnership

Evidently, BME partnerships of various sorts exist with new ones emerging. However, it was emphasised that these need to extend beyond such as inviting people to preach on a Sunday. Larger churches could consider, for example, how to give up some of their wealth and power to make partnership work.

It was noted that the level of participation of Asians and other minorities in the Summit was low, so that the Caribbean and to a lesser extent African presence was overwhelming. More needs to be done to bring other ethnicities into partnership.

iv) Brain Drain

It was noted that there is what amounts to a 'brain drain' or 'spiritual drain' from BME churches, with key individuals taking up roles in 'mainstream'. What might be the long term effect upon BME churches of this trend?

v) Racial Justice Sunday

This day which takes place usually on the second Sunday of September each year has struggled to engage BME churches. It was pleasing to note that the survey suggested that recognition of the work of CCRJ is high and more than two-thirds of BME Churches say they encourage participation in RJS.

vi) International Links

Two-thirds of BME Churches have international links. This bodes well for trans-national action, exchange and developmental work.

vii) Affiliation

Over 90% of churches say they are affiliated to an 'umbrella' ecumenical organisation. However in light of continuing concerns over stewardship of some BME Churches, agencies need to look at their requirement for membership and BME Churches must be encouraged to join at least one recognised agency.

The relationship between BME and traditional churches was discussed and it was thought that we should engage in discussion about how together we can achieve mutual aims.

Social Issues

Several social issues surfaced during the day, from various sources. They are represented below under appropriate headings.

i) Main Social Issues

apathy among the young, child welfare (child abuse), crime and justice, distortion in the media (negative perceptions), divorce, domestic violence, education (skilled training), employment of young people, family structure and single parenting, fragmentation of BME Churches, health issues (mental health, HIV/AIDS, access to healthcare, drug/alcohol abuse), homosexuality, housing, male identity (maleness, role models), marginalisation of black culture, premises (lack of, finding), racism, unemployment, unity and diversity,

ii) BME Christian Community Response

What can/should we do to respond well to these issues as BME Christian Community?

iii) With regards to education

BME Christian community must have a voice – government should respect the views/hear and listen to BME Christians. We need to know who we are and where we are going and pass it on to our children. Be willing to engage with the issues in education. Speak to youngsters in schools. Train up children from home – Proverbs 22 v 6. Listen to the children and hear their voices.

iv) With regards to young people and children

Give children training in relation to their culture and identity. They need good role models to imitate. Introduce children to holistic Christian values to promote integrity. Set the right example for the young.

There was consternation expressed at Trevor Philip's recent assertion that child abuse in Black churches is 'normal', where as in general, leaders understood their churches as places that offered children dignity and a place of worth.

v) With regards to crime and justice (including youth crime)

Highlight the effects of crime to the young. Leadership should be aware of crime and its effects and disseminate positive information to all congregation (including youth). Get right strategies in place for tackling/crime through education. We must all take responsibilities for the issues of crime. Identify sources of crime and not just symptoms. Provide young people with alternatives to crime. We must be prepared to work with ex-offenders to bring about change. We must educate ourselves and others in relation to crime.

vi) Pioneers

The Summit was reminded of the importance of remembering the struggles of the pioneers of the church in the 1950s and 1960s, and BME Christian community needs to find ways to celebrate their achievements. BME church members and leaders have given inspiration and leadership to our communities in ways that only we can.

vii) Sharing Arrangements

according to the survey, two-thirds of BME churches are in sharing arrangements. Historically that has been BME churches hiring, but increasingly BME churches are hosting others. The challenge is to make all sharing more than landlord/tenant arrangements.

viii) Nation of Islam

Contrary to popular opinion in the media, the impact of the NOI on BME Churches is quite low. Only 17% of respondents saying they have been affected, although the level of affect is not known.

Towards an Agenda for BME Churches

Doctrine/Theology

- i) Establish Theological Working Group
- ii) Assist churches that need it with training in Child Protection and encourage all churches to have Child Protection Policies in place
- iii) Develop national book list of published (and unpublished) works, websites, etc
- iv) Identify and publicise BME theological study centres and specialist libraries of British BME doctrinal and theological resources
- v) Draw up plans and seek support for BME National Convention
- vi) Encourage smaller independent churches to seek the oversight and support of more established ones. And draw up model oversight charter
- vii) Encourage deepening of sharing of gifts and resources among BME churches
- viii) Bring BME and White leaders into dialogue
- ix) Arrange meetings between BME Church leaders and leaders of non-Christian faiths
- x) Commission some academic work in the field of inter-cultural faith relations in Britain.
- xi) Discuss with mainstream ministry/theological colleges about meeting BME Churches training needs
- xii) Convene meeting of heads of BME training colleges/centres to discuss working together.
- xiii) Joint work with the Publisher, Editor, Board of the Journal of Black Theology, MECA and other agencies to engage BME Church leaders and members as subscribers and readers
- xiv) Develop and promote forums for study and dialogue of these and other theological and philosophical issues affecting BME Churches and society
- xv) Encourage churches to write their histories and individuals to theologise
- xiv) Work on ecclesiology of BME Church.

Economics

- i) Set up Economic Issues Working Group
- ii) Develop a national economic strategy for BME churches
- iii) Investigate and discuss current protocols for sale/transfer of church owned property from one church to another.
- iv) Conduct a resources and skills analysis of BME churches
- v) Hold city-wide discussions with a view to establishing sustainable CBLCs that help coordinate economic activity in church and community
- vi) Develop international economic connections and exchanges involving young people and entrepreneurs
- vii) Develop economic and social capital to invest in those parts of the BME community that has been left behind
- viii) Identify the way ahead economically based on a change our mindset
- ix) Set up separate business/economic arms of the church
- x) Register these as separate organisations
- xi) Become better at accessing funding
- xii) Encourage entrepreneurial spirit
- xiii) Become aggressive, relevant, militant, timely.

Environment

- i) Set up environmental Working Group
- ii) Identify key environmental issues for BME Churches
- iii) Identify key environmental issues for BME communities
- iv) Identify key environmental issues for British society
- v) Identify appropriate BME churches responses to environmental issues

Media

- i) Set up Media Issues Working Group
- ii) Engage the press and media more effectively
- iii) Circulate DBMC information to all BME Churches.
- iv) Explore ways in which BME Churches can have greater and positive media visibility.
- v) Encourage a) all BME Churches to publish their histories and other periodicals, b) encourage current and potential authors to publish.

Politics

- i) Set up Political Issues Working Group
- ii) Deepen dialogue between government and BME Churches
- iii) Meet with Trevor Phillips to correct misconceptions about child abuse in BME Churches
- iv) Commission a book on, 'A manifesto for the BME churches in Britain'
- v) Discuss ways to support and make the most of opportunities offered by the international nature of BME Churches
- vi) Convene multi-agency meeting to discuss membership requirements
- vii) Campaign for every church to belong to credible inter-church agency
- viii) Black-led and mainstream churches to collaborate more for greater clout

Social Issues

- i) Set up Social Issues Working Group
- ii) Find ways to celebrate the achievements of BME Church pioneers, which represent triumph over adversity
- iii) Use Black History Month to tell the true story of the history of BME Christianity
- iv) BME church leaders to view themselves also as community
- v) Engage in particular acts to bring Black and Asian leaders together for fellowship and joint action
- vi) Encourage women to train for leadership
- vii) Encourage young people to train for ministry
- viii) Each church to address retirement provision for older ministers
- ix) Ecumenical agencies to insist on compliance with statutory obligations as part of criteria for membership
- x) Encourage move beyond sharing of premises to deeper fellowship
- xii) Encourage major Aid Agencies to engage directly with BME Churches
- xiii) Encourage BME Churches to develop economic development programmes including aid to the needy.

Conclusion

'To round up this conference, I suggest that if possible, committees be established under the headings as discussed, to set up a structure to keep today's spirit and momentum going and look at ways and means of providing solutions to the issues raised at this conference' (delegate).

It has been suggested since that funding be sought to remunerate each lead person for these six areas of national work.

Appendix 1

The following statement was distributed to the national media and press:

Press Statement

11 October 2005

Black and minority ethnic Church leaders sets agenda for 21st Century

Britain's Christian community is gearing up for a landmark national summit for Black and Minority Ethnic Church leaders.

More than 100 leaders from across the UK have been invited to attend this historic meeting entitled **'Stronger Together - Weaker Apart'** which takes place at the Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street, Westminster, London SW1 on 20 October from 10.30am - 5pm.

The day is for praying, networking and discussing everyday concerns: what do Black and minority ethnic Church leaders in Britain have to say on global warming, natural disasters, famine in Africa, AIDS, Live8, G8, international terrorism, London bombings, witchcraft, child abuse, ritual killing in churches....and the contrast between revival in Black Churches and slump in attendance in mainstream Churches?

This National Leaders' Summit has been organized by Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs (MECA) in recognition of the increased role black and minority ethnic leaders play within the church and the growth of Britain's minority ethnic Christian population. MECA is a catalyst for cooperation and fellowship and an instrument of Churches Together working with Christians from minority ethnic communities in Britain and Ireland.

The minority ethnic population in Britain and Ireland is 7.9 percent of the overall population, over 90 percent of whom live in England, of which 45 percent live in London.

According to recent figures released by the Christian Research Association, Black church membership in England has grown by 18 percent, while overall figures in England have fallen by 5 percent. Black and minority ethnic people are 66 percent of London's church going population.

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Secretary for Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs at Churches Together commented, 'It is very obvious that Britain's Black and minority ethnic Christian community, particularly those living in our inner cities, is a key factor for the future growth and witness of Christianity in this country.'

He continued, 'With this fact in mind, the **'Stronger Together - Weaker Apart'** National Summit for Black and Minority Ethnic Church leaders, provides a great opportunity for ministers from these communities to join together to reflect on the history and successes of minority ethnic Churches and look at how they can have a greater impact in the lives of the people they serve, as well as secular society and the wider Christian community.'

Speakers lined up to give talks at the **'Stronger Together - Weaker Apart'** National Summit include Revd Dr Albert Odulele, Premier Radio presenter Muyiwa Olarewaju, Revd Celia Collins and Revd Rueben King, National Youth Leader of the New Testament Church of God.

'I believe this national summit will mark a turning point in the ministries of Black and minority ethnic Church leaders, and help them to realize they have a major role to play in turning the minds and hearts of the people of Britain back to God,' said Bishop Aldred.

-Ends -

Appendix 2

Hoped for Big Wins

Prior to the summit, MECA Secretary circulated the following statement as indicative of what he hoped might emanate from the discussions.

Social Issues

a) *That BME church leaders agree to establish a framework to develop policies on matters such as education, national culture, young people & children, criminal justice, prison, etc., that can be implemented by us and which influence the policies and actions of others.*

b) *That in response to our significant presence national, regional and local government and other policy makers are made to consider it good and normal practice to consult with BME church leaders on these issues.*

Economic Issues

That BME church leaders agree to explore the benefits of an integrated approach to doing business such as banking, training initiatives, employment, etc. Enabling the BME churches to exercise greater clout with banks, government, private businesses and voluntary organisations.

Political Issues

That BME church leaders agree that having a powerful political voice is important and are prepared to establish a mechanism to make this happen, ala the Muslim Council of Great Britain. For example, why not a BME bishop in the House of Lords, greater BME representation at national civic events, more effective political lobbying for or against legislation such as the incitement to religious hatred bill.

Doctrinal and Theological Issues

a) *That BME church leaders agree to examine our corporate mission in the UK.*

b) *That BME church leaders agree to establish a central theological and ministry training college serving primarily the BME Christian community, as well as a strategy for utilising existing ones.*

c) *That a forum, a kind of synod, to discuss and deal with difficult issues be explored, e.g. a six-monthly or annual Summit to examine issues like denominational difference and sameness, witchcraft, demon-possession, exorcism, etc.*

Media Issues

That BME church leaders agree to establish a national media strategy for the BME Christian community to stimulate our mission activities, take charge of the portrayal of our image and challenge stereotyping, leading to greater access to the press, and effective use of the media.

Environmental Issues

That BME church leaders agree to develop a green strategy, declaring that the earth is the Lord's, and so BME churches have a role in caring for the planet, lowering pollution, etc.

Joe Aldred

October 2005

Appendix 3

PROGRAMME

- 10.30am Coffee and registration
- Chairperson: Revd Nezlin Sterling**
- 11.00am Welcome and introduction followed by an act of worship led by Revd David Daniels
- 11.30am Black and Minority Ethnic Christian Contributions to Christianity in Britain & Ireland Today – Dr R David Muir
- 12.00am Buzz groups
- 12.05am Presentation of research findings:
Black and Minority Ethnic Church Leaders
Dr Doreen McCalla
- 12.35am Plenary
- 1.00pm Buffet lunch
- Chairperson: Dr Albert Odulele**
- 2.00pm Choice of workshops looking at the following issues:
- A Social Issues – Bishop William Wood
 - B Economics – Ms Shola Lana
 - C Politics – Revd George Hargreaves
 - D Doctrine and Theology – Mr Raj Patel
 - E Media – Mr Muyiwa Olarewaju
 - F Environment – Revd Ruben King
- 3.00 Tea break
- 3.30pm Feedback from workshops identifying key issues
- 4.20pm Revd Dr Jerisdan Jehu-Appiah – resident theologian
- 4.30pm Forward Together – Revd Celia Collins
- 5.00pm Close

Appendix 4

Theological Reflection

Revd Dr Jerisdan Jehu-Appia brought a theological reflection on the days proceedings:

He considered contributions made by the BME Churches. Jesus' teaching that you do not put new wine into old wineskins: some things begin well but over time their usefulness changes. Mentioned some leaders who had been key in BME Church development, including authors who could help build the churches.

Church is also about society. Church is not just about crisis, it is about Christ. If Christ is at the centre, we can allow the luxury of learning. Avoid panic and reacting to immediate situations. Jesus didn't panic: he observed, e.g. used his knowledge of fishing etc., and that enabled him to win through adversity. Church is a healing community. Self-worth comes primarily from fact that you belong to Christ.

- Said we need to have an appreciation of who we are and where we are
- That we are together humans, survivors, all excellent and beautiful, these are what spirit makes of us.
- Need a sense of where we want to go
- Need to plan how to get there together.
- Christ has to be the core of everything we do.

Revd Celia Collins brought the concluding challenge:

She asked where are we at, where are we going, how do we get there? 'Today shows how far we've come.' Proverbs 13.33, there is much food in fallow ground of the poor. First, we have to turn up the ground. Accept we are made like God, then we can do his work. If a man remains without understanding, he will not be fruitful. Your activity must relate to understanding of the 21st century.

She spoke of David and the example of 1 Chronicles 12. In Luke 19, people came to Hebron, created an army that could take Jerusalem. Noted the need to recognize seasons. We're now in Tabernacle season. God asked them to bring the product of the process, i.e. the fruit/wine. The Church is the vessel that God uses to bring his kingdom. And it will take more than one Church to get the job done. Some are very strong politically, some socially, spiritually, others economically. 'We cannot go singly because that which we're meeting is an alliance.' Nothing is won by strength, only by strategy.

Some churches have so many experts: send them down the road to another. You will never achieve anything in isolation. Jesus looks at Jerusalem and weeps. There are certain things that make for our peace – but what day are we living in? Can we grasp that peace?

There are three prophetic conferences in November. Should they be working together? She says 'no' because pressure can come from three directions,

strategically. There is one goal: to build the kingdom. If we see differences as not achieving the goal, there will be trouble. What matters is how we relate.

If you bring a coconut from the shores of Jamaica to shores of Brighton, you cannot grow it: the difference is the climate. Today's climate must be strong relationally. 'When we get the climate right, it allows heaven to kiss our world then we can say your kingdom came on earth.'

Black & Minority Ethnic Christian Contributions in Britain and Northern Ireland Today



Dr R. David Muir
(20.10.05)

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Black history & socio-historical developments
3. Rethinking the nature of BME Christian contributions
4. The cultural politics of black church leadership and partnership?
5. Some unscientific concluding remarks



Introduction...

- The life-affirming, life-authenticating nature of Black Christian experience...
- Religion, Ideology and the Black church (the journey between Mbiti and Marx to arrive Christ via Lincoln!)
- Confession



The peculiar sustaining force...

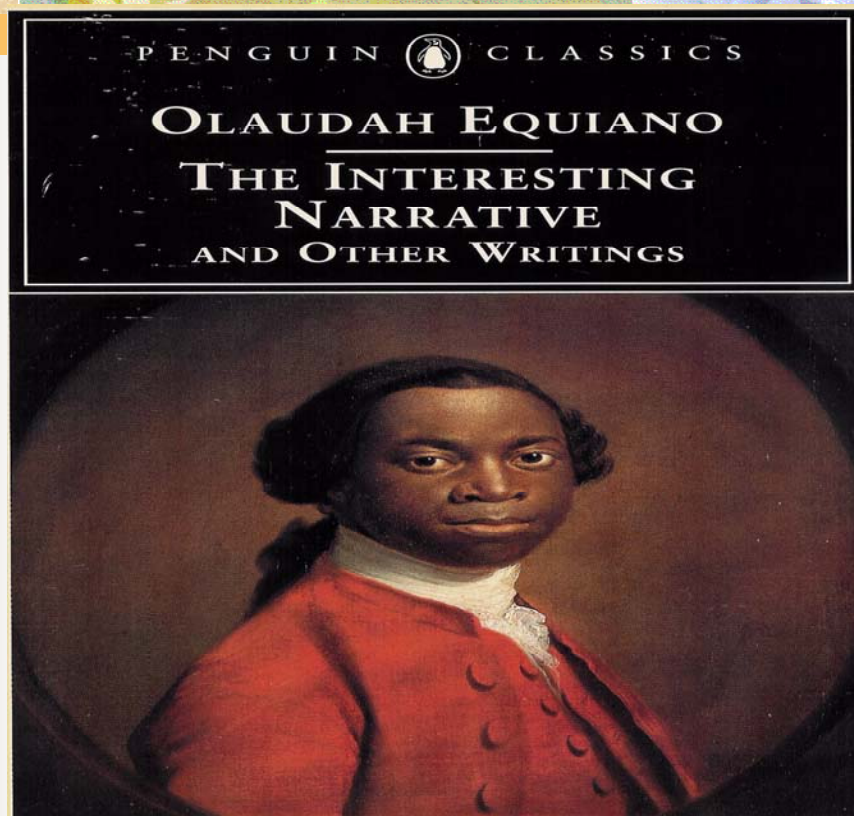
- “His church was his school, his forum, his political arena, his social club, his art gallery, his **conservatory** of music...as well as *sanctum sanctorum*...It was the peculiar sustaining force which gave him strength to endure when endurance gave no promise, and the courage to be creative in the face of his own dehumanization.”

C. Eric Lincoln, 1970

Black British Religion-Political Iconography

- “... a particular favourite
of heaven.”

Equiano, 1789



Contextual History & Traditions



- Pre-Windrush heritage
- Post-Windrush politics and culture
- Mapping the stages of growth and development

A view from the Centre? (A)



“This country may become an open reception centre for immigrants not selected in respect of health, education, training, character, custom...The British people fortunately enjoy a profound unity without uniformity in their way of life, and are blest by the absence of a colour racial problem.”



A view from the Centre? (B)

- “An influx of coloured people domiciled here is likely to impair the harmony, strength and cohesion of our public and social life and cause discord and unhappiness among all concerned...We venture to suggest that the British Government should...control immigration in the political, social, economic and fiscal interests of our people.”



Developmental Paradigms...

- **Racism & rejection: community default?**

“The first place I visited was a church, but nobody said, ‘Welcome’...We felt a sense of rejection straight away... Another member told me... ‘I think the church down the road want black people.’ I was looking for love, warmth and encouragement. I believed the first place I would find that was in the Church, but it wasn’t there.”

Io Smith, *An Ebony Cross*, 1989, p.40.

Developmental Paradigms...

Cultural & liturgical incongruity

“The newly arrived Caribbean community of the 1950s and 1960s ...sought...shelter under the canopy of the existing church structures and found little that resonated with its own expression of Christianity. This was not always the result of hostile rejection or polite indifference...but was also the result of a mismatch of cultural responses and an incongruity between the secularised formalities of many churches and the simple fervency of many Caribbeans.”

Joel Edwards, “*The British Afro-Caribbean Community*”, 1993.

Interpretive Periodization?

Stages:

Mark Sturge:

Joe Aldred:

1948-1955	The scattered church	<i>(Initiation)</i>
1952-1960	The community church	<i>(Rapid growth)</i>
1955-1966	The denominational church	<i>(Consolidation)</i>
1965-1975	The consolidating church	<i>(Fragmentation)</i>
1975-1985	The restless church	<i>(Para-church orgs)</i>
1980-1985	The integrated church	<i>(Stagnation of old)</i>
1980-1993	The diverse church	<i>(Emergence of new)</i>
1990-1996	The revitalised apostolic church	
1997-2003	The recognised church	
2004 +	The maturing church	



Rethinking BME Christian Contributions...

- Beyond worship and exuberance
- ‘Redemptive interventions’
- Community leadership and cohesion
- Presence in the established churches and challenge to the wider Christian community to mirror biblical unity
- Black Christian theological reflection and biblical hermeneutics



Recognising our Contribution and Significance...

- “ I know of the crucial role which the Black Majority Churches have played – and continue to – in offering inspiration and leadership to their communities, encouraging them to set their sights and hold fast to their aspirations, even when people meet with prejudice, hostility or outright rejection.”

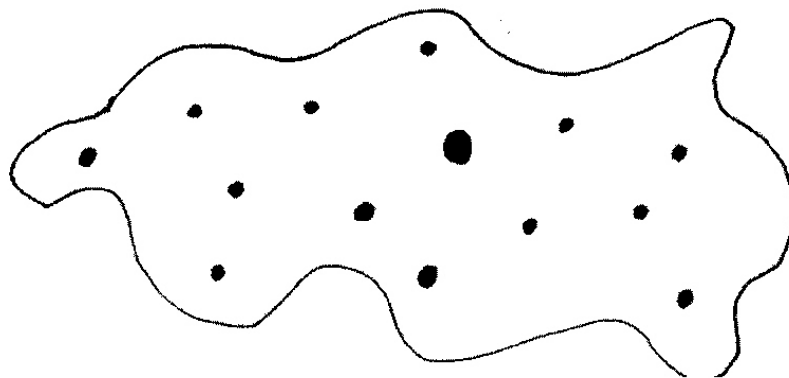
The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, (2000).

The cultural politics of black church leadership?

- Leadership in BME churches and organisations
- Leadership in national, white/established institutions
- Decoding the politics of personal and institutional journeys:

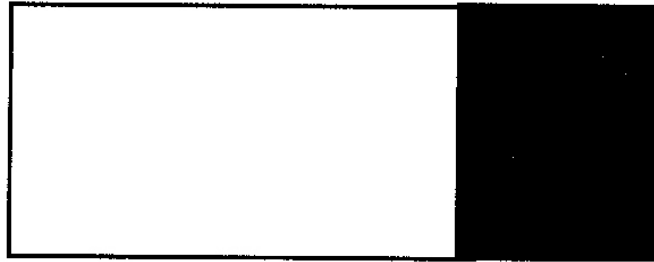
“Much credit must also be given to institutions that have made themselves vulnerable by ‘swimming against the tide’ and appointing sons and daughters of ‘Black or Black-led ‘ churches as their leaders as their leaders.” Mark Sturge, 2005.

Race and Christian Partnerships (1) unity & integrity: the perennial challenge



The Dalmatian Effect or Co-opting Model

Race and Christian Partnerships (2) unity & integrity: the perennial challenge



The Partnership or Inclusive Model

Conclusion...

- Whither Black Majority Church?

“Black Churches came into being to fulfil spiritual, social and cultural needs which would otherwise go unmet- and the African and Caribbean Church in the UK is an indication of God’s ability to meet a people’s need through their own ministry to themselves.” (Joel Edwards)

Training and developing a new generation for new challenges

- A manifesto for faith and public policy?

Appendix 6

Dr Doreen McCalla's PowerPoint Presentation

Stronger Together Weaker Apart

National Summit for Black and Minority
Ethnic Church Leaders

MECA Conference

Presentation of Research Findings
Black and Minority Ethnic Church Leaders'
Questionnaire

Dr Doreen McCalla

Areas of Interest

- General
- Church Life
- Partnership and Ecumenism
- Intercultural and Interfaith Relationships
- Education and Training
- Publication, Information and the Media
- Christian Agencies
- Social and Political Engagement
- Doctrine

General Questions

- Leaders' Ethnicity
 - ◆ Asian = 5%
 - ◆ Black = 83%
 - ◆ White = 7%
 - ◆ Other = 5%

NB. other represents leaders of mix parentage
- Major Ethnic group in your church
 - ◆ Asian = 2%
 - ◆ Black = 87%
 - ◆ White = 7%
 - ◆ Other = 4%

NB. Other represented a mix of ethnic groups.

General Questions cont'd

- Leaders' Gender
 - ◆ Male = 83%
 - ◆ Female = 17%
- Leaders' Age Group
 - ◆ Under 40s = 3%
 - ◆ 40-65 = 80%
 - ◆ Over 65 = 17%

Church Life

- Are systems of accountability to statutory bodies e.g. The Charity Commission operating in your Church?
Yes (N = 90%)
No (N = 10%)
- Are your pastors supported by a hardship fund?
Yes (N = 10%)
No (N = 85%)
No response = (N= 5%)

Church Life Cont'd

- Does your Church provide programmes of spiritual development for young people, e.g. for leadership?
Yes (N = 87%)
No (N = 10%)
No response (N = 3%)

Partnership and Ecumenism

- Does your Church work with other Churches?
Yes (100%)
- Do you support the concept of Councils of Black-led Churches throughout the UK?
Yes (N = 79%)
No (N = 19%)
No response (3%)
- Would you support a joint National Black Majority Church Convention?
Yes (N = 80%)
No (N = 18%)
No response (N = 2%)

Partnership and Ecumenicalism Cont'd

- Do you provide oversight for any other Church or leader?
Yes (N = 55%)
No (N = 42%)
No response (N = 3%)
- Do you or your Church receive oversight from any other Church or leader?
Yes (N = 57%)
No (N = 40%)
No response (N = 3%)

Partnership and Ecumenicalism Cont'd

- Does your Church encourage pulpit swapping?
Yes (N = 71%)
No (N = 25%)
No response (N = 3%)
- Does your Church have sharing arrangements, e.g. with any other churches for buildings and other resources?
Yes (N = 66%)
No (N = 34%)
- Has your Church ever experienced difficulties purchasing buildings or other properties from other Churches?
Yes (N = 39%)
No (N = 61%)

Intercultural/Interfaith Relations

- Do you support the idea of partnership between Black-led and White-led Churches?
Yes (N = 90%)
No (N = 10%)
- To your knowledge do any of your leaders belong to any multicultural fraternal?
Yes (N = 54%)
No (N = 41%)
No response (N = 5%)
- Were you aware of the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs (MECA) Reference Group of CTBI/CTE?
Yes (N = 71%)
No (N = 29%)

Intercultural/Interfaith Relations Cont'd

- In your opinion, what percentage of Black Christians belong to White-led Churches?
0-20 (N = 22%) 21-40 (N = 41%)
41-60 (N = 24%) 61-80 (N = 2%)
81-100 (N = 4%) No response (7%)
- In your opinion, what percentage of white Christians belong to Black-majority Churches?
0-20 (N = 80%) 21-40 (N = 10%)
41-60 (N = 3%) 61-80 (N = 2%)
No response (5%)
- Do you encourage your Church get involve in Racial Justice Sunday?
Yes (N = 71%)
No (N = 29%)

Intercultural/Interfaith Relations Cont'd

- Is your Church part of an international Church?
Yes (N = 66%)
No (N = 34%)
- Does your Church seek to evangelise people of other faiths such as, Jews, Muslims, etc.?
Yes (N = 67%)
No (N = 30%)
No response (N = 3%)
- Has the work of the Nation of Islam affected members (especially young people) of your Church?
Yes (N = 17%)
No (N = 83%)

Education and Training

- Does your Church provide leadership and theological training?
Yes (N = 78%) No (N = 22%)
- Does your Church require ordained leaders to have undergone official/accredited ministerial training?
Yes (N = 85%) No (N = 15%)
- Would you be in favour of training being provided for your leaders to better understand people of other faiths?
Yes (N = 88%) No (N = 12%)

Education and Training Cont'd

- Do you think that research should be carried out into the relationship between Black Christianity and other faith groups?
Yes (N = 86%) No (N = 12%)
No response (N = 2%)
- Does your Church get involve in racial awareness training?
Yes (N = 39%) No (N = 61%)

Education and Training Cont'd

- Would you support the idea of establishing a national Black Churches theological/training college?
Yes (N = 54%) No (N = 32%)
No response (N = 14%)
- Would your Church be interested in exploring sending students for ministerial/theological training to mainstream church colleges?
Yes (N = 78%) No (N = 15%)
No response (N = 7%)

Publication, Information, the Media

- Are you aware of the Directory of Black Majority Churches?
Yes (N = 68%) No (N = 32%)
- Have you found the regular communication of newsletters, etc, by email from Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs (MECA), helpful?
Yes (N = 45%) No (N = 37%)
No response (N = 18%)
- Would you welcome greater recognition of the work of Black Majority Churches in the press and media?
Yes (N = 95%) No (N = 5%)

Publication, Information, the Media cont'd

- Has the history of your Church been written and published?
Yes (N = 34%) No (N = 66%)
- Does your Church have a national publication?
Yes (N = 29%) No (N = 71%)
- Are you aware of *Black Theology an International Journal*?
Yes (N = 17%) No (N = 83%)

Publication, Information, the Media Cont'd

- Have you ever 'visited' the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) or Churches Together in England (CTE) website?
Yes (N = 28%) No (N = 67%)
No response (N = 5%)
- Do you think there is enough literature in the public domain about Black Majority Churches?
Yes (N = 100%)

Christian Agencies

- Is your Church affiliated to any Church agency e.g. The African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance (ACEA), Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)/Churches together in England (CTE), etc.?
Yes (N = 93%) No (N = 7%)

- Are you aware of the Churches Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ)?
Yes (N = 71%) No (N = 29%)

- Has your Church built a strong relationship with any Aid Agencies, e.g. Christian Aid, Tear Fund, CAFOD?
Yes (N = 37%) No (N = 63%)

Social and Political Engagement

- Is your Church working on any projects with public agencies, e.g. education, health, police and legal system, politics, etc.?
Yes (N = 56%) No (N = 44%)

- Do you engage in political activities?
Yes (N = 34%) No (N = 66%)

- Do you think Black Majority Churches should be represented by one organisation that speaks on their behalf in the political/public arena?
Yes (N = 72%) No (N = 16%)
No response (N = 12%)

- Does your Church have an established social, economic or political programme?
Yes (N = 32%) No (N = 66%)
No response (N = 2%)

Doctrine

- Do you believe homosexuality is a sin?
Yes (N = 98%) No response (N = 2%)

- Do you believe abortion is wrong in every circumstance?
Yes (N = 54%) No (N = 41%)
No response (N = 5%)

- Do you believe cloning is ethically/morally OK?
Yes (N = 10%) No (N = 88%)
No response (N = 2%)

- Do you believe the Bible permits remarriage after divorce?
Yes (N = 66%) No (N = 32%)
No response (N = 2%)

Appendix 7

Bishop Simon Iheanacho presented an interim report on the work of a Working Party set up recently by MECA Reference Group

Remit for MECA Working Group

'To examine the extent to which issues such as miracle babies, exorcism, ritual sacrifice, the occult and other quasi-Christian practices exist within or impact upon Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Christian communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland'.

Members of MECA Working Group

Mrs Shirley Maginley; BME Link Officer, NSPCC Cross-cultural

Revd Janet Murray; General Secretary, Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches

Apostle Sam Abidoye; Head/Chair Cherubim & Seraphim Council of Churches

Bishop Simon Iheanacho; Apostolic congress of G.B., (Chair of the Enquiry group)

Mrs Merlene Greaves; Afro-Caribbean Evangelical Alliance

Revd George Hargreaves; Operation Christian Voice

A STATEMENT by MECA Working Group

The Working Group has met twice, plus one enquiry visit regarding the issue of "Miracle Babies" as a means of gathering information and understanding. The issues raised for us to examine are wide ranging, covering England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The Working Group requires more time to properly examine these issues in order to determine the extent to which any of these practices exist and their impact upon the (BME) Christian Community. The Working Group agrees that the media involvement and the need for government policy bodies to act, place an urgent need on us to produce a good report.

- (a) A report that will provide a better understanding of normal practices within (BME) Christian Communities.
- (b) Give a guide to what is not normal practice
- (c) A report that will give policy makers better understanding regarding these issues.
- (d) The need to produce recommendations for good practice for (BME) Christian Communities (should they accept it) to take forward.
- (e) To provide a list of experts from (BME) Christian Communities, who could become points of references and source of information.

The Working Group is determined to produce a good report which will help advance a better understanding of the issues raised for enquiry to the extent of their existence and impact upon the (BME) Christian Communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The Working Group invites all the (BME) Community leaders to supply any information or contributions they consider necessary to help the Working Group complete this enquiry successfully.

Thank You.

Bishop Simon Iheanacho
Chair, on behalf of MECA Working Group

Appendix 8

List of Delegates

CHURCH/ORGANISATION

Revd Chidi Abiakweh	Amazing Grance International Christian Centre
Pastor Clement Adebayo	Christian Victory International Ministry
Revd Stephen Afolaleye	Salvation Church of Christ
Ms Uzo Agyhare-Kumi	CARJ
Bishop Dr Joe Aldred	Churches Together in England
Pastor Eduardo Amelia	Kimbanguist Church
Enoch Amoah	Ascension Trust
Revd James Douglas Andrews	Bethel House
Bishop Angaelos	Coptic Orthodox Church
Revd Jimmy Austin	
Revd Nancy Babarinde	Hope Fellowship
Randall Bailey	United Reformed Church
Mr Philip Bandseylla	Kimbanguist Church
Ms Sonia Barron	Church of England
Evangelist H Beckford	The Light & Life Gospel Fellowship
Pastor Vanrick Beresford	Maranatha Ministries International
Mike Best	Keep the Faith
Revd Esme Beswick	Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches
Bishop Alvin Blake	Calvary Church of God in Christ
Pastor Likutu Bofoya	Kimbanguist Church
Mr Lloyd Booker	NSPCC
Melvin Brooks	New Jerusalem Apostolic Church
Pastor Pastor Yvonne Brooks	New Jerusalem Apostolic Church
Revd Lena Brown	TAPAC
Revd Herma Buttler	The Light & Life Full Gospel Fellowship
Mrs Sonia Chambers	Barnardo's
Revd Malcolm Cummins	New Testament Church of God
Revd Marcia Da Costa	Love Fellowship
Revd David Daniels	Peoples' Christian Fellowship (PCF)
Revd Prince N Davidson	Destiny City
Mr Nigel Desborough	
Ms Marcia Dixon	The Voice
Mr Leon A Dundas	
Pastor Kingsley Ehigiamusoe	
Revd Dr Kingsley Ekaette	
Revd Mo Elliott	West Yorkshire African-Caribbean Council for Churches
Revd Kunga Kongo Emawoyi	Kimbanguist Church
Pastor Chike Enendu	
Bishop Francis	Ruach Ministries
Revd Leroy Francis	Life Tabernacle Church
Evangelist Offor Gabriel	
Ms Carole Golden	Churches Together in England

Revd Claion Grandison	New Testament Church of God
Bishop David Greaves	New Testament Assembly
Mr Creswell L Green	
Mrs Joyelyn Green	
Archbishop Paul Hackman	Beneficial Veracious Christ Church (TAPAC)
Revd Princess Hackman	Beneficial Veracious Christ Church (TAPAC)
Ms Gloria Hanley	Beneficial Veracious Christ Church (TAPAC)
Revd George Hargreaves	Operation Christian Voice
M H Harvey	
Revd Chris Ihembu	UK World Evangelism Trust
	UK World Evangelism Trust/Apostolic Congress of
	Great Britain
Bishop Simon Iheanacho	
Pastor Brigitte Bokengo Ilokwa	Kimbanguist Church
Mr Errol John	Barnardo's
Pastor Marcia Jones	
Revd Bakatubia Kalonga	Kimbanguist Church
Sister Helen Kamara	Born Again Christ Healing Church International
Mr Jean Pierre Katutondua	Kimbanguist Church
Mr Alex King	
Mr David King	Christian Aid
Mr Ruben King	ENCAMS BMSs Environmental Project
Katei Kirby	ACEA
Dionne Lamont	Bethesda Ministries
Ms Shola Lana	Community Action Network
Bishop James Larbi	Transatlantic and Pacific Alliance of Churches
Revd Cid Latty	Christchurch Baptist
Mr Beresford Lewis	PhD student
Ms Ruth Lovell	Youth for Christ
Mrs Shirley Maginley	NSPCC
Dr Doreen McCalla	Researcher
Ms Gloria McGowan	Open Door Ministries, Church of God of Prophecy
Revd C Morris	Church of God of Prophecy
Dr David Muir	Evangelical Alliance
Mr S Murray	New Testament Assembly
Revd Janet Murray	Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches
Evangelist Nwaneri Fabian Nnamdi	
Nims Obunge	Peace Alliance
Dr Albert Odulele	Glory House
Olu Ojedokum	ACEA
Revd Felicia Okoye	Divine Grace Ministries
Mr Muyiwa Olarewaju	Premier Radio
Dr Joel Oluwafenu	Kingdom Life Prophetic
Most Revd Dr Fidelia Onyuku-	
Opukiri	Council of African & Afro-Caribbean Churches
Revd Lambert Osuji	Bethel House
Pastor F Iyefa Ozango Pangi	Kimbanguist Church
Senior Apostle Jame Ozigi	Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches
Revd Elson Parris	Wesleyan Holiness Church

Mr Tony Parry	Barnardo's CANA Project
Mr Raj Patel	Alliance of Asian Christians
Revd Tedroy Powell	House of Bread
Bishop Wilton Powell	Church of God of Prophecy
Revd Andrew Prasad	Baptist Church
Chantelle Prosper	Lord Taylor of Warwick's office
Kumar Rajagopalan	London Baptist Association
Mr Richard Reddie	Churches Together in England
Ven Tunde Roberts	St Olave's Vicarage
Prophetess Esther Samson	Hope Fellowship
Ms Lindsey Sanderson	ACTS
Mr Delbert Sandiford	Diocese of Southwark, Church of England
Revd George Saw	Life Chapel Ministry
Lieutenant Colonel Dawn Sewell	Salvation Army
Revd Tim Smith	Open Door Ministries, Church of God of Prophecy
Mrs Gwen Smith	Open Door Ministries, Church of God of Prophecy
Rt Revd James Stapleton	
Mr Jeremy Stapleton	
Mrs Esther Stapleton	
Revd Peter Stapleton	Miracle Church of God in Christ, Bedford
Ms Edith Steele	Churches Together in England
Revd Nezlin Sterling	New Testament Assembly
Evangelist Margaret Sylva	Bethel United Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic
Revd Beverley Theodore	Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre
Revd Arlington Trotman	CTBI/CCRJ
Mr Delhorne Turner	
Evangelist Donny Ubah	UK World Evangelism Trust
Anne van Staveren	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Ms Jean Waite	Journalist
Revd Humphrey Walters	Seventh Day Adventist
Mr Errol Williams	Open Door Ministries, Church of God of Prophecy
Mr Mary Wiltshire	Church of God of Prophecy
Revd William Wood	Wood World Missions & Power Centre Church
Mrs Wood	Wood World Missions & Power Centre Church
Pastor Verna Wynter	Bethel United Church of Jesus Christ Apostolic

APPENDIX 9

Vision of MECA

A Christian Church that is enriched by its diversity impacting society with the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Mission of MECA

To enable through encounter and dialogue deep and long-lasting relationship between all Christian 'denominations', under girded by an ethos of celebrating unity in diversity in which the gifts of all are utilized for the building up of the Body of Christ and the liberation of humankind.

Strategies

1. By networking Minority Ethnic churches.
2. By networking Minority Ethnic Christians within the mainstream churches.
3. By networking Minority Ethnic and mainstream churches.
4. By providing a focus for resources for and about Minority Ethnic churches

Appendix 10

Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs (MECA)

What is MECA?

MECA is an instrument of Churches Together working with Christians from minority ethnic communities in Britain and Ireland. MECA works with other ecumenical agencies, some of which are members of Churches Together, particularly those that serve the interests of minority ethnic Christian communities. MECA secretary, Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, works with a Reference Group drawn from minority ethnic Churches and mainstream churches.

What does MECA do?

MECA seeks to network minority ethnic Christian communities, and to build bridges between them and mainstream Churches and agencies, as well as focus on resources for and about minority ethnic Christian communities. MECA seeks to draw minority ethnic Christian communities into closer fellowship with each other and the wider church to affect secular society.

MECA encourages care of all in membership of churches, as well as regard for legal, moral and ethical standards, sound biblical and theological practice. MECA is not a regulating body but a catalyst for cooperation, fellowship and good practice.

How many minority ethnic people are there in UK?

The minority ethnic population in Britain and Ireland 7.9% of the overall population, over 90% of whom live in England, of which 45% of whom live in London.

Where do they worship?

A significant proportion of the minority ethnic population follow the Christian faith: many in mainstream churches; others in churches established and peopled in the majority by people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The first of these Churches were set up in the early 1950s by Christians from the Caribbean, but today in Britain and Ireland there are flourishing Christian communities of people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Chinese, Korean and other heritages.

To which Churches do they belong?

Minority ethnic Christians belong to a rich variety of denominations of different histories, traditions, theologies and cultures. Many belong to traditional mainstream churches, others to national 'Black-led' or 'Black-majority' Churches, Asian and other independent fellowships. There are over 500 individually named organizations, including churches and ecumenical agencies, serving the minority ethnic Christian communities. The *Directory of Black Majority Churches* is a key instrument in identifying churches.

Appendix 11

MECA Reference Group

Secretary: Bishop Dr Joe Aldred

Members:

Special Apostle Sam A Abidoye	Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches
Bishop Angaelos	Coptic Orthodox Church
Revd Sonia Barron	Committee for Minorities Ethnic Anglican Concerns
Revd Vonley George	Wesleyan Holiness Church
Dr David Goodbourn	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Ms Dionne Gravesande	Christian Aid
Bishop David Greaves	New Testament Assembly
Bishop Simon Iheanacho (Chair)	Apostolic Congress of Great Britain
Bishop James Larbi	Transatlantic and Pacific Alliance of Churches
Revd Louis McLeod	New Testament Church of God
Revd Janet Murray	Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches
Bishop Onye Obika	International Ministerial Council of Great Britain
Revd Daniel Otieno-Ndale	Black and Asian Baptist Forum
Revd Olukayode Owolabi	African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance
Senior Apostle James Ozigi	Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches
Mr Raj Patel (Vice Chair)	Alliance of Asian Christians
Bishop Tedroy Powell	Church of God of Prophecy
Lieut-Colonel Dawn Sewell	Salvation Army
Bishop Timothy Smith	Church of God of Prophecy
Revd Bill Snelson	Churches Together in England
Revd Nezlin Sterling	New Testament Assembly
Revd Arlington Trotman	Churches Commission for Racial Justice
Revd Humphrey Walters	Seventh Day Adventist Church
Kataline Tahaafe-Williams	United Reformed Church

Contact Details

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