

Transnational Exchange in World Christianity: Racial Reconciliation in the Newfrontiers Network of Churches, 1979–2010

by SAM JEFFERY
King's College, London
E-mail: samuel.jeffery@kcl.ac.uk

This article demonstrates how transnational encounters and exchanges can shape and re-shape Christian beliefs and practices in a globalising world. It does this using the example of a transnational network of neo-charismatic churches called Newfrontiers that was founded in the small towns of Sussex during the 1970s but, by 2011, encompassed almost 850 churches in over sixty countries. Drawing on extensive primary research, this article shows how the theological and practical commitment of Newfrontiers churches to racial reconciliation and the building of diverse congregations was forged over thirty years through encounters between British, South African and Ghanaian Christians.

CN= *Coastlands News*; DI= Digital item; FI= *Frontline International*; NFA= Newfrontiers Archive, Regents Theological College, Malvern; NFIM= *New Frontiers International Magazine*; NFM= *New Frontiers Magazine*

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Encounters between societies and cultures have shaped the expression of Christianity since the earliest centuries of the Church. From the encounters between Hellenistic and Jewish Christianities in the Early Church to the encounters fostered by the intensified globalisation of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the multi-directional exchanges and interactions that occur at the interface of cultures and societies have moulded the worldviews, beliefs and practices of Christians.¹ It is these processes of multi-directional interaction and exchange that are the subject of this article. Using the example of a transnational network of neo-charismatic churches called Newfrontiers that was founded in the small towns of Sussex during the 1970s but, by 2011, encompassed almost 850 churches in over sixty countries, the essay traces the process through which its theological and practical commitment to building racially diverse congregations was shaped by the encounters between British, South African and Ghanaian Christians.² Through extensive study of previously unseen archival materials and over sixty hours of oral history interviews conducted with Newfrontiers leaders and church members from six countries, the article illuminates the processes of ‘glocalisation’ that made and re-made Christian identities, beliefs and practices in a globalising world.³

The formative potential of transnational encounters and cross-cultural transmission for Christian theology has long been recognised by scholars of World Christianity. The historian and missionary Andrew Walls, one of the architects of ‘World Christianity’ as a scholarly framework, invoked the encounter between Jewish and Hellenistic Christians in the Early Church to describe the meeting of different cultures and societies as ‘Ephesian moments’. Walls postulated that modern-day encounters between Euro-American, African and Asian Christians could be as theologically formative and enriching as any encounter in the history of the Church.⁴ Yet, much scholarship on World Christianity has privileged analysis of local, non-western Christianities over the transnational networks

¹ Andrew Walls, ‘Afterword: Christian mission in a five-hundred-year context’, in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds), *Mission in the twenty-first century: exploring the five marks of global mission*, London 2008, 193–203 at p. 203; Klaus Koschorke, ‘Transcontinental links, enlarged maps, and polycentric structures in the history of World Christianity’, *Journal of World Christianity* vi (2016), 28–56.

² For this statistic see Terry Virgo, ‘Firstline’, *NM* iv (July–Sept. 2011), 4–6. All issues of the Newfrontiers magazine, published between 1980 and 2011 under various titles, are available in the NFA.

³ Victor Roudometof, ‘Glocal religions: an introduction’, in Victor Roudometof (ed.), *Glocal religions*, Basel 2018, 1–9 at p. 4.

⁴ Andrew Walls, *The cross-cultural process in Christian history: studies in the transmission and appropriation of faith*, New York 2002, 77–8, and ‘Afterword’, 203; Joel Cabrita and David Maxwell, ‘Introduction: relocating World Christianity’, in Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell and Emma Wild-Wood (eds), *Relocating World Christianity: interdisciplinary*

that facilitate these encounters and exchanges.⁵ A burgeoning transnational ‘turn’ is emerging in the work of historians like Klaus Koschorke,⁶ Brian Stanley,⁷ Joel Cabrita,⁸ David Maxwell⁹ and in recent edited volumes,¹⁰ as scholars interrogate transnational connections and exchanges, compare developments in different parts of the world and examine intertwined impulses in Christian history towards ‘independency’ and ‘ecumenism’. Still, studies have tended to focus disproportionately on unidirectional movement, whether from ‘the West to the rest’ or the reverse, noting but often not exploring multi-directional exchanges and the cycles of transmission, reception and adaptation they entail.¹¹ This article makes these exchanges and their effect on Christian belief and practice its central concern.

To illuminate these exchanges, the article draws on insights from wider scholarship on ‘glocalisation’. The process of glocalisation accounts for a central feature of globalisation – understood here as the compression of the world through its increasing interconnectedness – namely, the way that cultures and ideas which traverse the world are also ‘mold[ed] into the fabric’ of local communities as they travel.¹² Cultures and ideas that are therefore global, or at least transnational, do not eradicate local ones, but can be adapted to them. As a term for this process of adaptation, glocalisation can be treated as akin to the refraction of light through certain materials, following the historian and theorist Victor Roudometof. In other words, as globalisation leads to the transmission of ideas or religious cultures across borders, glocalisation denotes their ‘refraction’ by new local contexts; they are not received in pristine form but changed by the new environments they encounter.¹³ This also

studies in universal and local expressions of the Christian faith, Leiden 2017, 1–44 at pp. 8–12.

⁵ For a recent survey of the field see Cabrita and Maxwell, ‘Introduction’, esp. pp. 3–4.

⁶ Koschorke, ‘Transcontinental links’.

⁷ Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the twentieth century: a world history*, Princeton 2018.

⁸ Joel Cabrita, *The people’s Zion: southern Africa, the United States, and a transatlantic faith-healing movement*, Cambridge, MA 2018.

⁹ David Maxwell, *African gifts of the spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement*, Oxford 2006.

¹⁰ Alexander Chow and Emma Wild-Wood (eds), *Ecumenism and independency in World Christianity: historical studies in honour of Brian Stanley*, Leiden 2020.

¹¹ For examples see Kirsteen Kim, ‘Mission: integrated or autonomous? Implications for the study of World Christianity’, and Dana L. Robert, ‘Sacred music and Christian transnationalism in 1920s–1930s China and Japan’, *ibid.* 62–80, 221–39.

¹² Roland Robertson, ‘Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity’, in Mike Featherstone, Scott M. Lash and Roland Robertson (eds), *Global modernities*, London 1995, 35–53 at p. 44; Roudometof, ‘Glocal religions’, quotation at p. 3.

¹³ Robertson, ‘Glocalization’, 44; Victor Roudometof, ‘Forms of religious glocalization: Orthodox Christianity in the *longue durée*’, *Religions* v (2014), 1017–36 at

highlights how, far from being antithetical to one another, the global and the local are mutually constitutive categories. A culture or idea that traverses the world, after all, originates in a particular local context and, when glocalisation moulds it into the fabric of new local communities, its adapted forms may be cast once more into the transnational or global realm. At the interface of the global and the local, then, identities and cultures are perpetually made and re-made through cyclical processes of transmission and adaptation and the 'local' itself is revealed, not as a pristine reality, but as something 'constructed' that emerges from the politics of place-making and identity.¹⁴

Of course, while the language of glocalisation is not always used, important studies exist of how Christians in specific localities have appropriated and adapted transnational flows of ideas and doctrines.¹⁵ Recent work on 'independency' and 'ecumenism' in Christianity has also shown the production of 'pluriform' Christianities at the interface of transnational flows with local contexts that closely parallels the process of glocalisation.¹⁶ Yet explicit engagement with the concept is particularly useful for studying multi-directional exchange in World Christianity. It underscores the significance of global and transnational processes in shaping much-studied local Christianities and turns attention further toward the perpetual refashioning of identities, beliefs and practices through transnational encounter and exchange. Moreover, it facilitates cross-fertilisation between scholars of World Christianity and those of other world religions who are engaged in studies of multi-directional exchange under the moniker of 'glocal religion'.¹⁷ However, before applying this approach to the changing ideology of Newfrontiers with regards to racial reconciliation, it is necessary to introduce the network itself in more detail.

The transnational network of Newfrontiers

Newfrontiers is an example of an independent charismatic or neo-charismatic church movement.¹⁸ Neo-charismatic groups emerged worldwide

pp. 1018–20, and 'Theorizing glocalization: three interpretations', *European Journal of Social Theory* xix (2016), 391–408 at pp. 398–403.

¹⁴ Roudometof, 'Forms of religious glocalization', 1019–20; Peter Beyer, *Religions in global society*, New York 2006, 18–61; Victor Roudometof, 'Recovering the local: from glocalization to localization', *Current Sociology Review* lxvii (2019), 801–17 at pp. 808–13.

¹⁵ Maxwell, *African gifts*.

¹⁶ Emma Wild-Wood, 'Introduction: ecumenism and independency in World Christianity', in Chow and Wild-Wood, *Ecumenism and independency*, 1–19 at pp. 14–17.

¹⁷ Roudometof, *Glocal religions*.

¹⁸ While this essay uses the movement's current name throughout, it was originally founded under the name 'Coastlands' (1980–6), before changing to 'New Frontiers'

during the 1970s and 1980s, drawing from already established Pentecostal and charismatic traditions but standing outside their denominational structures.¹⁹ Newfrontiers was birthed through pastor Terry Virgo's visiting ministry in churches across the southern English counties of East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and south-east London during the 1970s, before being formally established in 1980. At its roots was an ideology that centred on the theme of 'restoration'. Like a range of neo-charismatic groups, Newfrontiers adopted an ecclesiology which centred on restoring the five-fold ministries of Ephesians iv. The Bibles of Newfrontiers leaders would have fallen open at this chapter, so regularly did they expound its verses referring to Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists. From the New Testament, such leaders concluded that these were the offices around which the Church was to be organised and that they were to be populated with individuals 'anointed' by the Holy Spirit to fill them. As such, there was no room for any structure deemed 'denominational', nor democratic processes in church government.²⁰ This, however, was only one facet of the restoration they sought. Beneath it was an adventist hope for the 'restoration of all things', or the final establishment of God's kingdom on the earth. While believing that this would be consummated only at Christ's second coming, leaders who adhered to this ideology held that the Church, restored to the enduring pattern of church life set out in the New Testament, would also be the agent of its progressive realisation in the present age.²¹ It was this spirit of recovery and restoration that earned Newfrontiers and other like-minded British movements the collective title of 'British Restorationism'.²²

(1986–8), 'New Frontiers International (NFI)' (1988–2002) and 'Newfrontiers' (2002–present). Each change reflected the movement's growing transnational ambition and reach.

¹⁹ Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions', in Allan Anderson and others (eds), *Studying Global Pentecostalism: theories and methods*, Berkeley, CA 2010, 13–29 at pp. 19–20.

²⁰ For further exposition of these principles see Andrew Walker, *Restoring the kingdom: the radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*, 4th edn, Guildford 1998, 129–71, and William Kay, *Apostolic networks in Britain: new ways of being Church*, Milton Keynes 2007, 19–41.

²¹ The eschatology of British Restorationism is often mistaken for post-millennialism but it incorporated a range of millennial positions. Newfrontiers leaders tended to be positive a-millennialists. See Martin J. Scott, 'The theology of the so-called "new church" movement: an analysis of the eschatology', unpubl. MTh diss. Brunel University 1997; Andrew Ewen Robertson, 'The distinctive missiology of the New Churches: an analysis and evaluation', unpubl. PhD diss. Glyndwr University 2014, 10–12; and Walker, *Restoring the kingdom*, 137–43.

²² The label 'British Restorationism' is most used by sociologist Stephen Hunt but was first adopted in Andrew Walker's seminal work on what had hitherto been known as the 'House Church Movement'. Walker tended simply to refer to 'Restorationism', but his study nevertheless focused on its British manifestations:

British Restorationism, however, by no means originated in isolation. The theological development of the churches and pastors that comprised it was influenced by visits to and from a group of American charismatic pastors, known as the ‘Fort Lauderdale Five’, who influenced their adoption of controversial ‘shepherding’ practices.²³ Older transatlantic influences from the North American ‘Latter Rain’ movement were also apparent, as was the role of transnational Brethren networks between Britain and New Zealand.²⁴ Yet British Restorationists sought to establish their local credibility, resisting suggestions that they were the outposts of an American movement and insisting that their ideas about apostleship had not originated externally.²⁵ Indeed, there was an ambivalence about American Christianity as a cultural force among British Restorationists and a concern about the conflation of the Gospel with the ‘American way’ by its more ‘outrageous’ figures.²⁶

Despite attention to these North American connections, scholarship on British Restorationism has generally neglected its overseas links, but a few important studies have shown that groups like Newfrontiers had a missional vision that extended far beyond Britain.²⁷ At first, this vision was the partially concealed background to efforts by Virgo and his ‘apostolic team’ to establish Restorationist principles in churches overseas but, by the mid-1980s, contact with more evangelistically active groups and reported prophetic visions moved world evangelisation firmly into the foreground.²⁸ Church planting began its unrelenting ascent on their agenda and complemented the movement’s existing practice of ‘adopting’ already established congregations. Between 1986 and 1991, at least twenty-two new churches were planted by leaders associated with Newfrontiers, including five in India and Cyprus.²⁹

Stephen Hunt, *A history of the charismatic movement in Britain and the United States of America: the Pentecostal transformation of Christianity*, Lewiston, NY 2009, ch. ix; Walker, *Restoring the kingdom*, 33–41.

²³ Walker, *Restoring the kingdom*, 83–5, 92–101. On ‘shepherding’ practices see S. David Moore, *The Shepherding Movement: controversy and charismatic ecclesiology*, London 2003, 1–2.

²⁴ Scott, ‘Theology’, 14–24; Walker, *Restoring the kingdom*, 53–6; Peter J. Lineham, ‘Tongues must cease: the Brethren and the Charismatic Movement in New Zealand’, *Christian Brethren Review* xxxiv (1984), 7–52 at pp. 22–48.

²⁵ Walker, *Restoring the kingdom*, 101, 84, 158.

²⁶ Sam Jeffery, ‘“A world-wide family on a mission”: the history of the Newfrontiers network in transnational perspective, c. 1980–2011’, unpubl. PhD diss. King’s College, London 2019, 144–6 at p. 144.

²⁷ Kay, *Apostolic networks*, 260–72; Robertson, ‘The distinctive missiology’.

²⁸ Terry Virgo, *No well-worn paths*, Eastbourne 2007, 125–33.

²⁹ Jeffery, ‘“A world-wide family”’, 112. A significant number of ‘adoptions’ came from a Baptist background initially. See Kay, *Apostolic networks*, 69–71.

The movement's accelerating expansion was facilitated by regular conference events and the transnational circulation of media that promoted its Restorationist ideology. *Restoration Magazine* (1975–92), the Newfrontiers magazine (published under various titles between 1980 and 2011), sermon recordings and books like Virgo's seminal monograph, *Restoration in the Church*,³⁰ moved through networks of travelling pastors and international post into the hands of local leaders in Switzerland, South Africa and Kenya, to name just a few. Members of Virgo's apostolic team spoke overseas regularly and their early itineraries included France, Hungary, Spain, India, Nepal, Mexico, the United States and South Africa. The leaders who received them most warmly tended to be those who had already started to think in similar ways, who were frustrated with 'traditional church life', who had Reformed leanings, or who otherwise found attractive the combination of Reformed theology, biblical exegesis and charismatic practice that characterised Newfrontiers. Initial contact often led to attendance at one of the movement's flagship events in the UK – the Downs Bible Weeks (1979–88), Stoneleigh International Bible Weeks (1991–2001) and the Brighton leadership conferences (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002–11) – with the travel costs of those from poorer nations often funded wholly or in part by British churches.³¹

Through multi-directional visits by pastors and attendance at conferences by leaders (and sometimes whole churches), transnational friendships grew and so did the number of churches associated with Newfrontiers.³² Indeed, Newfrontiers and other Restorationist groups placed a premium on informal, intimate and warm friendships within churches and between church leaders. This was another facet of the New Testament pattern of church life that they sought to restore in the face of the 'cold formality' that they perceived in the historic denominations.³³ Indeed, joining Newfrontiers was not a formal process – for this conjured the spectre of denominational institutionalism for Restorationists – but a process of growing friendship and partnership in a shared mission.³⁴ As the historian Dana L. Robert has shown, networks of friendship and the regular face-to-face interactions that facilitate them provide a rich context for multi-directional exchange in World Christianity.³⁵ This was true for Newfrontiers. By 2010 'British' Restorationism was a misnomer for its ideology and belied the formative 'glocalising' processes that had

³⁰ Terry Virgo, *Restoration in the Church*, Eastbourne 1985.

³¹ Jeffery, "A world-wide family", 147–55, 211. The Brighton leadership conferences operated under different names and from 2006 were called the 'Together on a Mission' conferences. The 'Brighton Conference' remained a persistent shorthand, however.

³² Jeffery, "A world-wide family", 198–215.

³³ Virgo, *Restoration in the Church*, 69–73 at p. 70.

³⁴ Nigel Ring, Oral history interview, 16 Nov. 2017, 17–19; Jeffery, "A world-wide family", 209–10.

³⁵ Robert, 'Sacred music and Christian transnationalism'.

occurred between leaders and congregations in the global North and global South who mutually constructed each other as friends, even family.

Patterns of glocalisation: South Africa

That something changed between early articulations of the Restorationist principles of Newfrontiers and later ones is immediately clear through a comparison of their ‘vision and values’ documents. Despite resistance to formal membership processes, pragmatism dictated that an informal statement of beliefs be penned for churches wishing to partner with the network. In May 1993 this took the form of a ‘discussion document’ that listed thirteen characteristics that a church working in partnership with Newfrontiers should have had.³⁶ Another document, published in 2010, modified this to seventeen, of which two additions stood out. Among established commitments to the final authority of the Bible, male eldership in the Church and loving church relationships, the first spoke of the importance of a ‘church which is serving and empowering the poor within its own ranks and beyond’. The second called for a ‘church that wholeheartedly embraces the New Testament teaching of the one new man, demonstrating love and respect between the races, cultures, and sexes’.³⁷ Both reflected encounters between the founding ideology of the movement’s British leaders and the socio-political contexts of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa. The first was influenced by voices from South Africa in the late 1990s and did much to increase the traction of the movement in the global South.³⁸

The second addition, however, went to the heart of the movement’s relational nature. The phrase ‘one new man’ invoked the second chapter of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, which argued that ‘the dividing wall of hostility’ between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by Jesus Christ ‘that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace’.³⁹ By 2010 this had become the proof text for Newfrontiers leaders to argue that bringing reconciliation between races and cultures in a single body—the Church—was central to the restoration of New Testament church life.⁴⁰ The statement also referred to the importance

³⁶ ‘New Frontiers International: a basis’, May 1993, back cover, NFA, box 46, item #HD0076.

³⁷ *Vision & values*, Hove 2010, 2, *ibid.* item #HD0078.

³⁸ Sam Jeffery, ‘Globalisation and “British” neo-charismatic Christianity: the transnational community of the Newfrontiers network of churches, c. 1970–2011’, in David Goodhew and Mark Smith (eds), *Christianity in Britain since 1914*, forthcoming 2023. This point is also made by Robertson, ‘Distinctive missiology’, 85–6.

³⁹ Ephesians ii. 14–15, English Standard Version.

⁴⁰ Craig Botha, a Newfrontiers leader, observed in general terms the process of transmission by which this happened. What follows adds historical depth and relates it to

of mutual respect between the sexes, although this was an uncommon spin on an idea which has not been uncovered in any earlier discussions of the topic.⁴¹

The prior absence of racial reconciliation from the Newfrontiers statement of values spoke to the network's roots in England's southern counties. It was not that this would have been objectionable – Newfrontiers leaders supported reconciliatory efforts in South Africa, as will be shown – but race relations rarely confronted the network's largely white British constituents at close quarters. The United Kingdom had domestic and imperial histories of racism and the racial inequalities of British society were highlighted by a series of riots in inner-city areas like Brixton, Toxteth and Handsworth in the early to mid-1980s.⁴² However, not only were these inner cities removed from the Sussex heartlands of the network, but the outlook of Newfrontiers leaders had echoes of a longer British tradition, encapsulated in media and diplomatic discourse, that constructed Britain as an egalitarian and tolerant nation and located problems of race relations primarily in South Africa or the American South.⁴³ Some Christians and initiatives, like the British Council of Churches' Joint Working Party of black-led and white-led churches in the late 1970s, had begun to challenge this, but during the 1980s racism continued to appear only as a South African problem in the pages of the Newfrontiers magazines.⁴⁴ The only reflexivity in their reflections on South African and British socio-politics regarded not race, but the troubles in Northern Ireland, which were cited as a reminder that the British should not lecture South Africans about getting 'their house in order'.⁴⁵ However, the network's growing connections on the African continent – particularly in apartheid South Africa – would gradually bring the issue of racial reconciliation to the fore.

Relationships between Terry Virgo, his team and South African Christians dated to the summer of 1982 when Derek Crumpton, a South

global processes: 'A biblical spirituality for Evangelical and charismatic churches in 21st century South Africa', unpubl. MTh diss. University of South Africa 2010, 60.

⁴¹ For a fuller treatment of gender in Newfrontiers see Kristin Aune, 'Making men men: masculinity and contemporary Evangelical identity', in Mark Smith (ed.), *British Evangelical identities past and present: aspects of the history and sociology of Evangelicalism in Britain and Ireland*, Milton Keynes 2008, 153–66.

⁴² Elizabeth M. Williams, *The politics of race in Britain and South Africa: black British solidarity and the anti-apartheid struggle*, London 2015, 4.

⁴³ Kennetta Hammond Perry, "'Little Rock' in Britain: Jim Crow's transatlantic topographies', *Journal of British Studies* li (2012), 155–77 at pp. 157–71.

⁴⁴ John Maiden, "'Race", black majority churches, and the rise of ecumenical multiculturalism in the 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History* xxx (2019), 531–56 at pp. 541, 549–56.

⁴⁵ John Hosier, 'South Africans ask: "What do you think of our country?"', *NFM* (Dec. 1989), 8.

African renewalist leader, visited the Downs Bible Week. Virgo found Crumpton to be 'delightful' and the friendship that emerged between them saw Virgo invited by Crumpton to speak at a conference in East London on the principles of Restorationism in September 1983.⁴⁶ On this trip Virgo established another link with what would prove to be the most enduring South African node of the Newfrontiers network: the newly founded Vineyard Fellowship in Wynberg, Cape Town. Its minister, the flamboyant Englishman Graham Ingram, had been a Baptist minister in Lusaka, Zambia, before moving to South Africa where he founded the new, independent charismatic fellowship. A former pastorate of Ingram's in the UK had recently entered Virgo's orbit and, on account of positive feedback from his former congregants, Ingram invited Virgo to preach at the new church after Crumpton's conference.⁴⁷

Virgo's visit did not represent the first transnational flow of Restorationist teaching to reach the new church; the writings of Arthur Wallis, a former member of the Brethren who played a key role in the emergence of British Restorationism, had already reached them.⁴⁸ However, Virgo was the first to establish what David Adams, a young white South African and soon to be elder of the new congregation, described as a 'heart connection' with the church. Virgo's teaching immediately resonated with the Restorationist ideas that were already influencing them and regular subsequent visits saw the friendship strengthen as Virgo and other English pastors spent days with the Vineyard Fellowship at a time. These visits especially showcased what Adams saw as Virgo's 'fatherly' way of caring for people.⁴⁹

These trips also provided a context for direct contact between English leaders and the apartheid system. This was especially the case for a two-week visit to Cape Town by fifty English church members from eighteen churches in 1987, the purpose of which was to support the Vineyard Fellowship in practical acts of service and evangelism in the impoverished black township of Khayelitsha. Interviewed years later, two of this group, who spent their days working in the township, recalled returning to the 'palatial' home of their white hosts from the church to be served dinner by house servants.⁵⁰ As one participant, Gary Welsh, reflected, the juxtaposition of wealth and privilege with poverty, seeing 'Whites Only' signs in public spaces, and witnessing the suffering of black and 'coloured' South Africans, did much to bring the injustice of the system home.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Terry Virgo, 'South Africa', *CN* (Winter 1983), 4, and *No well-worn paths*, 114.

⁴⁷ David Adams, Oral history interview, 3 May 2018, 3–4; Graham Ingram, *Out of the shadows*, Hertford 2008, 18; Virgo, *No well-worn paths*, 115.

⁴⁸ Adams, Oral history interview, 10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 7, 10.

⁵⁰ Gary Welsh, Oral history interview, 27 Apr. 2018, 16–17; Lex Loizides, Oral history interview, 1, 3 May 2018, 9.

⁵¹ Welsh, Oral history interview, 20–1.

However, despite these encounters, senior British leaders refrained from commenting extensively on the politics of apartheid. Their rejection of racism was apparent in their hopes, expressed in the pages of the *Newfrontiers* magazine, for racial reconciliation in South Africa, but stronger denunciation of the apartheid system or engagement in the politics of the transnational anti-apartheid movement were largely absent.⁵² Magazine reports of their visits to South Africa tended simply to refer to the ‘complex’ situation in the country, preferring to detail their growing friendships with Christian leaders and powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit than to discuss politics.⁵³ This undoubtedly reflected, at least in part, a concern to shun any semblance of colonialism and avoid lecturing new-found friends on their internal politics, something that was latent in reminders to British readers that ‘we in the UK know nothing of the tension under which South Africans live’.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, at times there were hints of reticence toward the wider anti-apartheid movement. On the subject of international sanctions, for example, one magazine article by an English leader gave privileged voice to the ‘bitter’ complaints of South African civil servants about their harmful and destabilising effects, with no effort to offer alternative views on the issue.⁵⁵ Combined with occasional language that suggested sympathy with South Africa as ‘world opinion’ sought to ‘impose its political will upon’ and ‘ostracise her’, a reader may have been forgiven for inferring a preference for Thatcherite ‘constructive engagement’ over the more radical politics of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement.⁵⁶

Another reason for the relative silence of British *Newfrontiers* leaders on politics, however, was a powerful preoccupation with restoring the Church and world evangelisation. That there were alternative political trajectories to which the Restorationist ideology could lead was apparent in contemporaneous and stinging condemnation by Bryn Jones, another Restorationist pioneer, of racism, Margaret Thatcher’s support for the South African government and British immigration policy debates.⁵⁷ Yet Jones was something of a pioneer and was notably more confrontational and post-millennial than other strands of British Restorationism.⁵⁸ *Newfrontiers*

⁵² For example, David Holden, ‘Cape Town’, *NFU* (Apr. 1987), 13; Loizides, Oral history interview, 1, 9.

⁵³ David Holden, ‘South Africa’, *CN* (Spring 1985), 8; Terry Virgo, ‘South Africa’, *NFU* (1986), 2.

⁵⁴ Nigel Ring, ‘South Africa’, *NFU* (Apr. 1987), 13. See also Hosier, ‘South Africans ask’, 8.

⁵⁵ John Hosier, ‘South Africa’, *NFU* (Apr. 1987), 15.

⁵⁶ Anon, ‘Action in South Africa’, *NFM* (Feb./Mar. 1988), 8–11 at p. 8; Rob Skinner, *Modern South Africa in world history: beyond imperialism*, London 2017, 131.

⁵⁷ Bryn Jones, ‘Truth about racism’, *Restoration* (Sept.–Oct. 1986), 17–18.

⁵⁸ Robertson, ‘The distinctive missiology’, 208; Scott, ‘Theology’, 40, 52; David Smith, ‘An account of the sustained rise of New Frontiers International within the

leaders contrasted this outlook throughout the 1980s and early 1990s to their primary and overriding concern for the restoration of the Church. This constituted an indirect strategy for social and political change. As Terry Virgo wrote in 1987, God had ‘been restoring His church in order to make her a flexible and powerful vehicle for the extension of the gospel’.⁵⁹ Churches modelled on the New Testament pattern were ‘a world-changing instrument in God’s hand’ and, as they multiplied and reached out evangelistically, the world would be transformed.⁶⁰ In other words, behind the hope of British Newfrontiers leaders that God would ‘build His church and heal ... [the] land’ – whether in the UK or South Africa – was a belief that the former would be causative of the latter, at least in part.⁶¹

This outlook did not preclude some social involvement by Newfrontiers-associated churches in the UK, for the Kingdom of God was believed to mandate compassionate work with the poor and oppressed. However, this did not extend past meeting immediate material needs to confrontation with the structural causes of poverty and oppression. Indeed, the Newfrontiers Magazine carried cautions against too much ‘direct political action’ by churches, criticising the ‘Moral Majority’ in the United States for precisely this and for blacklisting fellow Christians who, following their ‘God-enlightened conscience[s]’, came to different political conclusions.⁶²

In South Africa this meant that British Newfrontiers leaders participated in compassionate evangelistic outreach in South African townships, supported township congregations financially, preached earnestly about the restoration of New Testament Christianity and urged prayer both for revival and for South African churches to be ‘beacons of light ... [walking] wisely without compromising their faith’.⁶³ Their apoliticism was not straightforwardly the withdrawal from the world into individual piety, prosperity theology and spiritual warfare that characterised some Evangelical and charismatic groups in South Africa – not least major congregations like Ray McCauley’s Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg or Hatfield Christian Church in Pretoria.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, British

United Kingdom’, *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* xxiii (2003), 137–56 at p. 142.

⁵⁹ Terry Virgo, ‘All the families of the earth shall be blessed’, *NFU* (Apr. 1987), 3–5 at p. 5.

⁶⁰ Idem, ‘The local church’, *NFM* (Feb. 1990), 3–7 at p. 6.

⁶¹ Hosier, ‘South Africans ask’, 8; Terry Virgo, ‘Build your Church and heal this land’, *NFU* (Dec. 1986), 3–4.

⁶² Terry Virgo, ‘Social concern’, *NFU* (Oct. 1987), 3–5 at pp. 4–5.

⁶³ See, for example, Anon, ‘Action in South Africa’; Anon, ‘Khayelitsha township, Capetown’, *NFU* (June 1987), 10; Nigel Ring, ‘Khayelitsha’, *NFU* (Apr. 1987), 14.

⁶⁴ Glen Thompson, ‘“Transported away”: the spirituality and piety of Charismatic Christianity in South Africa (1976–1994)’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* cxviii (2004), 128–45 at pp. 134–8.

Restorationism, as expressed by Newfrontiers, lacked the ideological basis for direct political confrontation with the social order and echoed a wider tendency to emphasise spiritual and ecclesiastical renewal as the key to political change. Charismatic renewal in South Africa, for example, had coupled the global renewal movement's penchant for denominational reconciliation with racial reconciliation yet, despite lyrical accounts of the reconciliatory work of the Holy Spirit at the avowedly multi-racial South African Renewal Conference in 1977, it typified the focus on spiritual renewal in the hope that this would 'effect ripples of change' in South African society.⁶⁵ Pentecostal leaders like Assemblies of God minister Nicholas Bhengu also tended to favour, even embrace, racial reconciliation, while focusing on 'spiritual problems' and shunning politics in the belief that this would ultimately lead to social and political liberation.⁶⁶

However, the growing relationship between the Vineyard Fellowship and Newfrontiers coincided with a move away from this type of apoliticism at the Vineyard which had far-reaching implications for the glocalisation of British Restorationism. At the church, there was occasional frustration at the conservative stance of British leaders on the socio-political implications of the Gospel.⁶⁷ The friendship with Newfrontiers was valued for the care that was shown to the church, the relief it offered from the international isolation that some South African Christians felt and the teaching and financial support that flowed through it.⁶⁸ Still, Graham Ingram had arrived to minister in South Africa anticipating that he would need to 'challenge the [apartheid] system'.⁶⁹ His new church, which had a largely white and middle-class constituency, drew together young South Africans who were increasingly determined to confront the *status quo* and, as they put it, 'be part of God's solution' in the country.⁷⁰ In some instances, Ingram played a key role in sensitising their consciences to the injustice of apartheid.⁷¹ Also, as with some other neo-charismatic churches which came to take a more radical line on political involvement, the church

⁶⁵ Dot Mitchell, *He said 'yes': the story of Derek Crumpton*, Weltevreden Park 2018, 164–71; Thompson, "Transported away", 130–4 at p. 134. For the Renewal Movement's penchant for reconciliation see Ho Yan Au, 'Grassroots unity and the Fountain Trust international conferences: a study of ecumenism in the Charismatic Renewal', unpubl. PhD diss. Birmingham 2008.

⁶⁶ Allan H. Anderson and Gerald J. Pillay, 'The segregated spirit: the Pentecostals', in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (eds), *Christianity in South Africa: a political, social and cultural history*, Oxford 1997, 227–41 at p. 239; Thompson, "Transported away", 135.

⁶⁷ Craig Botha, Oral history interview, 7 May 2018, 5–6, and 'A biblical spirituality', 59.

⁶⁸ Adams, Oral history interview, 10–12; Botha, 'A biblical spirituality', 22.

⁶⁹ Ingram, *Out of the shadows*, 21.

⁷⁰ Adams, Oral history interview, 4–6 at p. 5.

⁷¹ Botha, Oral history interview, 2.

drew significant numbers of students from the nearby University of Cape Town who, black or white, often inclined towards greater political radicalism.⁷² Siviwe Minyi, a young and politically aware black student at the University of Cape Town who joined the church in the later 1980s, was just one example.⁷³

As protests and violence, beginning in the Vaal Triangle near Johannesburg, led P. W. Botha to declare a state of emergency in July 1985, a new sense of urgency propelled this young church, as well as other churches influenced by Restorationism, toward action.⁷⁴ There was no developed theology of political action but these Evangelically-inclined leaders naturally turned to the pages of the Bible to (re)interrogate the political implications of the Gospels and the limits of the obedience to government described in Romans xiii.⁷⁵ The writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his role in the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany, which had been an inspiration to the anti-apartheid activist and former Dutch Reformed Church minister Beyers Naudé, were also influential in their reflections.⁷⁶ While remaining true to their Evangelical convictions, they sought to learn from activists in the South African Council of Churches and at least one elder was influenced by liberation theology while studying for a theology degree at the University of South Africa. Publications by Allan Boesak, the influential activist, minister and later moderator of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, also had an influence and Boesak reportedly met with Terry Virgo and elders from the Vineyard Fellowship in 1987.⁷⁷

Action did not flow neatly from theological reflection but, as these disparate influences converged, occurred in tandem. Although there was no clear-cut strategy, evangelistic outreach started into the townships of Cape Town, particularly Khayelitsha, and a regular Sunday meeting commenced there in September 1986. The church also appointed its first black pastors to oversee congregations in Khayelitsha and Langa – Fanie and John Mthwana.⁷⁸ Gradually, action moved beyond compassionate,

⁷² Thompson, “Transported away”, 144; Skinner, *Modern South Africa*, 124. For a representative reference to student attendance at the church see Hosier, ‘South Africans ask’, 8.

⁷³ Siviwe Minyi, Oral history interview, 10 May 2018, 5–6.

⁷⁴ For example, the New Covenant Ministries International network, founded by Dudley Daniels: Thompson, “Transported away”, 138.

⁷⁵ Botha, Oral history interview, 15, 18. Romans xiii was commonly used to defend submission to the *status quo* by South African Evangelicals and in Christian history more generally. See Thompson, “Transported away”, 136, and T. L. Carter, ‘The irony of Romans 13’, *Novum Testamentum* xlvii (2004), 209–28 at pp. 209–10.

⁷⁶ Botha, Oral history interview, 18; Stanley, *Christianity in the twentieth century*, 250.

⁷⁷ Botha, Oral history interview, 18, 4, 6; Loizides, Oral history interview 1, 9.

⁷⁸ Botha, Oral history interview, 3; Anon, ‘Church growth: principles in practice’, *NFU* (Dec. 1986), 10–11 at p. 10; Graham Ingram, ‘Putting the Great Commission into practice in South Africa’, *NFU* (Feb. 1987), 10; Anon, ‘Growth at Khayelitsha’, *NFU* (Aug. 1987), 11; Minyi, Oral history interview, 11–12.

multi-racial evangelism; the church participated in political marches, publicised its anti-apartheid stance in South African newspaper adverts, participated in sit-ins over housing conditions in Gugulethu township and confronted the police force over concerns about police brutality.⁷⁹ They even engaged with the controversial issue of financial restitution, paralleling a wider debate about reparation payments for church complicity in racism that had intersected directly with the transnational anti-apartheid movement at the World Council of Churches' consultation on racism in Notting Hill, London, in 1969.⁸⁰ Embracing the idea of restitution, the Vineyard Fellowship took a 'restitution offering' which was used to build a church in Khayelitsha. Some who had purchased their homes using a government subsidy for first-time white South African buyers investigated whether they had made any profit under the scheme and gave this away in a similar fashion.⁸¹ By the early 1990s the leadership was encouraging its white members to attend the township congregations to establish a truly multi-racial church, with some white members coming under black leadership.⁸²

Crucially for the glocalisation of British Restorationism, the Restorationist ideas that had been transmitted to the Vineyard Fellowship began to be adapted in ways that placed far greater emphasis on racial reconciliation in this environment. During the 1980s and early 1990s church members recalled that New Testament passages including Ephesians ii were common proof texts in theological arguments for racial reconciliation at the Vineyard and like-minded South African congregations. Indeed, Siviwe Minyi recalls that the Vineyard was where his pre-existing political commitment to reconciliation was first given a theological underpinning through teaching on such texts.⁸³ A key development in the process of adaption was the arrival of Simon Pettit, an English leader from the Sussex heartlands of the network, to take over the leadership of the Vineyard Fellowship from Graham Ingram in August 1990. Despite their warm relationship with Newfrontiers, the Vineyard elders had been considering whether a close relationship with a movement based in the UK – South Africa's former colonial ruler – was appropriate in the political circumstances and the invitation to Pettit did not go undebated. However, these considerations were overridden by a prophetic word and a time of prayer that left them convinced that Pettit was the right man.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Botha, Oral history interview, 3–4; Simon Pettit, 'The message of reconciliation', *FI* (May/June 1993), 20–1; untitled news section, *FI* (May/Jun. 1993), 16; Botha, 'A biblical spirituality', 22–3.

⁸⁰ See Stanley, *Christianity in the twentieth century*, 243–5.

⁸¹ Botha, Oral history interview, 5.

⁸² Simon Pettit, 'Crying out for the nation', *NFM* no. 6 (1991), 8.

⁸³ Minyi, Oral history interview, 12–14. See also Botha, Oral history interview, 3, 18.

⁸⁴ Lindsey Pettit, Oral history interview, 15 Feb. 2018, 4–6; Adams, Oral history interview, 14–15, 20, 23; Botha, Oral history interview, 8.

Simon Pettit had a deep interest in the marrying of politics and theology, having studied both as an undergraduate, and embraced the existing efforts of the church which soon changed its name to Jubilee Community Church.⁸⁵ He was also deeply committed to the Restorationist values of Newfrontiers and, by 1993, began to publish articles in the Newfrontiers magazine that argued from Ephesians ii that ‘colour and culture are irrelevant to our fellowship and partnership in the gospel’. This principle, he contended, was a ‘key element in the restoration of the Church’.⁸⁶ As his wife, Lindsey, argued, racial reconciliation and the building of multi-racial congregations was ‘a distinctive of the New Testament church’.⁸⁷ British Restorationism may have arrived in South Africa lacking an explicit commitment to racial reconciliation, but it was ‘refracted’ by the opposition of local Christians to apartheid and their desire for interracial healing.

This refracted wave of Restorationist teaching travelled onward, but it did not find a quick reception in the English counties where it originated. Pettit was a rising star in the movement and transmitted it not only through the Newfrontiers magazine, which had an international circulation of over twenty countries by the late 1980s, but also through overseas preaching trips.⁸⁸ In this, he was a ‘bridging figure’ between South Africa and other contexts.⁸⁹ However, his seminar at the 1996 Brighton Conference on ‘cross-cultural mission’, during which he argued that reaching across ethnic and racial divides was a major theme of the New Testament and should be central to the purposes of the Church, was clearly not as well-attended as he would have liked. Pettit described the topic as a ‘Cinderella subject’ in Newfrontiers and joked that the English home towns of most of the network’s senior leaders tended to be overwhelmingly white and middle-class with little opportunity for the practical outworking of such ideas.⁹⁰ Parallel seminars on topics like ‘cell church’, ‘building a team’ and the ever-exotic theme of ‘spiritual warfare’ were more popular.⁹¹ This speaks to a ‘resonance factor’ in processes of glocalisation that has been identified in the changing practices of other world religions.⁹² The reception of this new aspect of Restorationist teaching

⁸⁵ Pettit, Oral history interview, 14, 16; ‘History’, Jubilee Community Church – Cape Town, South Africa, <<http://jubilee.org.za/about-us/history/>>, accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

⁸⁶ Pettit, ‘The message of reconciliation’, 20–1 at p. 20.

⁸⁷ L. Pettit, Oral history interview, 15.

⁸⁸ Virgo, *No well-worn paths*, 154. See *NFM* (Aug./Sept. 1988), 6.

⁸⁹ Robert, ‘Sacred music and Christian transnationalism’, 226–7.

⁹⁰ Simon Pettit, ‘Cross-cultural mission’, audio recording from the Brighton Conference 1996, 00:00:26–00:00:50, 00:09:06–00:09:22, NFA, DI #2908.

⁹¹ *Brighton International Leaders Conference 96 handbook*, 3, NFA, box 46, item #HD0024.

⁹² Ugo Dessi, ‘Japanese Buddhism, relativization, and glocalization’, in Roudometof, *Glocal religions*, 24–37 at p. 29.

from South Africa, or any global flow, depended on the extent to which it could find relevance in a given local context.

Outside the southern counties, however, these ideas did start to find traction. Newfrontiers was now expanding in the United Kingdom more widely and cities like London, where thirteen new churches were planted or adopted between 1990 and 2000, offered a new and more racially diverse theatre of operation.⁹³ Indeed, the audio cassette of Pettit's seminar was retained in the Newfrontiers Archive partly because it had been kept by the leaders of King's Church London, and donated to the collection. Pettit's teaching on being 'one new man in Christ' was also cited by the leader of the same church, Steve Tibbert, as part of the theological basis of their effort to reach across racial lines in their diverse south London surroundings. Pettit preached there at least once in the early 2000s and its leaders visited Jubilee Community Church. Gradually, the church transformed from a white English congregation of 150 attendees in 1995 to a congregation that had no majority ethnic or racial group in 2016 and, at 1,400 attendees, was one of the largest Newfrontiers churches in the United Kingdom.⁹⁴

Patterns of glocalisation: Ghana

The modified Restorationism of the South African nodes of the network also began to move through south-south connections to influence other African leaders. The most notable example comes from Accra, Ghana. City of God Church in Accra had been planted by Dr John Kpikpi, a young Ghanaian academic and his English wife, Alexandra, in 1992 and gradually entered the Newfrontiers orbit. Kpikpi's connection with the movement originated in 1986 when he had studied for a PhD in Brighton and became a member of Terry Virgo's home church in the town. Here, he imbibed the Restorationist values of the movement and returned to work them out in a Ghanaian context. When Simon Pettit took on oversight of the growing number of Newfrontiers churches in sub-Saharan Africa from his South African base in the 1990s, he soon drew Kpikpi into closer relationship with the movement.⁹⁵ Kpikpi recalls

⁹³ Sam Jeffery and William Kay, 'London's new churches: the example of the Newfrontiers network', in David Goodhew and Anthony-Paul Cooper (eds), *The desecularisation of the city: London's churches, 1980 to the present*, Abingdon 2019, 241–61.

⁹⁴ Personal knowledge; Steve Tibbert and Val Taylor, *Good to grow: building a missional church in the 21st century – one church's story*, Milton Keynes 2011, 118–22, 252, 256.

⁹⁵ John Kpikpi, Oral history interview, 18 May 2018, 5–12, 14–19. For Pettit's growing responsibility in Africa see references in 'Minutes, 1990–1999', ring binder, 'Apostolic Team, 5/10/93', fo. 5, NFA, box 55 and 'International NRG Group, 23rd/24th April 1998', particularly fo. 3.

the ‘chemistry’ he had with Pettit and a warm relationship formed that saw Pettit visiting Kpikpi’s church and Kpikpi being invited to preach at conferences organised in Cape Town.⁹⁶ By the early 2000s, and following a prophetic word at the Stoneleigh Bible Week, Kpikpi had taken on oversight of the growing number of Newfrontiers churches in West Africa.⁹⁷

Kpikpi’s early life and ministry had been characterised by a growing awareness of Ghana’s inter-tribal tensions. His own prejudices were gradually challenged as a young man by a series of friendships with members of other tribal and racial groups, none more influential than that formed with Alexandra, the Englishwoman he would meet and marry during his studies in Brighton. The cross-cultural experience of attending Virgo’s church along with the emphasis it placed on the grace of God and the acceptance of sinners through Christ were also formative. These influences converged in Kpikpi’s increasingly hostile attitude to the tribal divisions of African society upon his return to Ghana which coincided with the climax of a period of recurrent ethnic violence in the country’s Northern Region.⁹⁸ In this context, Kpikpi began to reflect that the tensions between the Ewes and the Twis or the Nanumbas and the Konkombas were as serious as the racial tensions he had become aware of in British society. He began to teach that the Church was ‘God’s New Tribe’, hosting a conference in Accra on this theme in 2001 and publishing a book with the same title in 2003.⁹⁹ Lamenting tribal division as a source of instability and a hindrance to economic development in Africa, Kpikpi was preaching a message of reconciliation that was manifested in a single community – the Church – in parallel to Pettit.¹⁰⁰

If Kpikpi’s message was not instigated by transnational influences from the South African nodes of the network, emerging as it did from his own experiences and context, it was nevertheless shaped by them. David Adams, one of the founding elders of the Vineyard Fellowship, was among those who read and advised Kpikpi on the draft manuscript of *God’s new tribe*.¹⁰¹ Pettit himself was present at the conference in Accra on this theme in 2001 and wrote a foreword to the book warmly endorsing the ideas therein.¹⁰² Kpikpi explicitly cited Jubilee Community Church as an exemplar of a church ‘seeking to become a non-racial, multi-cultural church’ and as the ‘New Tribe of God in Cape Town’.¹⁰³ Indeed, Kpikpi

⁹⁶ Kpikpi, Oral history interview, 17–19 at p. 18.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 33–4; ‘One to one: God’s new tribe’, *NM* ii (Sept.–Nov. 2004), 43–7.

⁹⁸ John Kpikpi, *God’s new tribe*, Accra 2003, 11–20; Julia Jönsson, ‘The overwhelming minority: inter-ethnic conflict in Ghana’s Northern Region’, *Journal of International Development* xxi (2009), 507–19 at pp. 507–8.

⁹⁹ Kpikpi, *God’s new tribe*, 18–20, 3. For a detailed study of Kpikpi’s ministry see Imogen Daynes, ‘“God’s new tribe”: education, media, and transnationalism in City of God Church, Accra, Ghana, 1992–2014’, unpubl. MPhil diss. Cambridge 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Kpikpi, *God’s new tribe*, 7, 12. ¹⁰¹ Ibid. 2. ¹⁰² Ibid. 3–4. ¹⁰³ Ibid. 66.

reflected that his experience of belonging to the Newfrontiers network had shaped his evolving theology of racial reconciliation and his understanding of what it meant to be one new man in Christ: ‘As we have interacted with Americans, Australians, British people, Dutch people, French people, Germans, Kenyans, Indians, Mexicans, Nigerians, Romanians, Russians, Sierra Leoneans, South Africans, Swiss people, Togolese people, and Zimbabweans we have grown in our knowledge and experience of what it means to be part of God’s called out ones who are being formed into one people.’¹⁰⁴

Kpikpi’s emphasis on ‘God’s new tribe’ was a clear adaption of the ‘one new man’ trope and represented a further refraction of Restorationist teaching in a West African context. While drawing on New Testament passages such as Ephesians ii, Kpikpi also located a wider narrative of integration and unity in the Christian Scriptures. Kpikpi began his argument by observing that, in the book of Genesis, God called Abram to leave his country, his people and his father’s household or – in Kpikpi’s retelling of the story – his ‘tribe’, to become the seed of a new tribe.¹⁰⁵ He went on to develop his argument using the story of Ruth, the Moabite woman who remained committed to her Jewish mother-in-law in the face of great hardship and thus took her place not only in the scriptural salvation narrative but, in Kpikpi’s view, presaged the coming together of different peoples and tribes as a single community in Christ and his representative on earth, the Church.¹⁰⁶ As such the ‘gospel makes it unacceptable to build different churches for different races’ in racially diverse places, he argued, moving beyond the Ghanaian context to cite the example of mono-ethnic and mono-racial congregations in Europe and the USA.¹⁰⁷ In this, Kpikpi echoed a longer history of concern about the ‘ghettoisation’ of Christians in European cities but, rather than calling for co-operation between ‘black-led’ and ‘white-led’ congregations, advocated for the total integration of Christians as a biblical mandate.¹⁰⁸

Again, this adapted flow of teaching began to travel onward from Ghana. It was transmitted back to the United Kingdom, not only in Kpikpi’s book and in magazine articles by Ghanaian leaders, but also in Kpikpi’s keynote session at the Brighton International Leadership Conference in 2003.¹⁰⁹ Kpikpi used the opportunity to challenge the predominantly white gathering of leaders in the following terms: ‘You need to plant churches which reflect the structure of your population. I mean, when I look round here there aren’t enough black people in your congregations ... Why should

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 25–32.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 45–68.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 67.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Maiden, “‘Race’”, 541–54.

¹⁰⁹ See ‘Recommended resources’, *NM* ii (Jan.–Mar. 2006), 24–5, and Fifi Zagloul, Kudzo Seneadza and Adriana Darkwa, ‘God’s new tribe: City Power Camp 2001, Ghana’, *NFM* (May–July 2002), 30.

it be like that? ... What God is calling us [to do] is to build churches that reflect the multi-coloured wisdom of God in the whole nations.’¹¹⁰

This emphasis from leaders in the global South on racial and tribal reconciliation began to resonate more widely in the Newfrontiers network from the early 2000s onward. As Kpikpi’s challenge hinted, churches associated with the network were increasingly working in racially and ethnically diverse contexts like London.¹¹¹ The network was also now growing much more rapidly outside the United Kingdom. Between 1996 and 2000 the number of churches outside the UK had doubled while growth within the UK had been around 12 per cent. In the mid-2000s and possibly earlier, the network passed the milestone where its non-British nodes outnumbered those within Britain.¹¹² Correspondingly, there was a marked increase in concern with ‘cross-cultural ministry’ and this was reflected in the rising number of Newfrontiers magazine articles and training courses addressing the issue.¹¹³

In this context, the movement’s senior English leaders began to embrace teaching on racial reconciliation far more explicitly. In a discussion of church planting in 2003, for example, Terry Virgo echoed the theme of Kpikpi’s book. Stressing that church planting was about establishing ‘God’s community in the earth’, he explored the nature of this community first with reference to the story of Abraham through whom ‘God established a new tribe’. Continuing the resonance, he wrote that through Christ, ‘all nations were invited to join this international tribe, God’s alternative society, a people with a different citizenship’, or his ‘new community on the earth’.¹¹⁴ More widely, ‘one new man in Christ’ became part of the Newfrontiers lexicon and continued to be transmitted through the network; discussions of multi-cultural worship by South African leaders invoked the concept and church planters working in Vancouver, Canada, made reference to it as part of their vision.¹¹⁵

By 2010 the inclusion of the ‘New Testament teaching of the one new man’ in the statement of the seventeen values of Newfrontiers represented the widespread take-up of this emphasis not just in Britain but across the network. Each value was explained by a short accompanying article

¹¹⁰ ‘God TV New Frontiers Leadership Conference programme 7’, video from Leadership International 2003, 00:38:00–00:38:49, NFA, DI #0978.

¹¹¹ Jeffery and Kay, ‘London’s new churches’.

¹¹² Jeffery, ‘“A world-wide family”’, 118, 126–9.

¹¹³ This can be seen from a keyword search of the digitised Newfrontiers magazines and an accompanying review of training advertisements in the NFA.

¹¹⁴ Terry Virgo, ‘Firstline’, *NM* ii (Feb.–May 2003), 3–5 at p. 3. See also his ‘One new man’, *NM* ii (Sept.–Dec. 2005), 5–9.

¹¹⁵ Evan Rogers, ‘Culture shock’, *NM* ii (Jan.–Mar. 2006), 16–17; ‘Prayer meeting’ video from the Together on a Mission conference 2011, 00:15:02–00:15:08, NFA, DI #2167.

included with the statement and Kpikpi authored the piece on this subject.¹¹⁶ Notably absent was a contribution from Simon Pettit, who had died suddenly in January 2005. In an illustration of how fundamental this commitment had become, another article about the importance of loving, intimate relationships within churches – another foundational Restorationist value – also made substantial reference to Ephesians ii as a foundation for the ‘gospel distinctive’ of churches that are loving, multi-ethnic and multi-racial communities. That it was written by Indrajeet Pawar, an Indian leader, reflected further both the onward spread of this idea and the growing role of indigenous leaders in the originally British movement.¹¹⁷ Investigations of its continued refraction in new local contexts, not least in the myriad and uniquely challenging locales of the Indian subcontinent, await further study.

In conclusion it would be easy to be too sanguine about the progress of racial reconciliation and inclusion in a church network like Newfrontiers. This article has shown that, as Newfrontiers expanded, its founding Restorationist ideology was widened as it was transmitted to the global South and, from there, onward, back to the UK, and on again. This process of multi-directional exchange was not a straightforward one. It was polycentric, involved south-south as well as north-south connections and, initially, was constrained by the lack of resonance refracted waves of Restorationist teaching found in the movement’s homeland. Through it, the building of multi-racial and multi-ethnic congregations became a central component of Newfrontiers’ ideology, but it is not this article’s intention to suggest that all, or any, Newfrontiers churches have successfully worked out the practical implications of the ‘one new man’ discourse. At least in the UK, writings by black church leaders show the ongoing challenges of this, both in Newfrontiers and beyond.¹¹⁸ These cannot be ignored and ongoing scholarship is exploring the practical implementation of this discourse in local churches.¹¹⁹

What this article does claim is that this process of transmission and adaptation between localities demonstrates the shaping and re-shaping of Christian beliefs and practices in a globalising world. As Andrew Walls

¹¹⁶ John Kpikpi, ‘One new man’, *Vision & values*, 49–52, NFA, box 46, item #HD0078.

¹¹⁷ Indrajeet Pawar, ‘Loving, caring, sharing communities’, *ibid.* 20–2.

¹¹⁸ Owen Hylton, *Crossing the divide: a call to embrace diversity*, Nottingham 2009; Ben Lindsay, *We need to talk about race: understanding the black experience in white majority churches*, London 2019.

¹¹⁹ For one critical study of Jubilee Community Church see Gladys Ganiel, ‘Race, religion and identity in South Africa: a case study of a Charismatic congregation’, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* xii (2006), 555–76. See also a forthcoming Durham DThM dissertation by Richard Lodge on multi-ethnic churches.

wrote of the southward shift of Christianity's heartlands, 'Christian mission in and from Africa is likely to widen the theological agenda ... [and] the consequent benefit could be of more than African significance.'¹²⁰ This, in microcosm, is visible in the refraction of the Restorationist ideology of Newfrontiers – that is, it was subject to multiple processes of glocalisation – through a series of local African contexts. By 2010 the British Restorationism of Newfrontiers, insofar as it was ever uniquely 'British', was a much broader set of ideas shaped by a wider chorus of voices. As neo-charismatic networks continue to grow rapidly in the early twenty-first century and navigate a world riven with enduring injustices and inequalities, much scope remains for scholarly exploration of multi-directional exchanges, the 'Ephesian moments' they underpin and the transformations that they may reap in World Christianity.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Walls, 'Afterword', 203.

¹²¹ Cf. Brad Christerson and Richard Flory, *The rise of network Christianity: how independent leaders are changing the religious landscape*, Oxford 2017.