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**The Origin and Development of the Native Baptists
in Jamaica and the Influence of their Biblical
Hermeneutic on the 1865 Native Baptist War**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Caribbean Studies

University of Warwick, Department of Caribbean Studies

March 2008

Abstract

This study investigates the Native Baptists and the dynamics between their Biblical hermeneutic and the 1865 Native Baptist War. This work outlines, for the first time, the origin, structure and development of the Native Baptists. This study also discerns the main themes of the Native Baptists as equality and justice and their Biblical hermeneutic as a hermeneutic of liberation. The main thesis is that the Native Baptists' interpretation of Scriptures and Scripture -related sources influenced the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War.

To achieve the goals of this study, this writer relied heavily on archival and contemporary documents. One of the major features of this study is that, for the first time, it provides an in-depth analysis of a major original source, which the first Native Baptists wrote about themselves. Another unique feature is the meticulous analysis of Paul Bogle's marked hymns, letter and speech and George William Gordon's speeches in the House of Assembly.

In order to examine and outline the origin, structure and development of the Native Baptists, this writer was informed by the social history of religion approach. And to reflect on their themes and Biblical hermeneutic this writer attributed the use of the Reader -Response approach to the Native Baptists.

Using these approaches, this writer discovered, contrary to the dominant position in scholarly writings on Native Baptists, that the Native Baptists were orthodox, well organized, engaged in marches for justice and desired the liberation of the oppressed and the oppressors. This work gives a more accurate picture of who the Native Baptists were and how their interpretation of the Bible and sacred literature contributed to the way things happened in the 1865 Native Baptist War.

A further study of the Native Baptists needs to determine if there is a co-relationship between the demise of the Native Baptists' institutional structures and the seeming retreat of present-day Baptists from political activism.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND DECLARATION

Thanks to Reverend Cawley Bolt, a colleague in ministry, for drawing to my attention The First Annual Report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society. This document was a mine of information, largely unexamined. I also express thanks to Dr. Clinton Hutton of the University of the West Indies (UWI) who made me aware of the rarely reported speeches of George William Gordon made in the Jamaican House of Assembly.

I express gratitude to the following who assisted this work in various ways:

My god-daughter Alicia Gayle and Andre Pusie of the National Works Agency for helping in the redesigning of the maps; Vivian Crawford, Executive Director of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ), for giving access to rare books; Sue Mills of Regent's Park College, Oxford for doing much photocopying; Rev. Gillian Wilson of United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) library who went beyond the call of duty, including bringing to my attention books that proved relevant; Fr. Gerard McLaughlin, archivist of the Jamaican Roman Catholic Archives, for facilitating access to rare documents; the helpful librarians at Spurgeon's College, London; University of the West Indies, Mona; National Library of Jamaica; Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cambridge University, Cambridge; British Library, London; Drew University, New Jersey, USA; United Theological College of the West Indies and Jamaica Archives; Omar Downie and Gerard Mercier who responded to the frequent technological problems; the members of Boulevard Baptist Church and pastors of the Jamaica Baptist Union who loaned

me books. Also to the membership of the Boulevard Baptist Church for granting me a historic three - year study leave; the IOJ for a grant and Air Jamaica for assisting with travel; Millicent and Ransford Maxwell of Birmingham, for being gracious hosts during my studies in the UK; the many friends for their contribution in cash or kind; Stanley Clarke, Barry Chevannes and Clinton Hutton for allowing me to copy sections of their dissertations; Professor Susan Bassnett whose PhD Seminars were cordial, helpful and refreshing and Rev. Dr. Cawley Bolt, Hyacinth Brown, William Hall, Janice Beckford, Wyvolyn Gager, professors Barry Chevannes, Brian Meeks and Verene Shepherd, who read sections of the draft dissertation. In addition, profound gratitude must be extended to my supervisor Dr. John Gilmore for his meticulous editing, his mantra “read everything”, and his insistence that I consult original documents and finally to my main touchstone for insights Rev. Dr. Burchell Taylor.

Mary went beyond the call of a wife and read extracts from this study and together with our children Deon, Duvaughn and Dana-Marie provided inspiration and support to complete this dissertation.

Declaration

This writer declares that this thesis is the candidate’s own work. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

ABBREVIATIONS

BMS - Baptist Missionary Society

CMS – Church Missionary Society

CO - Colonial Office

IOJ – Institute of Jamaica

JBU - Jamaica Baptist Union

JNBMS - Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society

JIS - Jamaica Information Service

KJV - King James Version

LMS – London Missionary Society

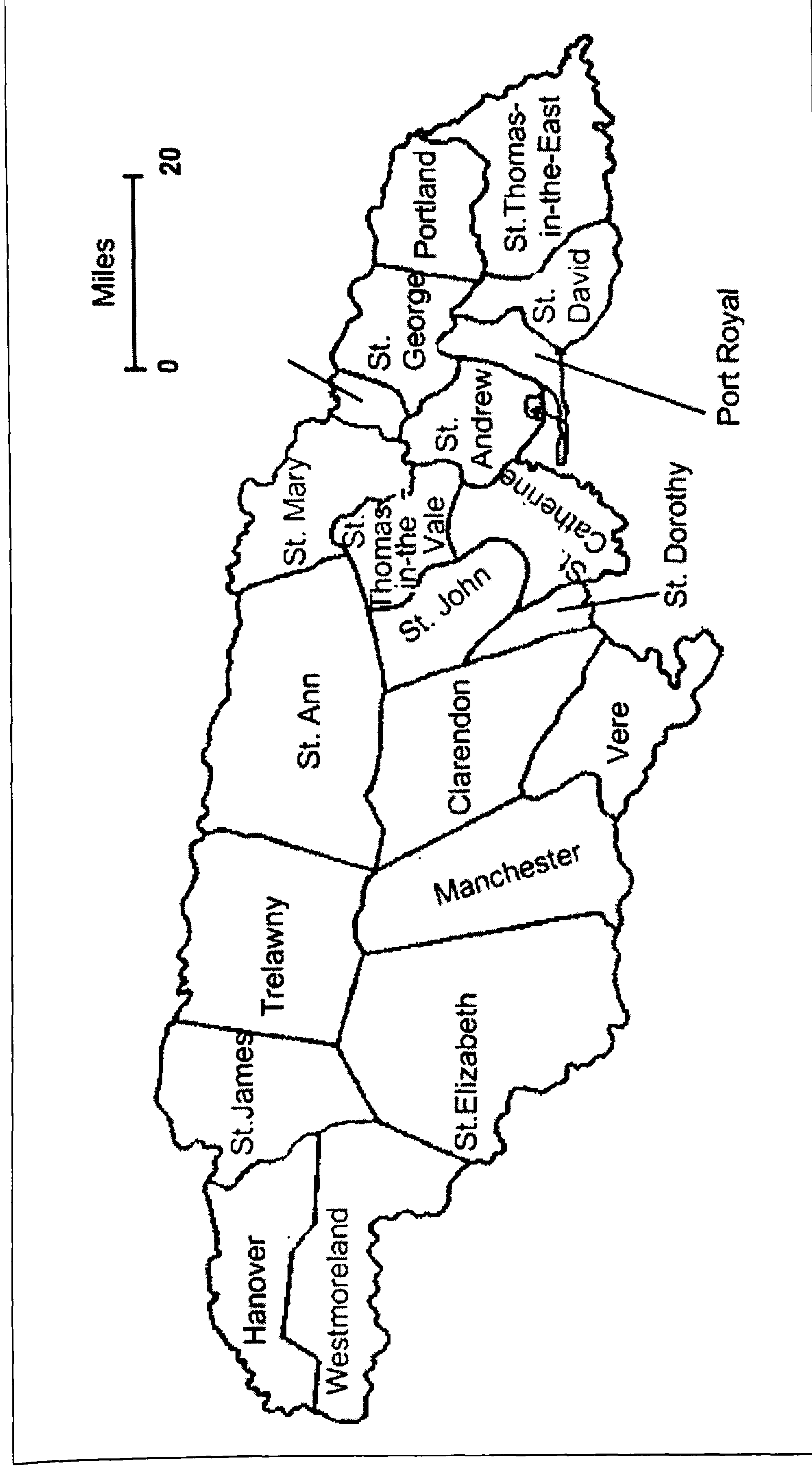
JRC - Jamaica Royal Commission

MR – Micro Reel

UTCWI - United Theological College of the West Indies

UWI - University of the West Indies

Map 1: Island of Jamaica as depicted in 1865



Source: Barry Higman, The Jamaican Censuses 1844 and 1861

INTRODUCTION

A) Rationale for the Study

In 1983, the bicentennial of Baptist witness in Jamaica was celebrated. Appropriately, a celebration was hosted in the environs of the Morant Bay Court-house, in front of which, a statue, representative of the esteemed Native Baptist leader and National Hero of Jamaica, Paul Bogle, stands. On that occasion, the recounting of the work of Baptists in the struggle for full freedom in the aftermath of the formal ending of slavery in 1834, aroused this writer's interest and propelled a dedication to the research of that period within Jamaica's colonial history. This journey climaxes with this foray into examining the Native Baptists' identity, ideology and the influence of their Biblical hermeneutic on the post-emancipation resistance in the mid nineteenth century.

Unfortunately, there has been no extensive study of the Native Baptists and part of the reason for that was a colonial bias against West Indian historiography. Eric Williams, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and historian, showed that British attitudes toward West Indian history were prejudiced and British writers made many false assumptions.¹ Elsa Goveia, pioneering West Indian historian, in reviewing this work claimed that Williams paradoxically was guilty of the same bias by giving the impression that historians who write about

¹Eric Williams, British Historians and the West Indies (London: Deutsch, 1966) 12- 29.

the West Indies only were less interesting and worthwhile subjects of study than those who wrote about the United Kingdom and the British Empire. ² And Edward Kamau Brathwaite, cultural critic, made the charge that even when the history was written by Caribbean historians it lacked serious and consistent analysis of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because they were schooled by the colonizers to research and write in a prejudicial manner against that period. ³ Additionally, historian Swithin Wilmot highlighted the “failure in the historiography of post-slavery Jamaica to include Black Jamaicans’ role in fashioning the politics of the island . . .” ⁴ Marxist ideology perceived religion as a problem and saw the solution as abolishing religion or at best relegating it to a private matter with no relevance for community life. ⁵ Some West Indian scholars appeared to be influenced by Marxist thought. For example, Douglas Hall, influential historian, claimed that religion helped to determine the person’s status in society rather than affecting one’s attitude and response toward the status quo of the society. ⁶ Therefore, religion in general and Native Baptists in

² Elsa Goveia, “New Shibboleths for Old,” Rev. of British Historians and the West Indies, by Eric Williams. New Beacon Reviews 1968: 33. For the seminal work in West Indian historiography see Goveia’s book: Elsa Goveia, A Study on the Historiography of the British West Indies to the end of the 19th Century (New Haven: Yale UP, 1955).

³ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Nanny, Sam Sharpe and the Struggle for People’s Liberation (Kingston: API, 1977) 4.

⁴ Swithin Wilmot, “The Politics of Samuel Clarke: Black Creole Politician in Free Jamaica, 1851-1865” Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle; Oxford, Currey, 2002) 227.

⁵ Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Marx-Engels Reader (2nd ed. New York, London: Norton, 1978) 28, 35.

⁶ Douglas Hall, Free Jamaica 1838-1865: An Economic History (3rd ed. London: Caribbean UP, 1976) 255.

particular have suffered from the general bias against West Indian history and a peculiar suppression of religion from the affairs of the State.

Native Baptists also suffered from other disadvantages. They were seen as a fringe, disorganized movement and not as one of the recognized church groups and therefore were not deserving of scholarly analysis. Phillippo described the great majority of those involved in the 1865 protest as “connected with no religious society.”⁷ He was implying that the Native Baptists were not a religious society. Hall disapproved of the group to which Paul Bogle belonged because it consisted of “break-away” pastors who were “scarcely possessed of other qualifications either to teach or preach.”⁸ Hall’s caustic comments were that Paul Bogle was a “dangerous man”, whose “emotional outbursts should be ignored.”⁹ A Baptist missionary source depicted Bogle and his leaders as “misguided men” who acted in an “evil hour.”¹⁰ In addition, reported research on Native Baptists tended to ignore what they wrote.

Furthermore, until now, no single study focused on the Native Baptists and what existed on them was at best fragmentary. This is due to the belief by some scholars that there was insufficient material about the Native Baptists to

⁷ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 340.

⁸ Hall, Free Jamaica 261.

⁹ Hall, Free Jamaica 250-53.

¹⁰ Baptist Missionary Society, Christian Missions in the East and West: In Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1873 (2nd ed. London, 1873) 56-57.

undertake an extensive study on them. Anthropologist Alston “Barry” Chevannes said, “There are no systematic accounts of the ritual of the Native Baptists . . .”¹¹ Robert Stewart, historian and former Jesuit missionary, broadened the claim and said, “Native religious groups or movements that were not a part of any missionary or European church network did not leave written evidence of their thinking or attitudes.”¹² And noted historian Shirley Gordon’s position was similar saying, “Native Jamaican Christian groups” independent of the European missions, such as Native Baptists and Independent Methodists, left “no written records.”¹³ While not disclaiming the existence of records on the Native Baptists, Gordon Catherall, prolific writer on Jamaican Baptist history, thought it would have been a Herculean task to pursue a study on that group of persons, and said that, “A study of the Native Baptist Movement up until the present day is almost impossible.”¹⁴ Catherall’s position was consistent with that of English Baptist missionary John Clarke who said it would be difficult to make “a just estimate of their [Native Baptists’] labours.”¹⁵ However, there was available evidence to disprove the claims of Clarke, Catherall, Chevannes, Stewart and Gordon because there were documents that the Native Baptists have written about themselves,

¹¹ Alston Chevannes, “Jamaican Lower Class Religion: Struggles against Oppression,” diss. , UWI, 1977 38. Alston Chevannes other name is Barry Chevannes.

¹² Robert J Stewart, Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1992) 121.

¹³ Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 4.

¹⁴ Gordon Catherall, “The Native Baptist Church,” Baptist Quarterly 24 (1971): 72.

¹⁵ John Clarke, Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, Including a Sketch of the Labours of the Early Religious Instructors in Jamaica (London, 1869) 221.

their origin, organization, objectives and beliefs, the main one being The First Annual Report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society.¹⁶ There was also reference to the Native Baptists in colonial documents¹⁷ and various contemporary documents of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ These documents will be examined in this study.

Catherall was one of the first scholars to agitate for a revision of the negative perception of the Native Baptists when he said: “There is sufficient indication to suggest that a picture hitherto presented of a community from which no good could come, needs to be revised . . .”¹⁹ In another work, he added that the contribution of the Native Baptists was such that “they were prepared to attack the social and political situation and reveal it for what it was . . .”²⁰ There have been other scholars, such as Clinton Hutton, a political scientist who specializes in Afro-Caribbean religions, who highlighted that the Native Baptists’ chapels were “the venues for religious meetings . . . as well as other meetings for airing

¹⁶ The First Annual Report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society; Containing a Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of Several of the Stations Connected Therewith; Together with the Number of Members, enquirers, List of Subscribers, Amount of Collections, etc. N. p. [c. 1841] 19 in W. Indies Pamphlets 1823 to 51 in Angus Library, Regent’s Park. The publication date is estimated as 1841 because the second one was to be published in 1842 First Annual Report 30. Therefore, the first would have to be before 1842.

¹⁷ Jamaica Almanack 1838, 1840 and Jamaica Royal Commission Report 1866.

¹⁸ E. B. Underhill, The West Indies: The Social and Religious Condition (London, 1862), William Burchell, Memoir of Thomas Burchell: Twenty-Two Years a Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1849) and Henry Bleby, Scenes in the Caribbean Sea: Being Sketches from a Missionary’s Notebook (London, 1854).

¹⁹ Catherall, Native Baptist 72.

²⁰ G. A. Catherall, Baptist War and Peace: A Study of British Baptist Involvement in Jamaica 1783-1865 diss. (Liverpool, [c. 1982]) 206.

social, economic and political matters” and added that “the religious, political and organizational influence of the Native Baptist [sic] over the masses of people in St. Thomas –in-the-East was unmistakable.” ²¹ Gad Heuman, a leading historian, had a favourable view of the Native Baptists, and recognized them as “a religious and political counterweight to the prevailing norms of the colonial society.” ²² It is, therefore, appropriate to revisit the Native Baptists and explore their identity and development and how their interpretation of Scriptures and understanding of God impacted the 1865 Native Baptist War.

Exploring the Hermeneutics of Native Baptists

It is an opportune time to study the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists because of some recent developments such as:

- ❖ Discovery of more material on the Native Baptists.
- ❖ Fresh assessments and appreciation of aspects of African religion. ²³

²¹ Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss., UWI, 1992, 173-74.

²² Gad Heuman, ‘The Killing Time’: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) xv.

²³ Gilmore writing in 1980s claimed that the writings about West African religions were usually through the eyes of detractors and competitors; therefore it was difficult to get a good understanding of their rites and ceremonies. In addition they were labeled as superstitious: J. T. Gilmore, Episcopacy, Emancipation and Evangelization: Aspects of the History of the Church of England in the British West Indies, diss., (U of Cambridge, 1984) 72. Since the 1980s, writings on African religion have improved. See Maureen Warner-Lewis, Central Africa in the Caribbean: Transcending Time, Transforming Cultures (Kingston: UWI P, 2003) 138-175.

- ❖ Emergence and development of Black, Liberation and Caribbean Theologies.
- ❖ Interest in the ideological determinants that impact revolutionary movements. ²⁴
- ❖ The missiology of the European missionaries have been re-assessed and found wanting. ²⁵
- ❖ The celebration of Black History Month since the twentieth century and the USA Civil Rights movement of the 1960s highlighting the achievements of persons of African ancestry.
- ❖ Many Caribbean persons having gained political independence from Britain, starting with Jamaicans in 1962, have produced a plethora of works examining the history of the West Indies through the eyes of West Indians rather than from the outlook of the colonists.
- ❖ Revival of interest in indigenous knowledge systems and folk religion.

There has been an epistemological shift in scholarship in recent times in that the source of knowledge and limits of knowledge have moved from the rationalism of the 17th century metaphysicians which only accepted beliefs founded on experience and reasoning and rejected the supernatural to a re-discovery of the supernatural. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), one of the architects of that re-discovery of the supernatural, posited that biblical hermeneutics was

²⁴ Brian Meeks, Narratives of Resistance: Jamaica, Trinidad, the Caribbean (Bridgetown, Kingston, Port-of-Spain: University P, 2000) xi.

²⁵ Stephen Neill, Colonialism and Christian Missions (London: Lutterworth P, 1966) 47 and Anna Johnston, Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 6-7.

concerned with the nature of the text, the act of reading, the authority of the particular readings of the text, the social character of all interpretations and the relationship between theory and praxis.²⁶ French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who is credited as a father of sociology, said, “there are no religions that are false. All are true in a fashion.”²⁷ And since then many scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century would no longer classify someone’s belief as superstitious but would grant it validity because it is claimed that there were no absolute truths and inspiration was possible to all.

The most significant development from the perspective of this study is a new understanding of the hermeneutical practice of the Native Baptists in bringing their religious faith and understanding of the Bible to bear upon their condition. Judged by the canons of the historical critical method, the hermeneutics of the Native Baptist leaders would be considered primitive or inappropriate because they did not focus on what the authors of the Biblical text might have meant. This was also the fate suffered by the colonized of the Asian, African and Latin American continents whose “interpretative practices were not seen as sophisticated enough to be studied within biblical disciplines . . .”²⁸ However, in

²⁶ Werner G. Jeanrond, “Hermeneutics,” eds. R. J. Coggins and J. C. Houlden, A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (SCM, 1994) 282. See also Watson’s treatment of Schleiermacher’s approach. The hermeneutical key for Schleiermacher was the person of Jesus as Redeemer hence his reading of the Scriptures was based on that Christological idea. Therefore, Jesus’ resurrection and Second Coming are inessential when compared to the doctrine of his person: Francis Watson, Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 13.

²⁷ Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life trans. Joseph Ward Swain (1915; London: Allen, 1957) 3.

²⁸ R. S. Sugirtharajah, The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001) 6.

light of the new insights of Reader-Response theory, which places greater emphasis on what the reader takes to the text and the perspective of the interpretative community rather than trying to ascertain what the author of the text meant, the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists needs re-examination. The role of the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists in their self-understanding, and self-expression in worship, work and witness is a major part of this study.

This study investigates the disjointed evidence on Native Baptists and their hermeneutics in order to challenge existing, imprecise and erroneous evaluations of this group and their interpretation of Scriptures, understanding of God and activism. This work offers a new and different assessment of their involvement in the Jamaican society by focusing on their origin, development and their Biblical hermeneutic. The claim is made that one cannot understand the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War without grappling with the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists, which motivated their Biblical prophetic response.

Thesis Statement

The thesis is that Native Baptists' Biblical hermeneutic influenced the nature and scope of their involvement in the 1865 Native Baptist War.

In the literature review it is argued that the writings about the Native Baptists and their role in society were generally inadequate (Chapter one). In order to explore this thesis, the methodology relied heavily on archival and primary

material (Chapter two). The Native Baptists are shown to be a well organized and that they developed in reaction to racism experienced in the English Baptist Church (Chapter three). They had orthodox beliefs and practices (Chapter four). They developed in and benefited from a certain religious context and heritage (Chapter five). Some distinctive themes and a Biblical hermeneutic were garnered from the Native Baptists' writings, sermons, hymn selections, letters, prayers and speeches (Chapter six). That reading the events of 1865 from the perspective of the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists reveals their influence on the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War (Chapter seven). And finally, the conclusion summarizes the salient points in the argument developed throughout the study and also highlights the importance of this research. This section closes with some recommendations for further research (Chapter eight).

B) Context

This study traverses a historical journey from the arrival of American Baptist missionary, George Liele to the arrest and execution of Native Baptist pastor, Paul Bogle in 1865. Liele arrived in Jamaica in 1783, the latter part of British colonial slavery in Jamaica, and established Baptist witness on the island.²⁹ His was the first successful ministry among the enslaved. The work grew and the pioneers Liele and Moses Baker needed assistance and they sought help in the form of English missionaries and the BMS responded by sending John Rowe in

²⁹ "Jubilee of the Jamaican Mission," Baptist Magazine 1865: 57.

1814.³⁰ This was the beginning of a long list of English Baptist missionaries to Jamaica including well-known ones such as William Knibb, Thomas Burchell and James Phillippo.³¹ These missionaries facilitated the development of the Baptist work among the enslaved, albeit with a narrow focus of saving the soul, while initially ignoring the conditions of slavery and the political, social and economic underpinnings of slavery.³² However, the enslaved heard the messages from the missionaries and had a different interpretation. One such enslaved person was Baptist deacon Sam Sharpe who claimed that slavery was inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible.³³ Hence, he organized the enslaved, about 60,000 of them from approximately 200 estates.³⁴ They were agitating to be treated and paid as workers and the protest was in the form of a passive resistance of a strike. As the event unfolded, the reprisals were ferocious and the event became known as the Baptist War.³⁵ This resistance was the catalyst, which led to the Act of Emancipation in 1833.³⁶

³⁰ Underhill, West Indies 204 and Clarke, Memorials 164.

³¹ Clarke, Memorials 70, 164.

³² Underhill, West Indies 205.

³³ Henry Bleby, Death Struggles of Slavery (London, 1853) 116.

³⁴ Michael Craton, Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton: Randle, Currey, Weiner, 1997) 316. Bleby also estimated that 50,000-60,000 thousand Negroes were involved in the resistance: Bleby, Caribbean Sea 43.

³⁵ Bleby, Death Struggles 113.

³⁶ Gordon Lewis, The Growth of The Modern West Indies (New York: Monthly Review) 168 and Bakan 4. Reckord puts it milder by stating that it “contributed indirectly to the abolition of slavery” Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 31. Green stated that “It was the Jamaican rebellion, not the new vigour of the anti-slavery movement, that proved the decisive factor in precipitating emancipation”: William A. Green, British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1976) 112. It was significant that one week after Sharpe’s death on May 23, 1832, the House of Commons established a

The Emancipation Act made provision for the planters to get £20m as compensation for the loss of the services of the enslaved ³⁷ while making all children under six years free and the others to serve a period of six years apprenticeship effective in 1834. The enslaved were disappointed that there would be a period of apprenticeship. ³⁸ No one was sure what was the difference between being enslaved and the new condition of being an apprentice. ³⁹ Of the apprenticeship system it was said, “ ‘IN PLAIN ENGLISH, IT IS SLAVERY’ ” ⁴⁰ and it was marked by atrocities. ⁴¹ The attitude of planters was that before apprenticeship ended they wanted to extract “the last drop of blood” and the “last fibre of sinew” from the Africans. ⁴² Apprenticeship was a continuation of the exploitation of the Africans. The apprentices believed that the houses they lived in and plots of land they cultivated were theirs. However, when Apprenticeship ended in 1838, the emancipated Africans were required by the planters to pay rent or move from houses they had built and plots they had cultivated. It was,

committee to look into the best means of abolishing slavery: Sam Sharpe (d. 1832: doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/53650 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).

³⁷ Godfrey Lagden, The Native Races of the Empire (London: Collins, 1924) 302.

³⁸ Studholme Hodgson, Truths from the West Indies. Including a Sketch of Madeira in 1833 (London, 1838) 283.

³⁹ Hodgson 274.

⁴⁰ David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 35. In fact, Cyrus Wallace, an apprentice, claimed that apprenticeship was worse than slavery: Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, The West Indies in 1837 (London, 1838) 253.

⁴¹ Sturge and Harvey 257. The Moravians’ assessment of apprenticeship (1834-38) was that “whatever else were the consequences, good or evil, or the system of apprenticeship, it was in more than one respect highly favourable to *the missionary cause*”: Jamaica Moravian Church, The Breaking of the Dawn, or, Moravian Work in Jamaica, 1754-1904 (London: Jamaica Moravian Church, [1904?]) 63. They were indifferent to the atrocities and concentrated on the benefits to their missionary work.

⁴² S. Copland, Black and White; Or, the Jamaica Question (London, 1866) 28.

therefore, left to the missionaries and the Africans to seek alternative economic solutions. The missionaries built Free Villages consisting of houses, churches and schools.⁴³ These provided economic well-being and facilitated a reasonable standard of living and stable family life. This type of Free Villages did not reach St. Thomas in the East and the persons of African origin established their own Negro settlements⁴⁴ sometimes taking possession of lands, which they claimed, belonged to them. This caused tension between the ruling class and the peasants. The situation worsened with problems associated with cholera and small-pox epidemics of the 1850s, drought of the 1860s,⁴⁵ economic decline⁴⁶ and an oppressive justice system.⁴⁷ The people's protest took many forms, including a Memorial sent to the Queen outlining their distresses.⁴⁸ This was rebuffed through the Queen's Advice.⁴⁹ The national blight did not escape the attention of the BMS official, Edward Underhill, who being in communication with the BMS missionaries was aware of the deteriorating situation. Underhill wrote Edward

⁴³ Underhill, Life 185-88, 209, Phillippo, Jamaica 221-22; John Clark, W. Dendy and J. M. Phillippo, The Voice of Jubilee: A Narrative of the Baptist Mission, Jamaica From Its Commencement; With Biographical Notices of Its Fathers and Founders (London, 1865) 116, Hall, Free Jamaica 23 and Audley G Reid, Community Formation: A Study of the 'Village' in Postemancipation Jamaica (Kingston: Canoe, 2000) 50.

⁴⁴ "A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea," Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453.

⁴⁵ "The Island Press: From the Morning Journal," Falmouth Post 18 July 1865: 1.

⁴⁶ Hall, Free Jamaica 39, 42.

⁴⁷ Edward Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865 (London, 1895) 56. Chutkan also examine the injustices in the judicial system: Noelle Chutkan, "The Administration of Justice in Jamaica as a Contributing Factor in the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865," 11/12 Savacou (1975): 78-85.

⁴⁸ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 206.

⁴⁹ Underhill, Life 329.

Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary, who sought answers from Governor Edward Eyre.⁵⁰ An upset Eyre decided to distribute the Underhill Circular, thinking that the European class of missionaries and leaders would dismiss the allegations. However, though there was divided opinion about the matter,⁵¹ the persons of African ancestry used the opportunity to register their grievances. Chief among them was George William Gordon and his partner in Christian ministry; campaign manager and business associate Paul Bogle. The Underhill Meeting passed some resolutions and Bogle and his followers marched from Stony Gut to Spanish Town to meet the Governor in order to register the gravity of the situation but to no avail.⁵² Subsequently, he and his followers marched to the Morant Bay Court-house to protest continued injustices. They were fired upon and the ensuing melee led to the deaths of eighteen persons of the ruling class and thousands of peasants.⁵³ This event is referred to as the 1865 Native Baptist War, a major focus of this study, along with the people, the Native Baptists.

This writer will examine relevant aspects of this historical background in more detail.

⁵⁰ Hume 132.

⁵¹ JRC Vol. 5 555 and "The Outbreak in Jamaica," Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 56.

⁵² Underhill, Tragedy 56-57.

⁵³ "Jamaica," Baptist Magazine Feb. 1866: 121.

Jamaica, in the nineteenth century, with its 21 parishes (See map 1) and approximately 4,243 square miles, averaging 190,000 acres per parish ⁵⁴ was a politically and religiously strategic colony in the British Empire. The importance of Jamaica to the colonial masters may be discerned from the comments that Jamaica was “the richest western jewel in the British crown.” ⁵⁵ Jamaica garnered much wealth for the British Empire through the slave trade, slavery and sugar.

Jamaica was also the hub from which other West Indian islands took their cue. ⁵⁶ In the 1840s, James Phillippo, English Baptist missionary, who served from 1823-79, also saw Jamaica’s importance for the evangelization of the world:

It is to be viewed in reference to the influence it may exert on the neighbouring islands and continent . . . Jamaica might indeed become spiritually what she is politically - the key-stone to the possession of the New World - a kind of rallying post for the army of the living God, in its efforts to subjugate the whole continent of South America to the ‘obedience of faith.’ ⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “Jamaica,” Missionary Herald Mar. 1841 40.

⁵⁵ Theodore Foulks, Eighteen Months in Jamaica; With Recollections of the Late Rebellion (London, 1833) 21. The topography and climate were lionized as “an island the most fertile in the world” and “blessed with a climate most glorious” Jamaica Tribune 18 Dec. 1865: [4]. Jamaica was also called “the brightest jewel in the British Crown”: A. A., “A Defence of Governor Eyre,” Gleaner 15 Jan. 1866: [3].

⁵⁶ James Losh, Speeches of James Losh Esq., and the Rev. William Knibb, on the Immediate Abolition of British Colonial Slavery (Newcastle, 1833) 8 in Pam. 7. 83. 13 in Cambridge U Library.

⁵⁷ James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843. Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 302.

Jamaica was significant politically and spiritually to the British.

Population classifications

The classification used to stratify the population in the nineteenth century was mainly according to colour, namely “Whites”⁵⁸ “coloured or brown”⁵⁹ and “Black.”⁶⁰ The Jamaica Almanack, an official document, also used those designations.⁶¹

This study avoids the use of the term “Black” to describe the persons of African origin who came to Jamaica or who were born on the island because many nineteenth century writers used it in a derogatory way. Henry Bleby, Methodist missionary, used “dark,” another word for “black,” in a connotative sense meaning retarded, backward, evil and stupid when he said that in St. Ann, “The

⁵⁸ J. Stewart, A View of the Past and Present State of the Island; With Remarks on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Slaves and on the Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies (1823; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 252; George Liele made reference to “Whites”: John Rippon, The Baptist Annual Register: For 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of 1793. Including Sketches of the State of Religion among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad (London, [c. 1793]) 334; John Bigelow, Jamaica in 1850 or, the effects of sixteen years of Freedom on a Slave Colony (1851; Westport: Negro UP, 1970) 25; John Clark, W. Dendy and J. M. Phillippo 41 and From Our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866:9.

⁵⁹ Bigelow 25. See Heuman for a discussion about the various problems associated with defining “free coloreds”; Gad J. Heuman, Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865 (Westport: Greenwood P, 1981) ix.

⁶⁰ From Our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866:9.

⁶¹ Jamaica Almanack 1838 117. Underhill and Copland had similar divisions: Underhill, West Indies 233 and Copland 51. Orlando Patterson, also used a colour coded stratification of colonial society: Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica (London: McGibbon, 1967) 48-51. There was, however, one instance of a nineteenth century writer, Copland, having two categories only for the population, namely, Europeans and Africans: Copland 50.

missionary's wife, too, devotes her rapidly increasing strength to the instruction of these dark children of Africa, - dark in mind, as in complexion . . ." ⁶² Similarly, in 1837, Nicholas Gyles, proprietor of Recess plantation, St. Thomas in the Vale wrote a letter to friend in London in which he said that apprentices could never be changed or improved "so long as they were black." ⁶³ "Black" was synonymous with backwardness. In addition, an unnamed preacher in the 1840s used "black" to depict that which was unwholesome, "a temper of a mind black and sullen; black as hell . . ." ⁶⁴ Moreover, Hamilton Hume, in defence of the reprisals by Governor Eyre, lambasted those persons who "in their desire to whitewash the black man, too often blacken the white man." ⁶⁵ Hume's racist symbolism had "white" representing purity and innocence while "black" represented impurity, evil and wickedness. And many modern scholars have identified the burdensomeness attached to being "Black." British scholar Catherine Hall said that for the missionaries "Blackness" could mean "Africa, superstition, heathenism", which would be in need of transformation. ⁶⁶ "Black" can also mean non-white, non-rich, powerless, African or non-human. ⁶⁷ In post-independence Jamaica, "black and white" denoted not skin colour but attitudes and status with

⁶² Henry Bleby, Romance Without Fiction: or Sketches From the Portfolio of an Old Missionary (London, 1872) 57.

⁶³ Sturge and Harvey 327-28.

⁶⁴ "Brief Sketches of Sermons against Revenge," Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1842: 59.

⁶⁵ Hume v-vi

⁶⁶ Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867 (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 165.

⁶⁷ Kortright Davis, Emancipation still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology (New York: Orbis, 1990) 118-19.

“black” being a negative.⁶⁸ This negative connotation was not confined to Jamaica but as renowned sociologist Orlando Patterson highlighted that in both Latin and non-Latin West Indies there was a “pattern of marrying lighter [skin colour] with upward social mobility.”⁶⁹ One sure way of advancing was through a fairer skin colour. “Black” carries the baggage of negativity.

This study also avoids another designation based on colour, namely “coloured.” Bernard Senior, military officer in the 1830s, implied that there was a slur attached to having a trace of “coloured blood.”⁷⁰ “Coloured” was associated with inferiority. In addition, “coloured” could mean either someone of African descent or a person of mixed race.⁷¹ It was therefore an ambiguous term.

Designations based on skin colour were often demeaning in the racist colonial society; colour descriptions were often used as an instrument of discrimination. Consequently, colour descriptions have been rejected in this work in favour of the more objective and less pejorative nationality or race. Therefore, the three major groups were the Africans, the Europeans and those of mixed race, the Mulattoes.

⁶⁸ Kathrin Norris, Jamaica: The Search for Identity (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford UP, 1962) 10.

⁶⁹ Orlando Patterson, “Blacks in the Americas,” 9/10 Savacou (1974): 112.

⁷⁰ Bernard Senior, Jamaica, As It Was, As It Is, and As It May Be (1835; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 67.

⁷¹ Hamilton Hume, The Life of Edward John Eyre (London, 1867) 132 and H. R., The Insurrection in Jamaica [1865] 1-2. See also Heuman, Between Black and White ix. Underhill referred to Edwin Palmer as both “a black man” and “a coloured man”: Underhill, Tragedy 115

Historian David Eltis argued that European self-identification was based on anyone “brought up as European.” Europeans defined themselves in terms of the subcontinent of Europe.⁷² The colonists called themselves “European” and others saw them as such.⁷³ The designation European is quite appropriate based on their self-understanding and popular usage.

However, Africa and Africans were terms, which had more meaning to the Europeans rather than the enslaved who tended to define themselves in terms of a narrow geographical area.⁷⁴ The enslaved primarily saw themselves in relation to their tribes such as Koromantees, Eboes and Mandingoes⁷⁵ which was more in keeping with their own self-identification. Nevertheless, in Jamaica, “African” was a popular designation used by Europeans to describe the enslaved during both the pre- and post- emancipation eras.⁷⁶ For the purposes of this study, the

⁷² David Eltis, The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 224.

⁷³ Stewart, View 168, 179; John Stewart, An Account of Jamaica (1808; New York: Books For Library P, 1971) 152; Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 326; Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, late of Jamaica (London, 1867) 12; Copland 50; Richard Hill, Lights and Shadows of Jamaica History; Being Three Lectures Delivered in Aid of the Mission Schools of the Colony (Kingston, 1859) 84; George Blyth, Reminiscences of Missionary Life: With Suggestions to Churches and Missionaries (London, 1851) 154 and Underhill, West Indies 192, 302.

⁷⁴ Eltis 224.

⁷⁵ “Jamaica: Salter’s Hill” Missionary Herald Dec. 1842: 392; Matthew Lewis, Journal of a West India Proprietor: Kept during Residence in the Island of Jamaica ed. Judith Terry (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 145; Royal Gazette (Jamaica) 16-23 July 1825: 15-16; Robert Madden, A Twelvemonth’s Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition From Slavery to Apprenticeship Vol. 1 (London, 1835) 99; Sturge and Harvey 287-88; Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies II (1793; New York: Arno P, 1972) xxxv, 71; Phillippo, Jamaica 188, 239 and W. J. Gardner, A History of Jamaica (3rd ed. 1873; London: Cass, 1971) 175.

⁷⁶ “Paul Bogle, the Rebel,” Gleaner 19 Jan. 1866: 2; Losh, 13, 22, 24 and Falmouth Post 26 Aug. 1840: 7.

enslaved were grouped as Africans, though cognizant that the term was largely a European imposition. By 1817, only 37 per cent of the enslaved population was born in Africa.⁷⁷ Therefore, at times, it was prudent to use African derivatives, such as “African origin,” meaning the person was born in Jamaica of African parentage.⁷⁸

In colonial Brazil, Negro included persons who were not accepted either as Europeans or Africans and could apply to those born in Brazil of African or mixed parentage or to those who spoke Portuguese and to the Africans who were neither Portuguese speaking nor native to Brazil.⁷⁹ Negro was an all-embracing term with a primary meaning of not being a member of the European ruling class. In the West Indies it carried a similar meaning. Negro was another popular designation for the enslaved.⁸⁰ However, it is now not a politically correct word in some situations and hence this word will be used sparingly while the term of preference is “African.”

⁷⁷ Gisela Eisner, Jamaica, 1830-1930: A Study in Economic Growth (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961) 132.

⁷⁸ Names making references to African origins, include “sons and daughters of Africa”: “Another Baptist Demonstration,” Falmouth Post 30 Sept. 1845: 2 and Bleby, Romance 54. “African origin” and “Sons of Africa”: Phillippo, Jamaica 148, 170 and “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9. “Men of African birth or descent”: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 37, 44, 176. “Descendants of Africans”: Stewart, View 251; and Edward Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865 (London, 1895) 18. “Children of Africa”: Bleby, Romance 3, 27, 57 and “Men of African origin”: Underhill, West Indies 297.

⁷⁹ R. K. Kent, “Palmares: An African State in Brazil” Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas ed. Richard Price. 1973. 2nd ed. (Baltimore and London: Hopkins UP, 1979) 171.

⁸⁰ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 14, 38, 42, Stewart, View 249, 251, Madden Vol. 1 79; “Rebellious State of the Slaves in Trelawny and St. James’s,” Supplement to the St. Jago Gazette, From Saturday December 31, 1831 to Saturday January 7, 1832 7 in UWI Library x AN. S3; Phillippo, Jamaica 172 and Hinton, Memoir 177.

Then, there were persons of mixed race. There were some who claimed that a Creole was someone of mixed race such as a well - informed clergyman in England who presumed that a lady who described herself as “Creole” was someone whose parents were not both “White” but either the father or mother was “Black.” ⁸¹ However, Senior emphatically defined Creole as “*an individual born in the West Indies, of white parents*” and it was erroneous to say that a Creole “must have been born of black or coloured parents.” ⁸² Many eighteenth and nineteenth century writers and residents of Jamaica used “Creole” to mean born in Jamaica, irrespective of nationality or race. ⁸³ Brathwaite also used “Creole” in a similar sense ⁸⁴ and according to Heuman, Brathwaite used it to mean from a local point of view as opposed to a primarily metropolitan perspective. ⁸⁵ Warner-Lewis stated that “Creole” was a term first recorded in the 1570s, attributed to Africans in Brazil and signifying an “outsider.” ⁸⁶ Creole is

⁸¹ Senior, Jamaica 67.

⁸² Senior, Jamaica 67. See also Madden 101.

⁸³ Phillippo, Jamaica 144. See also Long II 416; Gardner 164, 391; Stewart, View 168, 251 and Account 152 and Hume 140.

⁸⁴ Edward Brathwaite, Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean 1974. (Kingston: Savacou, 1985) 10. Brathwaite sometimes used his middle name Kamau. See also Nicole King, C. L. R. James and Creolization: Circles of Influence (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2001) 11.

⁸⁵ Heuman, Between Black and White xx. Linguist David Decamp said that originally, a Creole was a person of European descent who was born and raised in a colony but later it meant natives and others of non-European origin: David DeCamp, The Field of Creole Language [c. 1967] 4 in UWI Library.

⁸⁶ Maureen Warner-Lewis, Creolisation Processes in Linguistic, Artistic and Material Cultures 245-56 in UWI Library. For a analysis of the different meaning of Creole see O. Nigel Bolland “Creolisation and Creole Societies: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Social History Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle, Oxford: Currey, 2002) 15-19.

difficult to define and has been used as a “language type, person, style and culture” ⁸⁷ so this study will not use it to classify persons of mixed race.

J. Stewart, a colonial writer, defined a Mulatto as “the offspring of a white and a black” ⁸⁸ and though Heuman, recognizing a Mulatto as such, he generally avoided the word Mulatto. ⁸⁹ However, for this study, Mulatto is the preferred word because it avoids the use of colour designations such as “Browns” and “Coloureds”, which had demeaning overtones. In this context, Mulattoes represent all the various progeny produced from liaisons between Europeans and Africans such as “samboes, the offspring of a black and a mulatto; quadroons, the offspring of a white and a mulatto; and mestees, the offspring of a white and a quadroon.” ⁹⁰

The terms “slave” and “enslaved” also came in for semantic scrutiny. Preference has been given to “enslaved” because “enslaved” speaks to what was done to the Africans, that is, they were victims of subjugation while “slave” did not sufficiently explain or emphasize the harsh condition of such humiliation. In the very nature of the word “enslaved” is the idea of an enforced condition.

⁸⁷ Carolyn Allen “Creole: The Problem of Definition” Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle, Oxford: Currey, 2002) 48. Allen outlined the various thinking concerning Creole.

⁸⁸ Stewart, View 324. For same divisions see also Madden Vol. 1 89, 114. For similar divisions see Phillippo, Jamaica 144; Gardner 97 and Hodgson 60-61.

⁸⁹ Heuman, Between Black and White ix. Heuman gave no reason for not using Mulatto.

⁹⁰ Stewart, View 324. For same divisions see also Madden Vol. 1 89. For similar divisions see Phillippo, Jamaica 144; Gardner 97 and Hodgson 60-61.

Most modern scholars now use “enslaved.”⁹¹ There was also precedence in the 1800s for the use of “enslaved”⁹² and “enslaved brethren.”⁹³ And, according to Richard Panton, Anglican clergyman, the Africans did not appreciate being called “slave”. He related an incident to Joseph Sturge in which a visiting clergyman introduced a discourse to the African portion of the congregation by saying, “ ‘my slave brethren.’ ” They were displeased and said “strange minister too bad” because “when they stood before God in his own house, there was no distinction of condition.”⁹⁴ Since the enslaved did not appreciate the designation “slave” then it will not be used in this work.

⁹¹ There are a few persons who used “slaves”: Shirley J. Robertson, Rev. of Spanish Jamaica, trans. Patrick Bryan. Jamaica Journal 27 (2006): 78-79 Colin G. Clarke, Kingston Jamaica: Urban Development and Social Change, 1692-2002 (Kingston, Miami: Randle, 2006) 15-16, 23 25, 36, 76; Heuman, Killing Time 37. Clarke’s oxymoronic phrase was “emancipated slaves”: Cyril Clarke ed., Handbook of Baptist Witness in Clarendon (Jamaica: Clarendon Baptist Association, 1986) 33.

⁹² Bryan Edwards The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica, in Regard to the Maroon Negroes (1796; London, Stockdale Westport: Negro UP, 1970) i; Bleby, Scenes iv and Bleby, Romance 7, 57.

⁹³ Losh 23 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 37.

⁹⁴ Sturge and Harvey 285-86.

Table 1: Population Figures by Race 1834-1871

Race	1834 ⁹⁵	1844 ⁹⁶	1861 ⁹⁷	1871
Europeans	15,000	15,776	13,819	13,101 ⁹⁸
Mulattoes	45,000	68,529	81,068	100,346 ⁹⁹
Africans	311,070	293,128	346,377	392,707 ¹⁰⁰
Total	371,070	377,433	441,264	506,154 ¹⁰¹

There were two groups of colonies in the British Empire with one group of colonies having self-government in internal matters similar to Britain such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa where there was a predominance of English settlers. The other group of colonies were located in Africa, the Caribbean and India and they experienced a different type of colonialism which has been defined as direct and overall subordination of one country and a people to another on the basis of state power being in the hands of

⁹⁵ Eisner 127. Only the figures for the enslaved population were official. Caldecott had the population in Jamaica in 1833 as 369,000: A Caldecott, The Church in the West Indies (1898. London: Cass, 1970) 263.

⁹⁶ The total came from Census of Jamaica 1943 2; The breakdown was from Barry Higman, ed., The Jamaican Censuses of 1844 and 1861 (Kingston: UWI, 1980) 3; Hall, Free Jamaica 265 and George W. Roberts, The Population of Jamaica (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1957) 65. Copland had the same total, though for 1854: Copland 50, which might be a typographical error for 1844.

⁹⁷ The total for 1861 came from Census of Jamaica 1943 2; "Facts in the Educational Condition of the Island," Falmouth Post 25 Aug. 1865: 2; Hall, Free Jamaica 265 and Roberts 65. Others had a different aggregate: See Higman, Jamaican Censuses 16 and Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Country, 1830-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard UP 1955) 262. This writer accepted the official figures.

⁹⁸ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 262.

⁹⁹ Roberts 65.

¹⁰⁰ Roberts 65.

¹⁰¹ Census of Jamaica 1943, 2 provided the total and also Roberts, 65.

the dominating foreign power.¹⁰² In this context an English Governor, who as the representative of the Crown, ruled the colonies with the help of a select few who treated the majority subjects as an inferior race. In 1865, an English Governor, Edward Eyre, and a local legislature ruled Jamaica. This legislature, accessible by property qualifications, was heavily biased in favour of the European minority and Mulatto property owners, and excluded the majority of African origin.¹⁰³ It was minority rule in Jamaica for the period 1829-71 with a 4% European population in 1834, 4.2% in 1844, 3.1% in 1861 and 2.6% in 1871 always dominating.¹⁰⁴ Based on Table 1 the trend in Jamaica was that the Africans and Mulattoes were increasing while the Europeans were decreasing. By 1865, the ratio of Europeans to Africans had widened to 27 Africans to every European. There was a large base of Africans, then next on the rung being Mulattoes and at the pinnacle a small group of Europeans dominating the society. It was shaped like a pyramid. This arrangement was fraught with danger and led to exploitation, conflict, resistance and reprisals.

And who were the Native Baptists? There were cases when the term Native Baptists was used loosely for local Baptists who were non-Europeans.¹⁰⁵ Phillippo used Native Baptists both as non-European Baptist and also as a

¹⁰² George Pottinger, Analysis and Evaluation of the Contribution of the Methodist Society to Jamaica 1938-1967 Diss. (Boston University Graduate School, 1977) 17-18, 25.

¹⁰³ For a detailed outline of the political and legislative structure and the role of the local oligarchy see Hall, Free Jamaica 1-9.

¹⁰⁴ Eisner 153. Heuman made a similar point that "the Jamaican society was demographically skewed": Heuman, Killing Time xiii.

¹⁰⁵ Underhill, Life 72 and Gordon, Cause for His Glory 4.

distinctive group.¹⁰⁶ Modern historians had a tendency to ascribe the title of Native Baptists to Native Jamaican Christian groups.¹⁰⁷ However, in this study, the Native Baptists were persons who broke away from the English Baptists in response to the discrimination against persons of African ancestry becoming pastors. These indigenous persons took the name Native Baptist and formed their own organization, which was independent of European superintendence. These Natives Baptists evolved over time and formed other clusters especially in St. Thomas in the East. The Native Baptists were persons who essentially identified themselves as Native Baptists and also having acknowledged themselves as Native Baptists helped in identifying others who were Native Baptists or part of their organization. Others were discerned as Native Baptists based on having publicly accepted themselves as Native Baptists, worked closely with others in terms of joint witness and worship and were therefore duly seen as Native Baptists. In this definition of Native Baptists it only included those who were so identified while they were alive.

Native Baptists were, therefore, those persons who were principally of African origin, untrained theologically in the formal setting of a seminary, but nonetheless educated and having their own understanding of the Bible and God. The Native Baptists were indigenous to Jamaica. They felt that they were legitimate ministers of the gospel and were confident that they could do a

¹⁰⁶ Underhill, Life 72, 341.

¹⁰⁷ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 4.

competent job. They also wanted to be in charge of their church property and wanted to have independence from European management.

Culture of Resistance

There was a worldwide culture of resistance by oppressed persons to free themselves from degrading colonial slavery. In the sixteenth century there was a series of revolts by the enslaved in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, Carthagen, Honduras.¹⁰⁸ The Palmares, a government of escaped Africans on Brazilian soil, existed from at least 1605.¹⁰⁹ In the 1770s and 1780s, there were Andean peasant insurgencies against colonial oppression in the highland of Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.¹¹⁰ There were revolts also in the USA.¹¹¹ The enslaved Haitian people overthrew the French colonialists.¹¹² This revolt in Haiti, which led to the declaration of independence from France on January 1, 1804, was described by C. L. R. James, Caribbean Marxist and social activist, as “the only successful slave revolt in history.”¹¹³ In 1812, there was resistance in Cuba.¹¹⁴ In Barbados, there

¹⁰⁸ Noel Deerr, The History of Sugar Vol. 2 (London: Chapman, 1950) 318.

¹⁰⁹ Kent, Palmares 173, 175. Bastide, French anthropologist, preferred to classify Palmares as a “cultural resistance” movement rather than an attempt at a republican constitution: Roger Bastide, African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations 1960 trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore, London: Hopkins UP, 1978) 87, 89.

¹¹⁰ Brooke Larson, Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 4-5.

¹¹¹ “Fruits of Freedom in the West Indies,” Baptist Reporter Jan. 1860: 9.

¹¹² David Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1996) 3.

¹¹³ C. L. R. James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution Rev. ed. (1938; London: Allison, 1984) ix.

were aborted rebellions in 1649, 1675, and 1692 and a major one in 1816.¹¹⁵ In Demerara (British Guiana), there was, in 1823, a revolt.¹¹⁶

The Africans in Jamaica confronted their experiences of dehumanization in a variety of ways, including showing resistance.¹¹⁷ Patterson claimed that Jamaica had one of the more impressive records of revolts by the enslaved during slavery's 180-year existence.¹¹⁸ The first serious revolt in Jamaica was in 1684.¹¹⁹

Remarkably after each outbreak, according to Copland, the fetters of the enslaved were fastened more firmly and there was increased severity displayed by the oppressors.¹²⁰ The people were expecting freedom as of August 1, 1834 but after rejoicing on the holiday, they were bitterly disappointed when they were told to work as before. And many claimed, "Free, no free at all!"¹²¹ And so the resistance continued. There were resistances in the post-emancipation period in the West Indies. In 1856, there was the "Angel Gabriel" Riots in Guyana. John

¹¹⁴ Sibylle Fischer, Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution (Durham, London: Duke UP, 2004) 41.

¹¹⁵ Hilary Beckles, Black Rebellion in Barbados: The Struggle against Slavery, 1627-1838 (Bridgetown: Antilles, 1984) 1-88.

¹¹⁶ Deerr 326 and Hilary Beckles, A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 35.

¹¹⁷ Bleby asserted, "Open rebellion was their daily life": Bleby, Scenes [vi].

¹¹⁸ Patterson, Slavery and Slave Revolts 246.

¹¹⁹ See Belmore Papers Microfilm 1374 reel 4 for a list of rebellions. Patterson believed that the revolts prior to 1740 were inter-related: Slavery and Slave Revolts 246.

¹²⁰ Copland 6, 18.

¹²¹ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 80.

Sayers Orr, an apocalyptic preacher called “Angel Gabriel” dealt with political and religious subjects. In 1876, there was the Federation Riots in Barbados. The Planters were against the Imperial government’s suggestion of a Windward Islands Federation, inclusive of Barbados. Those of African origin thought it must be a good idea since the planters opposed it and so there was a protest.¹²² Michael Craton, social historian, said that there was a dozen riots in Jamaica between 1838 and 1865 but most were localized.¹²³ In 1851, there was a brief riot between rival Baptist factions in Spanish Town. In 1859, there were serious Toll Gate Riots in Westmoreland with protestors demolishing the toll-gates in the parish and there were also riots over rights to land on the Florence Hall Estate, Trelawny. In none of these protests were any in authority killed although the police killed two women in the Falmouth Riots.¹²⁴ In 1864, there was a strong “religious demonstration” of approximately four hundred persons during and after a court sitting in Trelawny involving persons from Sawyers charged with petty larceny.¹²⁵ This also did not become violent or bloody.

¹²² Craton 327, 328, 340. There were the St. Vincent Riots of 1862: Lorna Simmonds, Post-Emancipation Protest in Jamaica (Paper presented at the Fifteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians, UWI, Mona, Jamaica April 15-20 1982) 1 and in Trinidad: D[avid] Trotman, Protest in Post-Emancipation Trinidad (Paper presented at the Fifteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians, UWI, Mona, Jamaica April 15-20 1982) and in Dominica: Russell Chace, Protest in Post-Emancipation Dominica: The ‘Guerre Negre’ of 1844 (Paper presented at the Fifteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians, UWI, Mona, Jamaica April 15-20 1982).

¹²³ Craton 325. Simmonds said there were “over eighty instances of violent disturbances in post-emancipation Jamaica”: Lorna Simmonds, Post-Emancipation Protest in Jamaica (Paper presented at the Fifteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians, UWI, Mona, Jamaica April 15-20 1982) 1. However, Simmonds did not list those 80 violent disturbances.

¹²⁴ Hall, Free 248-49.

¹²⁵ Heuman, Killing Time 86.

There were two epoch-shaping protests in the nineteenth century. One was the Baptist War ¹²⁶ or Baptist insurrection, ¹²⁷ so-called because Baptist leaders and members were identified with this resistance to slavery. The other significant resistance in the nineteenth century was not identified as a Baptist War by contemporaries but was rather called an Insurrection. ¹²⁸ However, there were modern writers who identified it with the Baptists namely Baptist minister, Cyril Clarke who called it a “Baptist revolt” ¹²⁹ and sociologist Edward Seaga, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, who said, “so firmly was the Baptist Church identified with the ordinary people’s resistance of oppression, that the Morant Bay Rebellion was called ‘The Baptist War’ by some persons.” ¹³⁰ Other modern historians refer to it variously as “a demonstration, a disturbance, an uprising, a

¹²⁶ Some nineteenth century designations of the 1831 strike as the Baptist War included: Christian Record April 1832: 95 in Jamaica Tracts Vol. 3 Godw. Pamph. 2665 in Bodleian Library; Foulks 112; Sturge and Harvey 240; H. M. Waddell, Twenty-nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858 (1863. 2nd ed. London: Cass, 1970) 79, Henry Bleby, Death Struggles of Slavery (London, 1853) 25. However, Afroz believed Muslims led the resistance: Sultana Afroz, The Unsung Slaves: Islam in Plantation Jamaica (The Association of Caribbean Historians 25th Annual Conference 1993) 10–11. Maureen Warner-Lewis, a Caribbean linguist, showed that Afroz’s linguistic claims for Muslim presence in Jamaica were weak. And added that no evidence emerged from the court trials or their interviews subsequent to the Baptist War that anyone was a Muslim and “absolutely no mention of Islam was made”: Maureen Warner- Lewis, “Jamaica’s Muslim Past: Misrepresentations,” Journal of Caribbean History 37: 2 (2003): 299-306.

¹²⁷ Senior, Jamaica 37, 265.

¹²⁸ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9; “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6; R. H., The Insurrection of Jamaica, (1865) pamphlet in the UWI Library; Facts and Documents Connected with the Late Insurrection in Jamaica, and the Violations of Civil and Religious Liberty Arising Out of It in Jamaica (London, 1832) 15 and A Returned Missionary, “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter June 1864: 247.

¹²⁹ Clarke, ed. Handbook 37.

¹³⁰ “East Queen Street Baptist Church 200th Anniversary Feature,” Gleaner 11 May 2000: B10. Seaga did not identify who were those persons who called it “Baptist War.”

revolt, a riot or riots, a land riot, and a rebellion” ¹³¹ with the most enduring title being the Morant Bay Rebellion. ¹³² However, there have been serious doubts expressed from the outset, whether the event was a “rebellion”, with the Commissioners visiting Stony Gut on February 14, 1866 “to gain a better knowledge of the district in which the rebellion, if rebellion it can be called, originated.” ¹³³ Furthermore, the commissioners in their summary did not call it a rebellion but labeled it a “resistance to lawful authority.” ¹³⁴ And an unnamed contemporary writer in an English Baptist publication said, “It is not unreasonable to doubt whether there has been in Jamaica a rebellion or insurrection.” ¹³⁵ And as Reckord said, “In 1865, in a period of acute depression, a riot in one of the parishes became known as a rebellion, but the label reflected the scale of the government’s reprisals.” ¹³⁶ The variety of names indicated the different ways persons have understood the nature of the event. One such name as given by Bev Carey, Maroon writer, was the “Second Rebellion from the

¹³¹ The Editor, The Jamaican Historical Review Vol. XIX (1996). It was also called “riot at Morant Bay”: “A Theory of Missionary Effort,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 787; “Martial Law” Knight, ed., Liberty 19; “The Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865”: Mair, Women Field Workers 12; “Morant Bay riot”: Hall, Free Jamaica 250 and “Eyre’s Rebellion”: R. W. Beachey, The British West Indies Sugar Industry in the Late 19th Century (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957) 7.

¹³² Time of Fury: The Story of the Morant Bay Rebellion. Carey Robinson. Video Cassette. Jamaica Information Service, 1965 and Catch-A-Fire: Paul Bogle (1865) The Morant Bay Rebellion and Massacre. Menelik Shabazz. Video Cassette. Annabelle Alcazar, 1996. The latter video is in the personal collection of Clinton Hutton.

¹³³ From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 17 Mar. 1866: 9.

¹³⁴ JRC Vol. 4 538.

¹³⁵ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 784.

¹³⁶ Reckord 25-31.

Platform of the Native Baptist Church.”¹³⁷ Carey, identifying the resistance with the Native Baptist Church, was accurate, though one could question her use of rebellion. Rebellion has the connotation of an evil act against lawful authority. War is a preferred word because it can be a neutral term dependent on who the aggressor is and who is the defendant. A war can be armed conflict and or protracted struggle not involving arms. Furthermore, there is also the concept of a “Just War,” which outlines the conditions under which war can be justified.¹³⁸ Therefore, since “war” is less objectionable than “rebellion” and since most of the protestors were Native Baptists,¹³⁹ the 1865 event, in this study, will be called the 1865 Native Baptist War. Identifying a Jamaican resistance, as a “Native Baptist War” is not novel because Mary Turner and others said the 1831 Baptist War should not be called the “Baptist War” but rather “The Native Baptist War.”¹⁴⁰ However, what is new is calling the 1865 resistance, the 1865 Native Baptist War.

Resistance movements have become prime subjects of study and the Jamaican resistance no less so. The Jamaican movements have been examined in relation to what led to these revolutions; what happened, who were the leaders and what

¹³⁷ Bev[erly] Carey, The Maroon Story. The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History o Jamaica 1490-1880 (Kingston: Agouti, 1997) 611. The title page has an abbreviated first name for the author.

¹³⁸ James Turner Johnson, “War,” The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics eds. James F. Childress and John MacQuarrie (Philadelphia, Westminster P, 1967) 654-55.

¹³⁹ Hutton, Colour 172-73 and Heuman, Killing Time 83.

¹⁴⁰ Turner 153-54. Others who called it a Native Baptist War included Winston Lawson, Religion and Race: African and European Roots in Conflict A Jamaican Testament (New York: Lang, 1996) 158, 161 and Neville Callam, “Hope: A Caribbean Perspective,” Ecumenical Review 50 (1998): 138. Heuman agreed with Turner that it was a Native Baptist War: Heuman, Killing Time 36.

were their religious orientation, motives and objectives. The *Cornwall Courier* claimed a correlation between preaching and protests in the 1831 Baptist War. In reporting on an analysis of the relationship between estates and the intensity of the rebellion, the paper wrote: “Where there has been little preaching there was little disaffection, and where there has been plenty preaching, there was plenty of rebellion” ¹⁴¹ In addition, an unnamed English Baptist missionary pinpointed the role of prayer and said, “No one doubted the natural relation between these meetings for prayer and the insurrectionary spirit.” ¹⁴² The planters concluded that, “the teachers of Christianity have been the instrument of bringing about the late insurrection.” ¹⁴³ However, one anonymous Methodist missionary attributed the 1831 Baptist War to the leadership of the Africans in Christian ministry allowed by the English Baptists. ¹⁴⁴ In spite of the confusion of which group should be credited with the 1831 Baptist War, they all recognized that the manner the Bible was interpreted by the protestors played an important role.

Religion also played a vital role in the 1865 Native Baptist War. The English Baptists blamed the war on the oppression, lack of proper religious teaching from the European missionary denominations and the poor religious background of

¹⁴¹ Christian Record July 1832: 167.

¹⁴² A Returned Missionary, “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter June 1864: 247.

¹⁴³ Christian Record Mar. 1832: 60. See also “Rebellious State of the Slaves in Trelawny and St. James’s, [sic]” Watchman and Jamaica Free Press 7 Jan. 1832: 1. See also Bernard Senior, Jamaica, As It Was, As It Is, and As It May Be (1835; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 183, 275. He claimed that the favorite texts of these preachers were “If the Son shall set you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36); “No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6: 24), “You are bought with a price; be not ye servants of men” (1 Cor. 7: 23); “There is neither Greek nor Jew; There is neither bond nor free” (Gal. 3:28) and “Be not entangled with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

¹⁴⁴ Gordon Catherall, “The Native Baptist Church,” Baptist Quarterly 24 (1971) 68 and Parliamentary Papers Vol. XX 1831-1832. 104.

the African immigrants in St. Thomas-in-the-East.¹⁴⁵ Governor Eyre blamed it on the “misguided counsel of certain ministers of religion, sadly so-called, if the Saviour’s example and teaching is to be the standard.”¹⁴⁶ Colonel T. Francis Hobbs, commander of the 6th Regiment troops in Central District, was more specific, claiming:

The place swarms with native Baptist ‘chapels,’ their ministers are the leading rebels . . . At the door of those wolves in sheep’s clothing lies the responsibility of all this rebellion . . . Let those who doubt this statement visit ‘Somerset,’ ‘Mount Lebanon,’ ‘Mount Pigsah’- the hotbed of the rebellion, and account for this, in a province of wealth, in any other way than fanaticism.¹⁴⁷

Hobbs also added a role for Obeah, saying, “I have now [sic] doubt that ‘Obeism’ and the deepest religious fanaticism had much to do with this rebellion, especially in Somerset, where Wellington bewitched them, he had immense power, and was much dreaded, and persuaded the people they could not be wounded or killed by buckra.”¹⁴⁸ Religion played an essential role in the war.

¹⁴⁵ “Treatment of the People,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 58.

¹⁴⁶ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 54.

¹⁴⁷ JRC Vol. 5 1129. See also John Clarke, Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, Including a Sketch of the Labours of the Early Religious Instructors in Jamaica (London, 1869) 221, 223-24 and Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss., UWI, 1992, 174.

¹⁴⁸ JRC Vol. 5 1129.

Recent studies show that the Native Baptists played a significant role in the 1865 event. One scholar who recognized their importance was Heuman who observed of the 1865 Native Baptist War that, “since many of the leaders of the rebellion were Native Baptists and some of the meetings took place in their chapels, it is also important to assess the revolutionary implications of native religion.” ¹⁴⁹

While scholars such as Heuman, ¹⁵⁰ Hutton ¹⁵¹ and Beverly Carey ¹⁵² claimed that the Native Baptists were integral to the event of 1865, no one has attempted to show how their hermeneutics affected the outcome of the protest. This work gives greater recognition to what Brian Meeks, Caribbean political scientist, calls “ideological factors” which are significant variables in social determination. ¹⁵³

This work examines the ideology or the Biblical hermeneutic of the Native Baptists and its role in the resistance.

Hermeneutical Method

The word hermeneutics with its roots in the Greek word “hermeneus”, which

¹⁴⁹ Gad Heuman, ‘The Killing Time’: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 83. The JRC identified four Native Baptist leaders: JRC Vol. 5 157, 246, 1150. Phillippo claimed that the three Native Baptists and the three natives within the BMS were sum total of the number of Baptist protestors involved in the protest. He further said that twenty-six protestors were members of the Church of England and at least thirty were Roman Catholics: Underhill, Life 340-41. Phillippo was exonerating the Baptist missionaries from complicity in the resistance and went overboard by claiming that there were 10 times more Roman Catholics than Native Baptists and a similar ratio in respect to Native Baptists and Anglicans.

¹⁵⁰ Heuman, Killing xv, 83.

¹⁵¹ Hutton, Colour 173-74.

¹⁵² Bev Carey, The Maroon Story. The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica 1490-1880 (Kingston: Agouti P, 1997) 611.

¹⁵³ Meeks 34-35.

meant an interpreter or expounder, one who explains issues, is the art of understanding any written text. ¹⁵⁴ It is a quest for meaning. Werner Jeanrond, German theologian, said that the process of understanding a given text was influenced by one's biases and previous experiences and was, therefore, not a neutral activity. ¹⁵⁵ Whereas hermeneutics is concerned with the general rules that govern the study of interpretation, a hermeneutic, as used in this study, is a specific interpretative technique used to understand texts.

There are many hermeneutical approaches to reading the Bible. David Jasper, British Anglican priest and theologian, said one can engage with the Scriptures through "hermeneutics of faith," which is reading the Bible with eyes of faith, believing every word of it. This was the predominant way of reading the text until the seventeenth century. Then there is the "hermeneutics of suspicion" which involves testing every claim. ¹⁵⁶ This approach seeks to expose the inherent ideological bias in Biblical interpretation. Juan Segundo, Latin American liberation theologian, is well known for the approach called "hermeneutic circle" which was "the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal." ¹⁵⁷ It meant one examines the situation in light of the Bible and then the

¹⁵⁴ David Jasper, Short Introduction to Hermeneutics (Louisville, London: Westminster, Knox P, 2004) 7.

¹⁵⁵ Werner G. Jeanrond, "Hermeneutics," Historical-Critical Method eds. R. J. Coggins and J. C. Houlden (London: SCM, 1994) 282.

¹⁵⁶ Jasper 9- 10.

¹⁵⁷ Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology. trans. John Drury, (1976; New York: Orbis, 1982) 8.

Bible inspires the action and this new situation is again reflected upon based on the Bible and so the circle continues.

Reader-Response Approach

The Reader - Response approach is not a conceptually unified criticism. A Reader-Response hermeneutical perspective is one wherein the reader of the text brings a perspective to the text that relativized the texts and therefore every interpreter has a valid interpretation.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, the approach of the Native Baptists has validity.

Stanley Fish, one of America's leading literary theorists, highlights the importance of the interpretative community. He states that communication occurs only within a "context, or situation, or interpretative community" and the interpretative community determines that understanding achieved by two or more persons. One is constrained by the assumptions and practices of the interpretative community and therefore, there is not an inexhaustible plurality of meanings.¹⁵⁹ In addition, the same utterance in another situation will have another normative meaning.¹⁶⁰ Each community has shared agreement, shared

¹⁵⁸ Edgar V. Knight, "Reader- Response Critique," To Each Its Own Meaning eds. Steven McKenzie and Stephen Hayes (Louisville: W/K, 1993) 197.

¹⁵⁹ Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities (Cambridge, Massachusetts: London: Harvard UP, 1980) 304, 306-07.

¹⁶⁰ Fish 307-08.

values, and shared understanding. Beliefs are not “individual-specific or idiosyncratic” but “communal and conventional.”¹⁶¹ Meaning does not reside solely in the text simply waiting to be discovered through the correct historical critical method but the interpretative community creates meaning. Even when a reader reads alone, he or she is still a member of an interpretative community and is influenced by the mind-set of that interpretative community. In this study, the Native Baptists are an important interpretative community.

This writer reflects on the Native Baptists’ use of a type of Reader-Response approach to ascertain what understandings they brought to the Bible, what meaning they left with after interpreting the Bible and what action followed that reading.

Raymond Brown, Biblical scholar, said that Historical Criticism, which became popular in the nineteenth century, emphasized the intended meaning the author had in mind and required an historical inquiry and reconstruction of the world of the author. Brown also said that Literary Criticism, which became an important method in the mid-twentieth century, was first fashionable in English Literature and then Biblical scholars felt that it could be useful. While Historical Criticism focused on the author, Literary Criticism concentrated on the text itself. It was felt that the text, as an independent authority, was competent to yield meaning of its own that could be separate and apart from what the author intended. The

¹⁶¹ Fish 321. Watson stated that in the interpretative process, persons are dependent on their predecessors whether building on their work or tear down to build a new work: Watson 71.

claim is that one does not have to know what the author intended to derive meaning from the text. One can grasp meaning by exploring the characters, plot and metaphors within the text.¹⁶² General literature also wrestled with the concept of the “death of the author” and “the disappearance of the writer, the autonomy of writing . . . the power of language to organize and orchestrate itself without subjective intervention whatsoever, the notion of intertextualising of all literature.”¹⁶³ Therefore, different readers will derive different meanings, which have their own claim of validity without recourse to having to delve into the author’s purpose. There is also a shift in Caribbean social sciences. Meeks departed from the traditional methodological approach to the analysis of data and style of writing, including the behaviouralist/institutionalist traditions of West Indian social sciences and, later, mechanistic Marxist approaches, to embrace “a more transparent approach to narrative” and to make and reveal one’s “own biography as a central and indispensable part of any scholarly exercise of social-theoretical engagement.”¹⁶⁴ In outlining his biography with his orientation and prejudices, it was akin to a Reader -Response approach, which allows the reader, with his or her orientation and prejudices, to be involved. Additionally, a Reader -Response approach is a return to an art form of interpreting the Bible, which predates the time of the Native Baptists. Isaac Watts, who predated the Native Baptists in expounding on 1 Cor 3: 7, in the

¹⁶² Raymond Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 21, 22.

¹⁶³ Seán Burke, The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida (1992. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998) 9.

¹⁶⁴ Brian Meeks, Narratives of Resistance: Jamaica, Trinidad, the Caribbean (Bridgetown, Kingston, Port-of-Spain: University P, 2000) x.

eighteenth century, said, “The effect of the word preached is often different, and sometimes contrary, both to the preacher’s and hearers’ design.” ¹⁶⁵

There are many hermeneutical approaches ¹⁶⁶ but this writer is attributing the use of the Reader -Response Criticism ¹⁶⁷ by the Native Baptists. This hermeneutical approach of the Native Baptists meant that the important thing in understanding a text was not so much the author (historical criticism) or the text (literary criticism), but rather the reader in his or her interpretative community. While other approaches offer useful insights, it was the reader, or to be precise, the Native Baptists as readers of Scripture, that is emphasized in this study. The Native Baptists as interpretative community did not emphasize what the author meant or what the text meant in its context and instead concentrated on certain texts that were meaningful to their context and how those interpretations expressed solidarity with their hurts, needs and aspirations.

There is, therefore, no predetermined meaning embodied in the text. The reader who is conditioned and shaped by class, race, gender, experiences and previous religious orientation, derives meaning from the text. With this approach there is no attempt to find a single meaning or even the best meaning or a standard

¹⁶⁵ Nine Sermons, preached in the years 1718-19, by the late Isaac Watts, D. D.: Now first published from MSS. In the family of a contemporary friend (Oxford, 1812) 127 in British Library.

¹⁶⁶ There are other approaches, such as Textual Criticism and Source Criticism: Brown, Introduction 21-23.

¹⁶⁷ See Edgar Knight, “Reader- Response Critique” To Each Its Own Meaning eds. Steven McKenzie and Stephen Hayes (Louisville: W/K 1993) 197-219.

meaning. As Jasper articulated, “The idea that a text, least of all a biblical text, may have just one meaning, which, once grasped, remains firm, absolute, and unchanging forever, is a relatively modern concept, and an odd one at that, and would have been alien to an early Christian interpreter.” ¹⁶⁸ Francis Watson, Biblical scholar, observed that “finite texts appear to be open to infinite interpretations.” ¹⁶⁹ Every text is exposed to a plurality of meanings within the confines and context of the interpretative community.

This study evaluates the Native Baptists and their Biblical hermeneutic in their social context.

¹⁶⁸ David Jasper, Short Introduction to Hermeneutics (Louisville, London: Westminster, Knox P, 2004) 11.

¹⁶⁹ Watson 71.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the writings of twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship about the Native Baptists shows how they have been treated, who they were perceived to be, and when they were thought to have been established, what their beliefs were claimed to be and how they were seen to be organized. This overview also examines the works that portrayed the hermeneutics of the Native Baptists and their role in the 1865 Native Baptist War.

In 2003, Lloyd Cooke, Jamaican church historian, in an article in the *Sunday Gleaner*, denied the existence of Native Baptists, claiming, “The term Native Baptists is then more a pejorative than actually the name of a particular Baptist group of churches.”¹ An official Baptist publication written mainly by Jamaican-born Baptists, did not deny the reality of Native Baptists, but rather ignored them in the recording of the history of the Baptists of Jamaica from 1783 to 1938.² Catherall in his post-doctoral work credited the English Baptists with influencing societal changes in 1865³ but gave no commendation to the Native Baptists.

¹ Lloyd Cooke, “Native Baptists: Myth, Much Maligned or Authentic?” *Sunday Gleaner* 14 Dec. 2003: I 10. See response by Devon Dick, “Native Baptists Are No Myth,” *Sunday Gleaner* 28 Dec. 2003: F 8-9.

² R. A. L. Knight, ed., *Liberty and Progress: A Short History of the Baptists of Jamaica* (Kingston: Gleaner, 1938). Some other church writers who have ignored the existence and contribution of Native Baptists include: Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1992) 98; Cyril Clarke ed., *Handbook of Baptist Witness in Clarendon* (Jamaica: Clarendon Baptist Association, 1986) and Inez Knibb Sibley, *The Baptists of Jamaica* (Kingston: JBU, 1965) 49-50.

³ Gordon Catherall, *Baptist War and Peace: A Study of British Baptist involvement in Jamaica 1783-1865* (Liverpool: [c. 1982]).

However, Heuman recognized the significance of the Native Baptists in 1865 and in his book, 'The Killing Time': The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica he entitled a chapter "Ideology, religion and rebellion", ⁴ although he concentrated on the "political agenda" of the Native Baptists. ⁵ This study answers the question about the existence of the Native Baptists by tracing their origin and development and builds on other works, such as Heuman's, by highlighting the important contribution of the Native Baptists especially in the neglected area of the impact of their Biblical hermeneutic on the 1865 Native Baptist War

Fictional Portrayal of Native Baptists

It was essential to get the perspective of novelists and other artists because "the distinction between the literal and the literary truth is extremely difficult to pin down." ⁶ In addition, fiction captures the views of later writers about the events of the nineteenth century.

De Lisser's novel, Revenge, examined the 1865 Native Baptist War and ignored Bogle's Native Baptist faith while describing Bogle as "Drunk with blood and fury" and that "underneath the veneer of his [Bogle's] religion lay deep the superstitions of the African savage." De Lisser, a member of the ruling class who

⁴ Gad Heuman, 'The Killing Time': The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 80- 93.

⁵ Heuman, Killing Time 85.

⁶ David Jasper, Short Introduction to Hermeneutics (Louisville, London: Westminster, Knox P, 2004) 12.

served as editor of Jamaica's leading newspaper, the *Daily Gleaner*, also said Gordon was "hungry for applause."⁷

V. S Reid, leading Jamaican novelist, in New Day, which began in 1865 with the agitation for betterment and ended in 1944 when a new constitution inaugurated a "new day" for Jamaica, mentioned the main historical characters, such as Paul Bogle, George William Gordon, Governor Edward Eyre, the Maroons and the Custos.⁸ He contrasted Gordon, the peacemaker with Bogle the warmonger.⁹ Bogle was the "wild one" and the "madding man" who failed to grasp Gordon's plans.¹⁰ He praised the middle-class, Mulatto¹¹ Gordon. This was a new day in fictional writing in not condemning both Bogle and Gordon as De Lisser did but it showed the same prejudice against Bogle.

In another novel, Sixty-five, Reid narrated the events leading to the 1865 protest and again named the main figures.¹² In this novel "Grandpa Joe" was characterized as "a strong Church of England man" and was the mouthpiece for

⁷ Herbert G. De Lisser, Revenge: A Tale of Old Jamaica (Kingston: Gleaner, 1919) 24-25, 76, 98.

⁸ V. S Reid, New Day (1949. Edinburgh: Heinemann, 1973) 2, 56, 61. Reid specialized in writing historical novels.

⁹ Reid, New Day 8, 68, 92.

¹⁰ Reid, New Day 26, 90.

¹¹ The entry in the baptismal record said George Gordon about three months, "a Quadroon slave on Cherry Gardens" but other baptisms for December 27, 1815 said some were "Negro slaves on Cherry Gardens" and "Mulatto slaves on Cherry Gardens": "Baptism in 1815," St. Andrew Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1807-1826 Vol. 2 53 in 1B/11/8/1/2 St. Andrew 1807-26 in Island Record Office Jam 88 JA 1B/11 in Jamaica Archives. Gordon was a Quadroon.

¹² V. S. Reid, Sixty-five (1960. London: Longman, 1971) 11, 19, 78, 82, 101, 107.

the ruling class. He bitterly opposed Bogle while lauding the role of Englishmen William Wilberforce and William Knibb in the fight against slavery.¹³ Grandpa Joe stereotypically had Bogle as a “hothead” in contrast to “Reverend Mr. Gordon” who was of “moderate outlook” and wanted to fight “with memorials to the Queen.”¹⁴ There was, however, no mention of the connection between Bogle and Gordon and the Native Baptists.

Derek Walcott, Nobel Laureate, in the play Drums and Colours, performed in 1958 to mark the inauguration of the West Indies Federation, depicted the Haitian revolution in the context of a “civilized empire” while overlooking the contribution of the peasant farmer Paul Bogle and the Native Baptists to the Jamaican uprising in 1865 and instead portrayed the middle class businessman and politician George William Gordon as a martyr,¹⁵ having him say:

I risk my life for this; if we ask for these liberties,
We are seeking what is natural.¹⁶

Walcott failed to mention Bogle and the Native Baptists in the uprising.¹⁷

¹³ Reid, Sixty-five 11, 14 30.

¹⁴ Reid, Sixty-five 15, 38.

¹⁵ Derek Walcott, The Haitian Trilogy (New York: Farrar, 2002) 259-61.

¹⁶ Walcott 260

¹⁷ Walcott 259-61.

However, poet Francis Berry in Morant Bay and Other Poems said that Paul Bogle was a deacon in the Native Baptist chapel and George William Gordon was ordained in the Native Baptist Church.¹⁸ He also connected Myal to Native Baptists in a poem replete with references to the Native Baptists.¹⁹ He gave a sympathetic treatment of Bogle and Gordon and recognized their connection with the Native Baptists.

A Jamaican government video production (2002) on the life of George William Gordon did not reveal that Gordon was associated with the Native Baptists; it only stated that he had his own church and ordained persons including Bogle. However, in that same series, Bogle was mentioned as a Native Baptist leader.²⁰ The 1-hour documentary titled Time of Fury: The Story of the Morant Bay Rebellion mentioned that after emancipation most of the formerly enslaved became Baptists and that Paul Bogle was a Baptist deacon. George William Gordon was described as an extremely religious man but throughout the entire film there was no mention of Native Baptists.²¹ A half-hour documentary on the life story of publisher of the *Watchman* newspaper, Edward Jordon, who operated from the 1820s until the 1860s, revealed that Sam Sharpe was a leader

¹⁸ Francis Berry, Morant Bay and Other Poems (London: Routledge, 1961) 6, 21.

¹⁹ Berry 2, 6, 14, 16, 17, 21.

²⁰ Salute to our Heroes. Jamaica Information Service. Video Cassette. JIS, 2002 viewed at the JIS Archives in Kingston, Jamaica courtesy of Adrian Gordon.

²¹ Time of Fury: The Story of the Morant Bay Rebellion. Carey Robinson. Video Cassette. JIS, 1965.

in the Baptist missionary movement, but the film was silent on the Native Baptists.²²



Figure 1: Statue of Paul Bogle in front of Morant Bay Court-house (Sculptor Edna Manley). Photo courtesy of David Boxer.

British-born Edna Manley, renowned sculptor and founder of Jamaica's artistic movement, did a statue of Paul Bogle, which was erected in 1965 for the one hundredth anniversary of the 1865 Native Baptist War. Through the statue, (See figure 1) Manley, in the words of Jamaica's leading art historian David Boxer, "evokes the Crucifixion."²³ The horizontal stretch of the bent arms reminds one of Jesus on the Cross and Manley blending the cutlass with the cross showed she, daughter of a missionary, understood that for Bogle and his followers, religion

²² The Watchman: The Story of the Edward Jordan. Jamaica Information Service. Video Cassette. Jamaica Information Service, [n. d.] in film archives of National library of Jamaica. The film spelt his surname incorrectly. Instead of "Jordan" it should be "Jordon."

²³ David Boxer, Edna Manley: Sculptor (Kingston: National Gallery of Jamaica and Edna Manley Foundation, 1990) 41.

and politics were inter-related and the use of the machete was not necessarily inconsistent with the claims and aims of Christianity. In addition, Jesus according to the Christian Faith died on behalf of others and Manley in evoking that memory is placing Bogle as a martyr of the Christian Faith. In addition, one of Jamaica's leading self-taught artists, Malica 'Kapo' Reynolds, a Shepherd within the Pocomania tradition, made two significant depictions of Bogle, namely "Paul Bogle" (see Figure 2) and "Paul Bogle and Followers" (see Figure 3). According to art critic, Selden Rodman, Kapo's portrayal of Bogle depicted "a dynamic image of human revolt against injustice. The straight back, the thrust of the neck, the vertical arm culminating in the hand clenched around a stone, convey the importance of the issue and power of the righteous" ²⁴ (see Figure 2).

²⁴ Kapo: The Larry Wirth Collection (Kingston: National Gallery, 1982) 15.



Figure 2: Sculpture of Paul Bogle (Kapo: The Larry Wirth Collection)



17. Paul Bogle and Followers, 1966
Cedar
Height: 14½"

Figure 3: Sculpture of Paul Bogle and Followers
(Kapo: The Larry Wirth Collection)

Documentaries or films on the role of Native Baptists in the Jamaican society are non-existent. And most fictional works have either ignored or maligned the Native Baptists, except, Berry, Manley and Kapo who had a high regard for the spirituality of Native Baptist leader Paul Bogle.

Origin of Native Baptists

Many scholars have claimed that there was an umbilical connection between the Native Baptists and George Liele.²⁵ Hailing Liele as a founder of the Native Baptists meant that the Native Baptists existed in 1783, when Liele began preaching in Jamaica. Philip Curtin said, “Liele’s chapel was only one variety of Native Baptist congregation [sic]” and that this “was the beginning of the Native Baptist movement.”²⁶

Edmund Davis, former General Secretary of the Jamaica Council of Churches, said that the Native Baptist Church existed from 1824²⁷ while Patterson argued that the Native Baptists came into being from 1828.²⁸

²⁵ Edward Seaga, “Revival Cults in Jamaica: Notes Towards a Sociology of Religion,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 4; Philip Wright, Knibb ‘the Notorious’: Slaves’ Missionary 1803-1845 (London: Sidgwick, 1973) 78; Alston Chevannes, “Jamaican Lower Class Religion: Struggles against Oppression,” diss., UWI, 1977 34; Monica Schuler, ‘Alas, Alas, Kongo’: A Social History of Indentured African Immigration into Jamaica, 1841-1865 (Baltimore: Hopkins UP, 1980) 34. Mary Turner, Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaica Slave Society 1787-1834 (Urbana: U of Illinois, 1982) 57; Gordon Catherall, “The Native Baptist Church,” Baptist Quarterly 24 (1971) 69; Mervyn Alleyne, Roots of Jamaican Culture (London: Pluto, 1988) 89; T. C. Holt, The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labour and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938 (Baltimore: Hopkins UP, 1992) 290; Robert J. Stewart, Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1992) xvi; Diane J. Austin-Broos, Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders (Kingston: Randle, 1997) 54; Arthur Charles Dayfoot, The Shaping of the West Indian Church 1492-1962 (Kingston: Press, 1999) 130, 152, 184; and Colin G. Clarke, Kingston Jamaica: Urban Development and Social Change, 1692-2002 (Kingston: Randle, 2006) 39.

²⁶ Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Country, 1830-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1955) 32.

²⁷ Edmund Davis, Theological Education in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The United Theological College of the West Indies and its Four Antecedent Institutions 1841-1966 (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998) 59.

²⁸ Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica (London: McGibbon, 1967) 212.

Some scholars identified Native Baptists as being active in 1831.²⁹ Many writings identified Sharpe as a Native Baptist,³⁰ with the implication being that Native Baptists were in existence in 1831. Catherine Hall offered a later date when she asserted “By 1841 Duff, Lyon and others had decided to set up their own Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society to further their cause.”³¹ Russell in proffering a post 1865 date said that within five years the BMS leadership responding to subtle pressures from the Jamaican government and some of its missionaries in the island, began to distance itself from the events of 1865 by suggesting that the Baptists of St. Thomas were not genuine Baptists and the result was a division within the Baptist constituency and “the formation of the Native Baptist Church with significant branches in Kingston and St. Thomas.”³²

²⁹ Alleyne 91. He used Curtin as his source: Curtin, Two Jamaicas 86. See also Abigail Bakan, Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990) 56; Catherall, Baptist War 124 and Mimi Sheller, “Quasheba, Mother, Queen: Black Women's Public Leadership and Political Protest in Post-Emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1865,” Slavery and Abolition 19 (1998): 99.

³⁰ Stanley, History 75, 85; Heuman, Killing Time 36; Shirley Gordon, God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1996) 11; Neville Callam, “Hope: A Caribbean Perspective,” Ecumenical Review 50 (1998): 138; Turner 152, 199 and Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 27. Reckord and Turner are one and the same person. The only difference was that in the later writing “Native Baptists” was capitalized and not in quotation marks. See also Jamaica Information Service, “National Heroes-Sam Sharpe” JIS 1996-2001 <http://www.jis.gov.jm/special_sections/Heroes/Heroes1.htm#Sam> which was visited on 23 Jan. 2006.

³¹ Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867 (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 143.

³² Horace Russell, “The Reactions of the Baptist Missionary Society and the Jamaican Baptist Union to the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865,” Journal of Church and State 35 (1993): 601-02.

The various dates and the wide continuum of dates stretching from 1783 to 1865 for the origin of the Native Baptists are due to the fact that many scholars have not defined Native Baptists or have loosely defined them or used it as Catherall said in a “generic” ³³ sense. The imprecise definitions have played a major role in the proliferation of dates for the origin of the Native Baptists. In addition, by associating certain significant figures as Native Baptists, scholars were inadvertently dating the Native Baptists and got it incorrect. This study seeks to be as precise as possible about the date of establishment of the Native Baptists and also in defining who can be classified as Native Baptists.

Native Baptists and African Religious Expressions

Albert Raboteau, one of the foremost specialists on African-American religious history, said, “By the middle of the nineteenth century, African and Baptist beliefs had begun to fuse in the Native Baptist movement.” ³⁴ Other scholars who claimed that there was an intermingling of African and Christian/European beliefs among the Native Baptists included historians, Monica Schuler ³⁵ and Thomas Holt. ³⁶ However, Cooke did not claim an intermingling but rather felt that the predominant predisposition of the Native Baptists was that they held to

³³ Catherall, Native Baptist 70.

³⁴ Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 28.

³⁵ Schuler 34. For a similar position see Lawson 202 and Clarke, Kingston 39.

³⁶ Holt 291.

practices that more reflected “the African ancestral religions . . .”³⁷ Then there are scholars who linked Native Baptists to specific African derived religious expressions such as Myal, Obeah, Kumina, Convince and Revival. These positions will be outlined below.

According to Seaga, Myal was a “purely non-Christian African derived cult”³⁸ while George Simpson, noted American anthropologist, who did research in Morant Bay and West Kingston (two places in Jamaica known for Myal and Kumina), linked Myal possession to the Kumina ceremony, claiming there was no recorded instance of Myal occurring outside of Kumina ceremonies.³⁹ Additionally, Myalism was centred on a “special dance”⁴⁰ accompanied by “an intense state of spiritual possession.”⁴¹ Furthermore, Myal men “were skilled herbalists”⁴² who according to Russell practised “divine healing and the expulsion of evil spirits.”⁴³ Many writers, including Schuler,⁴⁴ Curtin,⁴⁵

³⁷ Cooke I 10.

³⁸ Seaga, Revival Cults 4. Warner-Lewis said it was an “African religion”: Maureen Warner-Lewis, Creolisation Processes in Linguistic, Artistic and Material Cultures (2002) 248.

³⁹ George Simpson, Religious Cults of the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Institute of Caribbean Studies, U of Puerto Rico, 1970) 167. Lewin also linked Myal to Kumina: Olive Lewin, Rock It Come Over: The Folk Music of Jamaica (Kingston: UWI P, 2000) 190-91.

⁴⁰ Patterson, Sociology 186. See also Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 192.

⁴¹ Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 147. Besson said Myal meant “spirit Possession”: Besson 243.

⁴² Raboteau 35.

⁴³ Horace Russell, “Understandings and Interpretations of Scripture in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth- Century Jamaica: The Baptists as a Case Study,” Religion, Scripture and Tradition in the Caribbean eds. Hemchard Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell (New York: St. Martin P, 2000) 111.

Sheller,⁴⁶ Beckwith,⁴⁷ Raboteau,⁴⁸ and Chevannes,⁴⁹ argued that Myal⁵⁰ counteracts the evil of Obeah.

Schuler in classifying “Native or Black Baptists” claimed that their “blend of African and European religious beliefs and practices was really Myalist, not [English] Baptist.”⁵¹ Linguist Mervyn Alleyne said, “By this time (1831) the distinction between Native Baptist Christianity and Myalism was often blurred and Native Baptists was ‘Christianised Myalism’ ”⁵² while Hutton claimed there was “sameness between Myalism and Native Baptism [sic].”⁵³ Hutton asserted, “This writer’s view is that Native Baptism [sic] was the public arm of Myalism.”⁵⁴ He, however, was engaging in conjecture in asserting such connection because he further stated, “although evidence of a direct link between

⁴⁴ Schuler 40.

⁴⁵ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 30.

⁴⁶ Sheller, Quashaeba 101.

⁴⁷ Martha Warren Beckwith, Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life (New York: Negro UP, 1969) 143.

⁴⁸ Raboteau 33-34.

⁴⁹ Barry Chevannes, “The 1842 Myal Outbreak and Revival: Links of Continuity” The Association of Caribbean Historians 25th Annual Conference [c. 1993] (Kingston: UWI) 15.

⁵⁰ Warner-Lewis claimed that it was spelt “mayaal” though “myal” is the popular spelling Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 190. This writer will use the general spelling to avoid confusion.

⁵¹ Schuler 34.

⁵² Alleyne 91-94. See also Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 94 and Lawson 202.

⁵³ Hutton, Colour 150, 167.

⁵⁴ Hutton, Colour 166-68.

Myalism/Kumina/Convince and Native Baptism [sic] in St. Thomas –in-the-East is so far sparse, it is unlikely that in reality there was no inextricable relations between the two.”⁵⁵ For these three scholars, the Native Baptists and Myalism were intrinsically linked.

Another African derived religious expression that was associated with the Native Baptists was Obeah. Findlay and Holdsworth,⁵⁶ Barrett,⁵⁷ Hogg,⁵⁸ Raboteau,⁵⁹ Bryan⁶⁰ and Bolland⁶¹ described Obeah as being evil. Patterson claimed that Obeah “was essentially a type of sorcery which largely involves harming others at the request of the clients, by use of charms, poisons and shadow catching.”⁶² Then he implied that Obeah was more akin to witchcraft than to sorcery when he stated, “the word obeah is derived from the West African witchcraft and not sorcery.”⁶³ Patterson in outlining contradictory statements about Obeah did not

⁵⁵ Hutton, Colour 166-67.

⁵⁶ G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Vol. II (London: Epworth, 1921) 25.

⁵⁷ Leonard E Barrett, The Sun and the Drum: African Roots in Jamaican Folk Tradition (Kingston: Sangster's, Heinemann, 1976) 73.

⁵⁸ D. Hogg, Jamaican Religions. A study in Variations, diss. , (Yale U, 1964) 6.

⁵⁹ Raboteau 34.

⁶⁰ Bryan 39.

⁶¹ Nigel O. Bolland, “Creolisation and Creole Societies: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Social History” Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle, Oxford: Currey, 2002) 33.

⁶² Patterson, Sociology 188. See also Olive Senior, Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage (Kingston: Twin Guinep, 2003) 354 and Hogg, Jamaican Religions 6.

⁶³ Patterson, Sociology 186.

elaborate on the difference between witchcraft and sorcery though he intimated that sorcery was worse than witchcraft.

But there are scholars who have a different perspective on Obeah. Brathwaite stated that the obeahman was “doctor, philosopher and priest” and that it was a misunderstanding to associate obeah with “superstition, witchcraft and poison.”⁶⁴ Additionally, in the plotting of rebellions, the obeahman guaranteed immunization to the insurgents against the armoury of the Europeans.⁶⁵ Other features of Obeah included healing,⁶⁶ and preventing, detecting and punishing crimes among the enslaved.⁶⁷ Paton outlined an additional benefit of Obeah, which is obtaining justice from superiors. She said that unlike both the colonial court system and the systems of justice associated with the indigenous dissenting churches, Obeah held out the possibility of “gaining redress even in conflicts with the people of superior status, including planters.”⁶⁸

Some scholars who have stated their opinions on the relationship between the Native Baptists and Obeah include Turner who said, “The Native Baptist leaders

⁶⁴ Edward Brathwaite, The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 219.

⁶⁵ Patterson, Sociology 192, Raboteau 34, Douglas Hall In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86 (London: Macmillan, 1989) 98 and Hutton, Colour 168, 245.

⁶⁶ Patterson, Sociology 192, Besson 242 and Barry Higman, Slave Populations of the British Caribbean 1807-1834 ([Kingston]: Press, 1995) 272.

⁶⁷ Patterson, Sociology 190.

⁶⁸ Diana Paton, No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780-1870 (Kingston: UWI P, 2004) 182.

were defined, accurately enough, as ‘Christianised obeahs,’ whose sects simply compounded error with error,”⁶⁹ and Hutton, who in a convoluted way, related the Native Baptists to Obeah through a common link to Myal.⁷⁰ Linking the Native Baptists with Obeah is usually an attempt to associate the Native Baptists with the perceived unsavoury aspects of Obeah.

Obeah, like Myal, has been difficult to define. Paton analyzed correctly when she claimed that “Precise definitions of obeah and myalism have proved elusive, in part because of the evidence about them comes almost entirely from outside.”⁷¹ The imprecise definition of Native Baptists and the inadequate definition of Obeah have made it easy for scholars to glibly link both as one and the same. Paton further claimed that Obeah was the name given by Europeans to all aspects of Caribbean popular belief that they found alien and threatening.⁷² Since some in authority in 1865 found Native Baptists alien and threatening, it partially explains why Obeah was associated with the Native Baptists.

One more African derived religious expression that was coupled with the Native Baptists was Kumina. Kumina is “an ancestral cult the main object of which is possession by the ancestral spirits through drumming and dancing.”⁷³ It is also

⁶⁹ Turner 59.

⁷⁰ Hutton, Colour 166-68.

⁷¹ Paton 183.

⁷² Paton 183.

⁷³ Patterson, Sociology 199. See also Kenneth Bilby and Fu-Kiau kia Bunseki, Kumina: A Kongo-Based Tradition in the New World (N. p. Cedaf Asdoc, 1983) 4, 6.

known as “the African dance.”⁷⁴ In addition, Kumina does not use Christian hymns but has its catalogue of “Koongo-based and Jamaican Creole Songs.”⁷⁵ Kenneth Bilby and Congolese scholar Fu-Kiau kia Bunseki stated that for Kumina or Cumina⁷⁶ “the evidence points clearly to a Central African background and a post-emancipation origin in Jamaica.”⁷⁷ Only Hutton speculated that there was a link between Kumina and Native Baptists.⁷⁸

Another ancestral cult believed to have influenced the Native Baptists was Convince. Convince or Bongo⁷⁹ was classified as an ancestral cult.⁸⁰ Donald Hogg visited a Convince meeting and observed that, “Although Convince contains various Christian ritual elements” it had a marked “anti-Christian character.” Hogg added, Convince had “large number of African derived characteristics” with

⁷⁴ Schuler 71 and Bilby and Bunseki, Kumina 1.

⁷⁵ Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 147. Warner-Lewis’ spelling “Koongo” is unique.

⁷⁶ Those who spell it “kumina” included Schuler 71, Seaga, Revival Cults 4, Warner- Lewis Central Africa 15, 17, 76 and Lewin ix, 18. Those who spell it “Cumina” included Patterson Sociology 199-201 and Simpson Religious Cults 167-69. Senior claimed that it could be spelt both ways: Senior, Encyclopedia 270.

⁷⁷ Bilby and Bunseki, Kumina 2. Patterson claimed that Kumina existed from 1730: Patterson, Sociology 201. However, Bilby and Bunseki quoted the historical, archival research of Schuler (1980) which said Kumina had its origin in mid to late nineteenth century: Bilby and Bunseki, Kumina 2.

⁷⁸ Hutton, Colour 166-67.

⁷⁹ Warner-Lewis used the term Convince and Bongo interchangeably: Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 146, 220. Alleyne said that Convince’s other name was “Convince Flenkee” and its members called “Bongo”: Alleyne 93.

⁸⁰ George Simpson, Black Religions in the New World (New York: Columbia UP, 1968) 14 and Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 145-46.

features such as “blood sacrifice, worship of ancestral ghosts, violent trance behaviour conceptualized as spirit possession . . .” ⁸¹

Alleyne connected the Native Baptists and Convince but later admitted that he found diametrically opposing evidence wherein Convince was linked not to Native Baptists but to the Maroons. ⁸² Alleyne quoted Moore who said that Convince originated among Maroons and also stated that it was therefore impossible to reconcile that observation with Presbyterian missionary W. J. Gardner’s comment that Convince was known among the “titular Native Baptists.” ⁸³ Hutton ignored Alleyne’s observation and theorized about a connection between Convince and Native Baptists. ⁸⁴

The final African derived religious expression that the Native Baptists were related to was Revival. Revival was an indigenous African –Jamaican religion, which derived its name from the Great Christian Revival of 1860-61 ⁸⁵ and was made up of two different strands, namely Pocomania and Zion Revival with Zion Revival being the more Christianized form of Pocomania. ⁸⁶ However, one must

⁸¹ Hogg, Jamaican 3, 16.

⁸² Alleyne 93-94. Alleyne relied on Gardner about a connection between Native Baptists and Convince: W. J. Gardner, A History of Jamaica: From its Discovery by Columbus to the Year 1872 (3rd ed. 1873. London: Cass, 1971) 357.

⁸³ Alleyne 93-94.

⁸⁴ Hutton, Colour 166-67.

⁸⁵ For the genesis and growth of Revival read Jamaica Moravian Church 111-18.

⁸⁶ Senior, Encyclopedia 534.

be cautious when trying to differentiate Pocomania and Revival Zionist and heed Simpson's advice that, "it is difficult to distinguish between Pocomania and Revival Zionists' cults."⁸⁷ In the reinterpreted gods in Revivalism there is no reference to Jesus.⁸⁸ Raboteau said the Native Baptists were a "precursor of present-day Revivalist groups in Jamaica" namely Revival and Pocomania.⁸⁹ Diane J. Austin-Broos, Australian anthropologist, was more emphatic and said "The Native Baptists now called 'Zion Revivalists' . . ."⁹⁰ Chevannes also spoke about Revival and "its antecedent forms, Myal and Native Baptists" and linked Native Baptists and Revival because he said Revivalists practised fasting and so did George Lewis, whom he claimed was a Native Baptist.⁹¹ However, similarity of practice is not a foundation on which to claim similarity of belief and affinity to same the institution.

Unlike other scholars who claimed that Native Baptists and Revival were in a relationship, Schuler claimed, "Kumina is thought to have given birth to Pocomania."⁹² Warner-Lewis, who, said Revival, Zion and "Pukkumina" were derived from the crucible of Myal, supports this position.⁹³ Two leading scholars

⁸⁷ George Eaton Simpson, "Jamaican Revivalist Cults" Social and Economic Studies 5 (1956): 402.

⁸⁸ Simpson, Religious Cults 198.

⁸⁹ Raboteau 28.

⁹⁰ Austin-Broos 62.

⁹¹ Chevannes, 1842 Myal 2, 13, 17.

⁹² Schuler 104.

⁹³ Warner-Lewis, Central Africa 190.

did not link Native Baptists with Revival and so raise doubts about the claim by others that Native Baptists and Revival were linked.

The predominant view of most historical writings is that Native Baptists were linked to African-derived religious expressions, though there was little consensus as to which one and hence Native Baptists were linked to African religions and also to Myal, Obeah, Kumina, Convince and Revival. These linkages, if true, would make the Native Baptists one of the most syncretistic religious expressions ever recorded and the Native Baptists would not have had a distinctive identity. Therefore, this study outlines the beliefs and practices of the Native Baptists in order to determine whether such beliefs and practices were African retentions or influenced by European-based Christianity.

Orthodoxy of the Native Baptists Questioned

Historian Philip Wright in the introduction to Phillippo's classic book said, "The Native Baptists were self-appointed spiritual leaders who departed in varying degrees from orthodox belief and practice."⁹⁴ While Catherall claimed, without elaborating, that Native Baptists "tended towards the enthusiastic" and the "religiously unorthodox" and attached to them was a "stigma of illiteracy, fanaticism and superstition."⁹⁵ In addition, British scholar, Colin G. Clarke said

⁹⁴ James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843. Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 7. See also Patterson, Sociology 212; Simpson, Jamaican Revivalist 335; Davis, Theological Education 59 and Senior, Encyclopedia 44.

⁹⁵ Catherall, Native Baptist 70, 72.

Native Baptists resembled “cult groups” rather than orthodox churches.⁹⁶ Curtin and Richard Burton articulated the view that the missionaries were the guardians of orthodoxy who had to compete against the unorthodox Native Baptist ministers.⁹⁷ Similarly, Austin-Broos, claimed that a line was drawn between “Orthodox Baptists” and Native Baptists concerning the Native Baptists’ worldview that politics and morality merged.⁹⁸ Furthermore, Hall said some Native Baptists were “seceders from orthodox congregations” and were “susceptible” to unorthodoxy.⁹⁹ Moreover, as recently as 2007, a Jamaican government website declared that the Native Baptists had “superstitious and pagan beliefs.”¹⁰⁰ This official release alleged that the Native Baptists were credulous and unorthodox.

Curtin gave two specific examples of the Native Baptists departure from orthodoxy. The first was “the emphasis on the ‘the spirit’ and a corresponding neglect of the written word.” This spirit emphasis was demonstrated by possession of the “the spirit” which descended upon the follower in a dream. The

⁹⁶ Clarke, Kingston 117.

⁹⁷ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 34 and Richard D.E. Burton, Afro-Creole Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1997) 99.

⁹⁸ Austin-Broos 61.

⁹⁹ Hall, Civilising Subjects 144, 165.

¹⁰⁰ “Culture,” Jamaica History, Jamaica Information Service, “Government of Jamaica-Culture,” JIS 1996-2007 <http://www.jis.gov.jm.gov_ja/culture.asp>. It referred to Moses Baker and George Liele as “slaves” when in fact they came to Jamaica as freedmen.

other example was that the Native Baptists believed in “the subordination of Christ as the chief religious figure and an emphasis on John the Baptist.” ¹⁰¹

In addition, Simpson caricatured Native Baptists as “spirit Baptists” ¹⁰² implying that they did not emphasize the Bible as much as they did the Holy Spirit or as Cooke puts it they “allow more liberty in the Spirit, and even ‘possession by the spirits.’ ” ¹⁰³

Holt was subtle in questioning the orthodoxy of the Native Baptists in his claim that they were millenarians. Holt claimed that the Bogle/Gordon Native Baptist alliance had “a strong millennial undercurrent” ¹⁰⁴ and gave as an example of Gordon’s “millennial faith” the following statement: “ Their plan is to pray to God for deliverance. You may laugh at this and call it cant, but I assure you it is the most effectual plan. If you know the number of ways in which God can, and often does destroy the evildoer, you would agree.” ¹⁰⁵ But in fact, Holt had earlier said that Native Baptists’ churches “were venues for fostering community, legitimizing alternative worldviews, and articulating political solidarity” and he further claimed that the “churches were political not in the narrow sense of partisan

¹⁰¹ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 33-34.

¹⁰² Simpson, Black Religions 52-3. Reid also spoke about “Spirit Baptists” as distinct from English Baptists: C. S. Reid, Samuel Sharpe: From Slave to National Hero (Kingston: Bustamante IPIA, 1988) 52. See also Wright who intimated that the Native Baptists were “spirit Baptists”: Wright, Knibb 78.

¹⁰³ Cooke I 10.

¹⁰⁴ Holt 294. Craton made a similar allegation that the 1831 Baptist War was millenarian: Michael Craton, Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton: Randle, Currey, Weiner, 1997) 316.

¹⁰⁵ Holt 295. See also JRC Vol. 4 228.

politics but in the broad sense . . . ”¹⁰⁶ Holt was indicating that the Native Baptists wanted community and political changes in the here and now. Holt’s observations seemed contradictory because he claimed that they were expecting that God would intervene without human agency for a change in their material situation but also said that they were involved in political action to transform the society.

Heuman did not share Holt’s view about the Native Baptists as millenarians and said, “For Native Baptists, religion contained a significant political dimension” and “Bogle also made use of the Native Baptists to support his political and religious ally, George William Gordon.”¹⁰⁷ Heuman added that Gordon’s final letter was “suffused with the mixture of religious and political ideas.”¹⁰⁸

Henderson also said the events that led to protest at Morant Bay in 1865 do not come within the scope of church history but may be properly regarded as “political.”¹⁰⁹ Catherall was more restrained and argued that the Native Baptist group was “semi-political” though he did state that Bogle and Gordon used the Native Baptist Church “for political ends.”¹¹⁰ Both Heuman and Hutton observed that most of the political leaders were Native Baptist members and preachers.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Holt 291.

¹⁰⁷ Heuman, Killing Time 184.

¹⁰⁸ Heuman Killing Time 184.

¹⁰⁹ Henderson 107.

¹¹⁰ Catherall, Native Baptist 71.

¹¹¹ Hutton, Colour 172-73 and Heuman, Killing Time 83.

These observations conflict with Holt's argument about a millennial undercurrent.

In addition, Heuman claimed that the political outshone the religious in 1865:

The oaths taken by the slaves in 1831 and by the ex-slaves in 1865 represented a fusion of religion and politics, but one in which political goals were dominant. Both the Baptist war and Morant Bay rebellion were political movements, but they were partly inspired by Baptist and Native Baptist traditions. ¹¹²

Heuman in his epilogue also said that politics was an integral part of the religious faith and expression, - "For Native Baptists, religion contained a significant political dimension." ¹¹³ Heuman in this statement was claiming that for the Native Baptists, their political activism was an outworking of their Christian Faith. Wilmot strengthened that position by highlighting some other Native Baptists who were involved in political activism. For example, John Davis, a Native Baptist pastor in Kingston, who had a chapel in Morant Bay, supported political candidates Mr. Heslop, as well as Andrew Duncan in the 1849 elections. Wilmot further indicated that, "the Native Baptist network in the parish was already politically active before George William Gordon's campaigns in the

¹¹² Heuman, Killing Time 37.

¹¹³ Heuman, Killing Time 184.

1860s.”¹¹⁴ In the 1850s, Matthew Lutas, a tailor, freeholder and trustee of the Native Baptist Church in Kingston was one of two of Kingston’s leading political organizers. In addition, Samuel Clarke mobilized small freeholders in St. David for electoral politics.¹¹⁵ The data suggests that the Native Baptists were not millenarians but were politically active as an expression of their religious faith.

Another way, in which the Native Baptists’ faith was expressed, was its pre-occupation with justice. Hutton, Gordon and Paton highlighted the justice system that emanated from the Native Baptists. Hutton demonstrated that Bogle was a Justice of the Peace and had an alternate justice system based on trial by jury with a structure and terms of reference. The court also issued written summons to people whom it felt violated the laws.¹¹⁶ Gordon said that many Native Baptist sects established their own courts following the Moses Baker pattern.¹¹⁷ Paton claimed there was the “existence of a network of popular courts, institutionally based in the Native Baptist Church” in post-emancipation Jamaica for the purpose of “resolving or mediating conflicts” in response to the “unstable”

¹¹⁴ Swithin Wilmot “ ‘A Stake in the Soil’: Land and Creole Politics in Free Jamaica – the 1849 Elections,” *The Shadow of The Plantation: Caribbean History and Legacy* ed. Alvin O. Thompson (Kingston: Randle, 2002) 317-18.

¹¹⁵ Swithin Wilmot, “The Politics of Samuel Clarke: Black Creole Politician in Free Jamaica, 1851-1865” *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture* eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle; Oxford, Currey, 2002) 229.

¹¹⁶ Hutton, *Colour* 191-93.

¹¹⁷ Gordon, *Cause for His Glory* 74.

oppressive official courts. ¹¹⁸ Involvement in the justice system was the natural outcome of the faith of the Native Baptists.

Who were the Native Baptists?

Turner claimed that “Native Baptist” was a broad term and said it was “clearly a generic term for the proliferation of sects in which the slaves developed religious forms, more or less Christian in content that reflected their needs more closely than the orthodox churches, black or white.” ¹¹⁹ It was a nonspecific term that was applied in a general sense to the enslaved who designed church worship to meet their specific needs.

Gordon asserted, “Native Jamaican Christian groups usually called themselves Baptist, and were referred to as ‘Native Baptists’ by those who recorded their existence.” ¹²⁰ Gordon highlighted the problem about who the Native Baptists were. So often, writers who record history label persons and groups as Native Baptists rather than trying to ascertain the groups who identified themselves as Native Baptists or accepted that they were Native Baptists.

Marvia Lawes, Baptist minister, labeled all Baptist groups in Jamaica as Native Baptists. She said, “My use of the name Native Baptists is in reference to all

¹¹⁸ Paton 189.

¹¹⁹ Turner 58.

¹²⁰ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 4.

Baptist groups in Jamaica including and in particular those also served by British Missionaries, but which emerged out of the work of George Liele and Moses Baker.”¹²¹ For Lawes, it was an all-embracing term.

In addition, the Native Baptists were often misrepresented by other designations. For Schuler, Gordon and Hall, Native Baptists was synonymous with “black Baptists,”¹²² Brathwaite represented Native Baptists as “Spiritual Baptists”¹²³ but Raboteau located the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad who interweaved “African customs with a rigidly orthodox Christian creed,”¹²⁴ while Patricia Stephens, a Spiritual Baptist scholar, re-inforced that Spiritual Baptists were indigenous to Trinidad.¹²⁵ Catherall said the Native Baptist Church was a “synonym for rebellion.”¹²⁶ These various designations have made it necessary for this study to ascertain who the Native Baptists were.

Native Baptists and organization

Catherall said, the Native Baptists, unlike the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU), had

¹²¹ Marvia Lawes, “Native Baptist Spirituality: (Re) Claiming Our Heritage” typescript. JBU Mission Archives, Kingston. 2000 6.

¹²² Schuler 34, Gordon, Cause for His Glory 4 and Hall, Civilising Subjects 165.

¹²³ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Nanny, Sam Sharpe and the Struggle for People’s Liberation (Kingston: API, 1977) 21.

¹²⁴ Raboteau 28.

¹²⁵ Patricia Stephens, The Spiritual Baptist Faith (London: Karnak, 1999) 6.

¹²⁶ Catherall, Native Baptist 70.

“no semblance of organisation.”¹²⁷ Gordon supported that statement and said that a feature of Native Baptists and other “Native Jamaican Christian groups” was that they had “no islandwide organisation.”¹²⁸ But Gordon appeared to have contradicted herself about no organization when she quoted Jonathan Edmondson, experienced Methodist chairman, who said, “ ‘A number of men who could not be employed by us have purchased black silk gowns, etc. and begin to form societies under the denomination of *native* Baptists and *native* Wesleyans.’ ”¹²⁹ Surely, to form a society and to be a denomination was an example of church organization. Kortright Davis, Caribbean theologian, also claimed that among the African descendants in the Caribbean there was no “distinctly formed church movement” such as among the African Methodists or the Baptists in the USA.¹³⁰ However, Chevannes claimed that the Native Baptist movement “was apparently institutionalized with a structured following.”¹³¹ and Sheller stated that the Native Baptist Church offered organizational resources in the same way that Black Churches did in the United States Civil Rights Movement.¹³²

¹²⁷ Catherall, Native Baptist 72.

¹²⁸ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 4.

¹²⁹ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 72.

¹³⁰ Kortright Davis, Emancipation still Comin’: Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology (New York: Orbis, 1990) 46.

¹³¹ Chevannes, 1842 Myal 3.

¹³² Mimi Sheller, Democracy After Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Rebels in Haiti and Jamaica (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2000) 14.

Themes and Hermeneutical approaches

Hutton posited that Bogle's approach was to use the Bible for "political/ideological objectives" in order to "justify Black opposition to the social systems and institutions established on the basis of racist notions of the relationship between Europeans and Africans."¹³³ From that hermeneutical perspective Hutton analyzed the marked Psalms in Bogle's hymnal¹³⁴ and developed five principal themes.

The themes were:

- ✓ The equitable use of the earth's resources,
- ✓ The need to use violence to destroy the oppressors,
- ✓ God as the source of justice,
- ✓ God on the side of the oppressed,
- ✓ The need of the oppressed to praise God and take their troubles to him.¹³⁵

Hutton developed themes from the newspapers' reference to Bogle's marked hymnbook but he did not consult a copy of the hymnbook, Watts's hymnal and so made the mistake of believing that the numbering in the hymnbook corresponded with the Psalms of the Bible. For example, Hutton saw a reference in the newspaper account that one of the Psalms marked was "115th" and he, therefore,

¹³³ Clinton Hutton, "Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65," diss., UWI, 1992, 234-35.

¹³⁴ "Hymns Selected and marked by Paul Bogle," Gleaner, 4 Nov. 1865: 4.

¹³⁵ Hutton, Colour 232-34.

examined Psalm 115: 16 in the Bible. ¹³⁶ However, when Psalm 115 2nd version was consulted in the hymnal it does not include a verse 16 but has six stanzas ¹³⁷ and none has the idea contained in verse 16 of that Psalm in the Bible. In addition, while this writer had recognized that Watts's hymnal was not an exact translation of the Psalms but rather Psalms put to music for Christian worship, ¹³⁸ he, like Hutton, failed to realize that Watts's edition based on the *Gleaner's* account consisted of two main sections namely, Psalms and Hymns and the latter were not based on a corresponding chronological number in the book of the Psalms in the Bible. In this Watts's edition, there were two number 11, one that was based on Psalm 11 in the Bible ¹³⁹ and another, which was not based on Psalm 11 but was identified in this hymnal as, not an Isaac Watts's composition but, that of John Rippon, a Baptist hymn-writer. ¹⁴⁰ In addition, the marked hymn number 23 had nothing in common with Psalm 23. ¹⁴¹ Hutton concentrated on Psalms while ignoring all the marked hymns. Consequently, the basis on which Hutton developed his themes was in instances faulty and inadequate.

Another scholar who examined the hermeneutical approach of the Native Baptists was Russell, who in a passing reference, said that the Bible was used by

¹³⁶ Clinton Hutton, "Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65," diss., UWI, 1992, 232.

¹³⁷ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 65.

¹³⁸ Devon Dick, "Paul Bogle: Prophet Without Honour," Thesis UWI, 1997, 36.

¹³⁹ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 6.

¹⁴⁰ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 131.

¹⁴¹ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 172.

Bogle and Gordon “to define the society that was beginning to emerge in their day and led to the peasant uprising of 1865.”¹⁴² However, he concentrated on the hermeneutical approach of Liele and Knibb.¹⁴³ He described Knibb’s hermeneutic as “contextual” and at another time “naïve literalistic” based on a “free” interpretation of Scripture.¹⁴⁴ He also claimed, without elaboration, that the hermeneutic of the enslaved at times resembled the “missionary hermeneutic” and at another time its main preoccupation was the defence of freedom.¹⁴⁵ This study will build on existing works on the themes and hermeneutical approach of Native Baptists, especially the significant leaders.

Theories on the 1865 Native Baptist War

Since the late twentieth century, there have been a few authors examining the 1865 event, including Hall,¹⁴⁶ Don Robotham,¹⁴⁷ Hutton,¹⁴⁸ Heuman¹⁴⁹ and Wilmot.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Russell, Understandings 112.

¹⁴³ Russell, Understandings 95, 99, 100 and 103.

¹⁴⁴ Russell, Understandings 103-04, 112.

¹⁴⁵ Russell, Understandings 110.

¹⁴⁶ Douglas Hall, Free Jamaica 1838-1865: An Economic History (3rd ed. London: Caribbean UP, 1976).

¹⁴⁷ Don Robotham, “The Notorious Riot”: The Socio-Economic and Political Bases of Paul’s Bogle’s Revolt (Working paper 8. Jamaica: UWI, ISER, 1981).

¹⁴⁸ Hutton, Colour.

¹⁴⁹ Heuman, Killing Time.

Hutton claimed that for Jamaica there was a causal relationship between African religious retentions and revolts such as between Obeah and Myal which drove the Sam Sharpe and Paul Bogle movements:

At every juncture in the African's struggle to end slavery and post-slavery oppression the healer/obeahman/obeahwoman and Myal priest/healer/obeahman/obeahwoman led the way. From Nanny, healer/obeahwoman/Queen Mother of Maroonage . . . to Deacon Paul Bogle, post-slavery rebel chief, Obeahism and Myalism were the socio-cultural factors utilized to sue for emancipation and empowerment.¹⁵¹

Caribbean historian, Patrick Bryan, after claiming that there was an association between the 1865 Native Baptist War and the Great Revival of 1860, said there were religious revivals in Jamaica in 1831, 1840 and 1883.¹⁵² However, in ascribing a causal link between a revival, which is a "spiritual and moral regeneration"¹⁵³ and a revolt, it was observed that there were five years intervening between the Revival of 1860 and the 1865 Native Baptist War. In addition, there was a revival in 1840 but there was no revolt. Moreover, Warner-Lewis said there were mass spiritual revivals or outbreaks in Jamaica in 1760s,

¹⁵⁰ Swithin Wilmot, "Women and Protest in Jamaica, 1838-1865," Paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, Martinique, April 13-17, 1987 1-23.

¹⁵¹ Hutton, Colour 168.

¹⁵² Patrick Bryan, The Jamaican People 1880-1902: Race, Class and Social Control (Kingston: UWI P, 2000) 41.

¹⁵³ Schuler 104.

1831-32, 1842, 1860-61.¹⁵⁴ And there was no revolt in 1842. There is a discrepancy between Bryan and Warner-Lewis in that the former has a revival in 1840 while the later has a revival in 1842. However, for both dates there was no revolt. This meant that there could be a revival without subsequent protests. The correlation between revolts and revivals is tenuous.

Kenneth Bilby claimed that the Maroons' narratives had it that Bogle's resistance was infused with "Kromanti power." Bilby claimed that some Maroon sympathizers gave Bogle this power which allowed him "to protect himself from bullets" once he refrained from eating "*bakra* food, sugarcane." The theory was that Bogle became hungry, ate the cane, lost the power and was captured.¹⁵⁵

A popular and predominant view of the 1865 Native Baptist War was that the protestors initiated violence.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Maureen Warner-Lewis, Central Africa in the Caribbean: Transcending Time, Transforming Cultures (Kingston: UWI P, 2003) 192.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth Bilby, True-Born Maroons (Kingston, Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2006) 314.

¹⁵⁶ Heuman, Killing Time 4, 7 and A. G. Hogg, "Rev. A. G. Hogg's Letter," Jamaica Historical Society Bulletin 11 (2000) 138-39. Semmel said Bogle wanted to "forment rebellion": Bernard Semmel, The Governor Eyre Controversy (London: MacGibbon, 1962) 45-46. Semmel gave no support for his statements. Some others who said the protestors threw stones first included Robert Stewart 155 and Holt 298

American scholar, Bernard Semmel said:

Paul Bogle, on the other hand, was organizing small, secret societies whose long-range purpose was to foment rebellion and drive the white man from Jamaica. Reports of illegal drills, of the collection of small arms and ammunition, and of clandestine meetings poured in upon Kingston.

Trouble was reported in parishes throughout the island.¹⁵⁷

Semmel made a distinction between Bogle and Gordon with Bogle being portrayed as violent and Gordon as the rational one seeking to resolve conflicts peacefully. He said Gordon collected subscriptions of money to be used to send a deputation to London, which would “present a petition to the Queen, personally, thus circumventing Governor Eyre.”¹⁵⁸ Heuman and Holt claimed that the protestors went to the Police Station to get arms before entering Morant Bay.¹⁵⁹ This sequence of activities was used as an argument that the protestors had violent intentions. Hutton not only said that Bogle and his followers were violent but also said that they found justification for the use of violence in his marked Psalm. Hutton quoted Ps. 143: 3, 12 and Ps. 11: 2, 6 to support his argument that there was a call to destroy the oppressors violently. He said that these Psalms, “justified the use of violence by the oppressed Black peasantry to remove the

¹⁵⁷ Bernard Semmel, The Governor Eyre Controversy (London: MacGibbon, 1962) 45-46. Semmel gave no reference for his statements.

¹⁵⁸ Semmel, Governor 45-46. Semmel gave no reference for his statements. Robotham substantiated Semmel’s point that Gordon employed peaceful tactics: Robotham 86.

¹⁵⁹ Heuman, Killing Time 4, 89, 184 and Holt 297.

violence and oppression of the White Plantocracy and its allies.”¹⁶⁰ Carey also held that Bogle and his supporters committed “acts of violence.”¹⁶¹ Hall said there was the resolve to “ ‘kill all the white men and all the black men that would not join them.’ ”¹⁶² There are others who claimed that the 1865 Native Baptist War was violent. Heuman said that at the Underhill Meetings “oaths were taken, some of which contained threats to kill the whites and pay no rent for the backlands. Violence at Morant Bay was now on the agenda.”¹⁶³ Heuman also quoted the testimony of William Alveranga who said, “We will kill every white and Mulatto man in the Bay.”¹⁶⁴ In 2000, K. E. Ingram, the editor of the Jamaica Historical Society and a renowned librarian, published, without analysis, the letter of Andrew Hogg, United Presbyterian missionary, which was written twelve days after the protest in 1865, claiming that the protest was violent.¹⁶⁵ In October of 2003, as Jamaica celebrated the achievements of its National Heroes, Martin Henry, University lecturer and newspaper columnist said, “Viscount Ellibank . . . insisted in old age that from second-hand information . . . (that) Negro women sat on the corpses and gashed them with broken glasses. The men opened the skulls, scooped out the brains into calabashes mixed them with rum and drank

¹⁶⁰ Hutton, Colour 232.

¹⁶¹ Bev. Carey, The Maroon Story: The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica, 1490-1880 (Kingston: Agouti, 1997) 573.

¹⁶² Hall, Free 246.

¹⁶³ Heuman, Killing Time 184. Heuman also said that some oaths were accompanied by kissing of the Bible and a commitment to truth telling: Heuman 80-83.

¹⁶⁴ Heuman, Killing Time 4.

¹⁶⁵ K. E. Ingram, “Another Voice from the Past: Concerning the Morant Bay Rebellion,” Jamaica Historical Society Bulletin 11 (2000): 137.

the mixture in the Baptist Chapel . . .” and then Henry seemed to suggest there was some element of truth in the statement when he asked, “Exaggeration and the forgetfulness of old age or some smattering of truth, at least?” ¹⁶⁶ Bogle and his fellow Native Baptists were, in 2003, being re-visited and depicted as rum - drinking cannibals.

On the other hand, George Henderson, Baptist pastor, though calling the 1865 event “tragic” claimed that Bogle and his followers were equipped with their agricultural tools and said of Bogle and his followers, “Some had sticks, and some machettes [sic]-the common agricultural tool of every peasant.” ¹⁶⁷ He did not believe that the people had violent intent. Another Baptist pastor, Leonard Tucker said the Volunteers fired at the protestors and then the protestors responded by throwing stones. ¹⁶⁸ This implied that the protestors were not the initiators of violence but were responding in self-defence.

When the police went to issue a warrant on Bogle and others on Tuesday October 10, Holt claimed that “Bogle told the police that it was too late to go down to the bay that day but that he would come down on the following day for the scheduled vestry meeting. It is not clear whether his initial intent was to submit to arrest or

¹⁶⁶ Martin Henry, “Morant Bay, 1865,” Gleaner 16 Oct. 2003: A4.

¹⁶⁷ G. Henderson, Goodness and Mercy (Kingston: Gleaner, 1931) 107.

¹⁶⁸ Leonard Tucker, Glorious Liberty the Story of a Hundred Years’ Work of the Jamaica Baptist Mission (London: 1914) 79.

to file a protest.”¹⁶⁹ Holt did not ascribe any malice aforethought to Bogle. Wednesday was the most convenient time. Holt claimed that Bogle’s intentions were enigmatic. Holt said, “Its procedural formality and tone, its appeal to redress of grievance, do not suggest violent intent” and he made reference to the testimony of Matthew Cresser who said Bogle went to Morant Bay to post bail. Modern scholar Holt moved away from the majority view of perceiving Bogle’s intentions as violent only to call his intentions “enigmatic” claiming that the procedural formality and the tone of the letter “do not suggest violent intent” but that it was doubtful that Bogle expected “any sympathy from Eyre” and “his military organization and drilling suggested that he was “preparing for a violent showdown.”¹⁷⁰ Holt however, did not claim that Bogle had violent intention, only that he was preparing for a violent confrontation.

Then there is the charge that the 1865 Native Baptist War was not conceptually authentic. Hall, in his seminal work on the economic history of Jamaica from 1838 to 1865, claimed that the protestors in 1865 lacked “any new social, political, or economic philosophies.”¹⁷¹ Don Robotham, the Marxist anthropologist, agreed with Hall that the Native Baptists, who operated in the 1860s, lacked a “clear ideology.”¹⁷² However, Hutton in disagreeing with Robotham that the Native Baptists lacked an ideology, noted that “He

¹⁶⁹ Holt 296.

¹⁷⁰ Holt 297.

¹⁷¹ Hall, Free 250.

¹⁷² Robotham 6, 22.

(Robotham) seriously underestimated the ideological aspects of the people's struggle while praising as heroic its physical, political aspects, as if one could be separated from the other" ¹⁷³ and showed the inadequacies of Robotham's analysis by asserting that, "the Bible played a central role in the direction and development of his (Bogle's) ideological perspective." ¹⁷⁴ Shirley Gordon said, "The events leading up to the Morant Bay riot, and its sequel, demonstrated religious attitudes and the varying religious responses of all concerned." ¹⁷⁵

There were some scholars who ridiculed the Native Baptists. Carey wrote that Bogle engaged in "wishful thinking." ¹⁷⁶ Her theory was that Bogle's plan was idealistic, impractical and imbecilic and he misunderstood Gordon's plan. ¹⁷⁷ Bilby also concluded that Bogle's plan was ill - conceived. ¹⁷⁸ These scholars have given little credit to the intellectual acumen and spiritual insights of Bogle and his followers.

In addition, Robotham, identified other fatal flaws of the Native Baptists as "their religiosity and naïve monarchism." ¹⁷⁹ Robotham saw their religious faith as

¹⁷³ Hutton, Colour 7.

¹⁷⁴ Hutton, Colour 231.

¹⁷⁵ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 99.

¹⁷⁶ Carey, Maroon Story 575, 610.

¹⁷⁷ Carey, Maroon Story 610.

¹⁷⁸ Kenneth Bilby, True-Born Maroons (Kingston: Randle, 2006) 314.

¹⁷⁹ Robotham 6, 22.

fostering subservience to the Queen. However, later in the same publication Robotham glowingly praised religion as a vehicle for “many political ideas of the people” and that “Religion not only attacked the old order but also provided the foundation for the new moral order of emancipated Jamaica.” ¹⁸⁰

Another theory about the 1865 Native Baptist War was offered by Semmel, who claimed that the suppression of the 1865 Baptist War was motivated by racism. To support his argument he quoted *the Times*, May 20, 1868 which said that one English officer flogged and compelled a Negro to say “God save the Queen, and d . . . the black man” and concluded from that reference that this was the essence of the insurrection. ¹⁸¹ However, one statement by a soldier should not be used to generalize on the motivation behind the suppression. Richard D. E. Burton, linguist, classified it as a “racial Armageddon” stating emphatically that race was “clearly the strongest” motivation, “if not the only” inspiration. He however, weakened his statement by mentioning that the protestors “spared the lives of many Whites when they deemed to have done no harm.” ¹⁸² Heuman position was different. Race was just one of the factors, “For the crowd, the colour of its victims mattered, but so did the class and political allegiance” ¹⁸³ Shirley Gordon was non-committal claiming, “To what extent the issue was consciously one of

¹⁸⁰ Robotham 79.

¹⁸¹ Bernard Semmel, “The issue of “Race” in the British reaction to the Morant Bay Uprising of 1865,” *Caribbean Studies* 2 (1962): 5.

¹⁸² Richard D.E. Burton, *Afro-Creole Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1997) 112.

¹⁸³ Heuman, *Killing Time* 185.

colour it is hard to say.”¹⁸⁴ Douglas Hall stated that it “was not a colour conflict” and citing as his reasons that the composition of the Volunteers and the Maroons included persons of African origin. In addition, the protestors killed persons of African origin.¹⁸⁵ Shirley Gordon noted that “Jamaican blacks felt instinctive solidarity with other blacks, slave or free” and the rallying call of Bogle was for “black solidarity” expressed in their socio-religious communities and used for the betterment in society and to “mobilise support for his protest.”¹⁸⁶

Shirley Gordon claimed that Gardner modified his views about the 1865 Native Baptist War before the end of 1865. Gardner who initially condemned the riot and commended Eyre said that the protestors never saw themselves as rebelling against the Queen and the protestors did not kill even one soldier or sailor.¹⁸⁷

William Clarke Murray, native Methodist missionary, stationed in Bath since 1863, said at the January 1866 District Meeting that “no murder had been contemplated in advance by the rioters.”¹⁸⁸ Gordon noted that the Jamaica Royal Commission “did not recognise or chose to ignore the religious impetus in the district protests of October 1865.”¹⁸⁹ This study addresses that deficiency and examines the Biblical hermeneutic that informed the Native Baptists’ response to the existing conditions.

¹⁸⁴ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 110.

¹⁸⁵ Hall, Free Jamaica 250.

¹⁸⁶ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 99, 125.

¹⁸⁷ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 111.

¹⁸⁸ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 116.

¹⁸⁹ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 119.

There are some theories about what resistance movements inspired the 1865 Native Baptist War. Catherine Hall said the Haitian revolution served as an inspiration.¹⁹⁰ Heuman said that the 1831 rebellion and the Haitian revolution served as models of protest.¹⁹¹ Heuman speculated that the Book of Martyrs, which was widely read and circulated, and in which Sam Sharpe was hailed as a martyr, possibly influenced Bogle and the other Native Baptist leaders.¹⁹² Sheller said there was little evidence of a Haitian model in Jamaica in terms of a plan for a violent overthrow of the government and expulsion of the Europeans.¹⁹³

This study offers an in depth analysis of the motivation behind the involvement of the Native Baptists in the 1865 Native Baptist War.

Summary

The Native Baptists have certainly not received their due from most historians over the last couple of decades. There is even the misconception that they did not exist. And then those who claim that they existed have offered dates for their origin from as early as 1783 to as late as 1865. Therefore, this work attempts to settle the origin of the Native Baptists.

¹⁹⁰ Catherine Hall, White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (Cambridge: Polity P, 1992) 282.

¹⁹¹ Heuman, Killing Time 40.

¹⁹² Heuman, Killing Time 86.

¹⁹³ Sheller, Democracy After Slavery 233.

The current historiography on the Native Baptists has propagated erroneous notions about the beliefs of the Native Baptists. If the leading scholars were to be believed then the Native Baptists would be synonymous with Obeah, Myal, Kumina, Convince and Revival. All these assertions could not be correct because all these different religious forms are not homogenous so it would be almost impossible for Native Baptists to be all things to all these various and differing African religious expressions. This study outlines the main tenets of their beliefs and practices.

The historical writings have often either claimed that the Native Baptists lacked a Biblical hermeneutic or if they had one it was unorthodox. The works of many, including historians and writers of fiction, from the early twentieth century onwards have contributed to the perception of the Native Baptists as being superstitious, insignificant, disorganized and violent. Therefore, this survey of modern writers, with the mainly negative comments made about the Native Baptists, has helped to make the Native Baptists' position in Jamaican history, at best, marginal. This study challenges these largely negative perceptions of the Native Baptists while confirming that the few scholars who had positive perceptions were correct. This study demonstrates that the Native Baptists were orthodox in the way they interpreted the Bible and Bible-related sources, which played a significant role in the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

It is necessary to ascertain who the Native Baptists were and what they accomplished and so this writer researched their existence, their identity, their beliefs and practices, their hermeneutics, their influences and impact on society.

Social history of religion

This study is situated in the field of the social history of religion because it aims to show that the Native Baptists, as a religious expression, had an origin, ideology and distinctive hermeneutical approach, which had an impact on the Jamaican society and was influenced by what was happening in society. Social history of religion looks at “the bases of religion . . . where religion and society can be seen as moulding and shaping one another.”¹ Locating this study in the social history of religion is not an attempt to reduce the Native Baptists and their beliefs and practices to its social setting only, but it is an acknowledgement that the Native Baptists were unintelligible without it. This research proposes to ascertain the identity and ideology of the Native Baptists and the dynamics between the Native Baptist Biblical hermeneutic and the Jamaican society.

Asserting the dialectical relationship between a religious faith and society is not a novel approach. Many scholars have recognized that religion and society are

¹ David Clark, Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 4.

interrelated. Durkheim in emphasizing that social solidarity underpinned all religious experiences, stated, “Religion is something essentially social.”² James Obelkevich, using an anthropological approach to explore religious phenomena in a rural district in England, asserted that, “the secret of theology is anthropology and, by extension, that the secret of religious history is social history.”³ Segundo stated that theology “is intimately bound up with the existing social situation.”⁴ Vittorio Lanternari, Italian scholar and historian, claimed that a “religious phenomenon may be explained only in so far as it is possible to trace its historical origin and development and to analyze it systematically in relation to concrete secular conditions.”⁵ Henderson addressing the Jamaican context (1829-1929) said, “political and religious history were found so interwoven that it was impossible to tell the story [Brown’s Town Baptist history] intelligently without including the emancipation of the slaves.”⁶

Therefore, this dissertation using the sociological approach - an attempt to explore religious life in terms of its relationship to other aspects of social structure and culture - analyzes the Native Baptists by probing their social structures and functions. David Clark, sociologist, pointed out that there was a

² Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (trans. Joseph Ward Swain. London: Allen, 1957) 10.

³ James Obelkevich, Religion And Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825 -1875 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1976) ix.

⁴ Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology (trans. John Drury. New York: Orbis, 1982) 8.

⁵ Vittorio Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed. A Study of Modern Messianic Cults (trans. Lisa Sergio 1960; London: MacGibbon, 1963) vi.

⁶ G. Henderson, Goodness and Mercy (Kingston: Gleaner, 1931) 15-16.

general bias of sociology against religious expressions outside of the official institutions. According to Clark, for many sociologists, religion was amenable to scientific analysis only to the extent that it became organized and institutionalized and where religion became a social fact either as ritual or doctrine. It had to be systematic, well formulated and well structured. Clark suggested that this was a paradox because the central task of sociology was to question official versions of reality. Instead the “sociological study of religion has generally displayed a slavish and uncritical acceptance of officially constituted definitions of religious phenomena.”⁷ Though Native Baptists and their interpretation of Scriptures and understanding of God have traditionally been classified as illogical, heretical and underdeveloped, this study, nevertheless, investigates their social class, status, educational levels and economic activity.

Additionally, in this thesis the Native Baptist group is examined anthropologically as to their customs and belief systems. Having not lived among the Native Baptists this writer’s methodological approach is not “participant observation”, an approach that has been criticized for being impressionistic, unscientific, idiosyncratic, non-replicable and for having unquantifiable data.⁸ This method is too dependent on the personality of the researcher and his or her ability to interact with informants. The participant observer method works best

⁷ Clark, Pulpit and Pew 1-2.

⁸ Clark, Pulpit and Pew 35. Edward Seaga, later Prime Minister of Jamaica, lived for nineteen months (1953-54) in a Jamaican village in order to make an anthropological study of religious cults: Edward Seaga, “Healing in Jamaica” True Experience in Exotic ESP (New York: Ebon, 1968) 98. Based on that experience he also wrote “Revival Cults in Jamaica: Notes Towards a Sociology of Religion,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 3-13

when examining one community but in this case that would not be possible because at the time of the study there were no existing Native Baptist congregations. Therefore, the approach to discerning this information was mainly through the writings of others.

Theologically

The Native Baptists were also evaluated theologically. Theology has always been specific and peculiar to different groups. European theology emerged out of European history, reflection, experience and understanding, and according to J. Emmette Weir, Caribbean theologian and Methodist minister, is informed by a “speculative approach” to doing theology with the purpose of answering what is the nature of the world,⁹ while the methodology of Black Theology was based on a belief that God was on the side of the oppressed -“the black poor” in America. It made the oppressed community the centre of theological thinking and discussion.¹⁰ Feminist theology emerged out of gender, wherein Caucasian women felt excluded from theological discourse and wanted to interpret theology through the experience of women while critiquing the emphasis of male domination in church history. It began with a “hermeneutics of suspicion” because of the androcentric bias of all sources -biblical, historical, psychological

⁹ J. Emmette Weir, “Towards a Caribbean Liberation Theology,” Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies 12 (1991): 51 7n.

¹⁰ William Gentz, ed. The Dictionary of Bible and Religion (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986) 143. Weir said that Black theology is “expounded by those who felt exploited on account of race”: Weir 41.

and even linguistic.¹¹ Later, Womanist theology looked at oppression based on gender, class and race.¹² Liberation theology was a reflection done by the economically oppressed in Latin America¹³ with Theresa Lowe Ching, Caribbean theologian, describing it as a theology, “marked by an unusual intensity, concreteness and particularity to meet the exigency of urgent transformation. Their entire theological enterprise, therefore, converges around a specific option for the poor and oppressed.”¹⁴ Lowe Ching concluded that Liberation Theology “re-reads Scripture from the perspective of the poor to discover new challenges of the Christian faith; it employs social sciences in collaboration with other traditional tools in order to free itself and society for liberative service of the poor.”¹⁵ The Native Baptists’ theology was explored from the perspective of liberation because they were attracted to texts, which focused on the liberation of the Africans in Jamaica from their oppressive context.

Primary and Contemporary Sources

This study places great reliance on what the Native Baptists wrote about themselves. Therefore, the primary document is The First Annual Report of the

¹¹ Gentz 358 - 59.

¹² Robert Beckford, Jesus Is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain (London: Darton, 1998) 15.

¹³ Weir 43.

¹⁴ Theresa Lowe Ching, “Latin American Theological Method and its Relevance to Caribbean Theology,” Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies 12 (1991): 4.

¹⁵ Lowe Ching 25.

Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society; Containing a Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of Several of the Stations Connected Therewith; Together With the Number of Members, enquirers, List of Subscribers, Amount of Collections, etc. ¹⁶ This document offered a rare and unique insight into their origin, organization, beliefs, hermeneutics and practices. Except for Catherine Hall,¹⁷ and historian James Robertson ¹⁸ other scholars have ignored this document, despite it being a mine of information. A wealth of information on the Native Baptists was also revealed in John Clarke's Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, Including a Sketch of the Labours of the Early Religious Instructors in Jamaica as well as in the official colonial publication Jamaica Almanack that was published annually in Kingston from 1751 to 1880. ¹⁹

C. L. R. James did not subscribe to the theory that great men were “merely or nearly instruments in the hands of economic destiny” but that “Great men make history, but only such history as it is possible to make.” ²⁰ With a similar understanding of the role of significant persons in historic events, two pivotal characters in Jamaica's nineteenth century history, namely, National Heroes Paul

¹⁶ This document made no reference to a publisher. This document was found at Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford in W. Indies Pamphlets 1832 to 51.

¹⁷ Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867 (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 143.

¹⁸ James Robertson, Gone is the Ancient Glory: Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1534-2000 (Kingston, Miami: Randle, 2005) 370.

¹⁹ Some publications in the series are spelt without the “k.”

²⁰ C. L. R. James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L' Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (Rev. ed. 1938; London: Allison, 1984) x.

Bogle and George William Gordon were scrutinized in relation to the Native Baptists. Bogle's views, sermons and speeches were largely ignored in the contemporary newspapers perhaps because he was not a member of any mission agency under European superintendence. Therefore, the major sources from which to glean Bogle's beliefs and practices were his letters recorded in The Jamaica Royal Commission Report (JRC) and a marked hymnbook, which was found on his body after his execution. This was an edition of "The Psalms of David, with the supplementary Hymns by the Revd. Isaac Watts, D.D." ²¹ Details of Bogle's markings in his copy were reported in the *Gleaner* newspaper. For Gordon, preeminence was given to his rarely quoted speeches in the House of Assembly ²² and his letters in the JRC report, which gave insights into his understanding of God.

The main source for the interpretation about the intention of the Native Baptists in the events leading to the 1865 Native Baptist War and the event itself came from their own accounts. This writer attaches great importance to the letter written by Bogle and nineteen others, which sets out Bogle's objective in marching to Morant Bay on October 11. This letter was laid before the JRC and is the only record from Bogle and his followers about the impending event.

²¹ "Hymns Selected and Marked by Paul Bogle," *Gleaner* 4 Nov. 1865: 4. English Baptist congregations also used Watts's hymns: *Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa* 16 Aug. 1843: 2.

²² These rare speeches were not located at the National Library of Jamaica, Jamaica Archives or Parliament of Jamaica but were discovered in West Indies Collection, UWI. It was discovered under the heading "Jamaica Assembly" (Special Collections X J138. H2).

In addition, much credence will be given to Thomas Harvey and William Brewin, Quakers who toured Jamaica in 1866 and whose findings are recorded in Jamaica in 1866. In addition, the discovery and use of H. R.'s two pamphlets, The Insurrection in Jamaica and The Troubles in Jamaica: A Condensed Statement of Facts challenged the dominant interpretation of the role of the Native Baptists in the 1865 Native Baptist War. Additionally, much credence was given to Underhill's Tragedy of Morant Bay, seeing that Underhill who toured the island in 1859/60 had his personal recollections tested and supported by public documents. Whereas Heuman, a leading authority on the 1865 Native Baptist War, relied on the evidence given at the Royal Commission to interpret the role of the Native Baptists in the event, this writer gave greater weight to what the Native Baptist said and wrote and missionary sources which corroborated what the Native Baptists said and wrote.

The missionaries were not a homogenous group and therefore had orientations based on denominational affiliation, class and race. Many missionary texts were "fundamentally and frankly propagandist in nature" with the aim "to inculcate public support for missionary endeavours" and the authors were males who were frequently silent about their partners' activities and perspectives.²³ Also, missionary writings were sometimes "culturally insensitive and destructive" and "provided a moral justification for British expansion."²⁴ Stephen Neill,

²³ Anna Johnston, Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 6-7.

²⁴ Johnston 2.

missionary to India and missions historian, examined the relationship between colonialism and Christian missions, and conceded, “whatever may have been the beneficial intentions of the missionaries, they were in fact the tools of governments, and that missions can be classed as one of the instruments of western infiltration and control.”²⁵ The missionaries also believed in the superiority of Christianity and its civilizing influence and never supported the protests of 1865,²⁶ which meant one was careful in the use of those materials that depicted the Africans in a negative and rebellious light. In addition, missionary writings were not always reliable in determining the orientation of Native Baptists because they recorded what accorded with their thinking and not necessarily what was the thrust of the Native Baptists’ thinking and actions.

Nevertheless, use was made of the missionaries’ writings, such as books, letters, reports, articles, speeches, pamphlets, periodicals, since these are first-hand and often comprehensive and analytical accounts. Many of these missionary writers had long residence in Jamaica, “forty-three years” in the case of Phillippo²⁷ and were well acquainted with their environment. In addition, Phillippo²⁸ was one of the few writers of that era who recorded what the enslaved and emancipated people said in their own language. Duncan Fletcher of London Missionary

²⁵ Stephen Neill, Colonialism and Christian Missions (London: Lutterworth P, 1966) 12.

²⁶ Jamaica Moravian Church, The Breaking of the Dawn, or, Moravian Work in Jamaica, 1754-1904 (London: Jamaica Moravian Church, [c. 1904]) 55.

²⁷ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 345.

²⁸ James Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843; Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970).

Society who started his missionary work in 1856 and who was one of the closest friends to George William Gordon had “personal knowledge of Jamaican affairs” and wanted to “give a faithful statement of facts.”²⁹ Underhill, in recording the biography of Phillippo, described his good fortune in having at his disposal, “almost daily entries of events as they transpired.”³⁰ The *Baptist Reporter* (1836-57) and the *Missionary Herald* (1819-1865), the official monthly bulletin of the Baptist Missionary Society, were valuable sources of data on correspondence and descriptions of the Jamaican mission and its customs.³¹ This writer depended on missionary writings up to the end of the nineteenth century.

Rare missionary documents were consulted at the Bodleian and Angus libraries, Oxford University, British Library, Cambridge University library, West Indies Collection, University of the West Indies (UWI), National Library of Jamaica and Spanish Town Archives. These missionary writings produced significant information about how the missionaries perceived themselves and the Native Baptists. The major document that gave an insight into the hermeneutics of the Baptist missionaries from the United States of America was The Covenant of the

²⁹ Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, Late of Jamaica (London, 1867) 13.

³⁰ Underhill, Life iv.

³¹ Taylor, English Baptist 22. Joseph Winks, a General Baptist, owned, edited and published the Baptist Reporter, which provided insights into the campaign against slavery. The larger Baptist group, the Particular Baptists, who had most missionaries in Jamaica, operated the Missionary Herald. Particular Baptists believed that salvation was limited to those elected by God while General Baptists believed that salvation was for all.

Anabaptist Church Began In America December 1777 and in Jamaica, December 1783.

This study also depends on the copious notes from The Jamaica Royal Commission Report of 1866, which examined 730 persons over two months.³² However, one was cognizant that some testimonies before tribunals, like Commissions of Enquiry, were biased with witnesses taking the line officials wanted to hear, or what made them look good, or what commended them to those who enslaved them or employed them, hence some there were contradictory testimonies.³³ And it was not surprising that the Commissioners warned that George Lake's testimony, which claimed Bogle said Gordon supported the rebellion "must be received with reserve."³⁴ Furthermore, commissioners sometimes asked leading questions.³⁵

³² JRC Vol. 4 10. Finlason claimed that the purpose of the Commission of Enquiry was to "allow time for the agitation to subside and for good sense to regain its ascendancy": W. F. Finlason, History of the Jamaica Case (London, 1868) 57. Gordon correctly noted a limitation of the JRC Report that "It is the body of evidence, and not the report itself, which reveals the range of attitudes prevailing in society, and the Christian justification offered for the contradictory points of view": Gordon, Cause for His Glory 119.

³³ William Anderson, a servant of Colonel Hobbs, contradicting himself about not knowing and then knowing when Bogle visited his father: JRC Vol. 5 157-59. Holt also mentioned some of the contradictory testimonies Holt 297 and 459 78n.

³⁴ From our Special Correspondent, "The Outbreak in Jamaica," [London] Times 30 Apr. 1866: 9. In this same report, Sarah Robinson admitted to giving false testimony.

³⁵ Rev. Mr. Henderson was asked about the causes of the economic climate, "Did that result from any natural cause, such as the want of rain?" JRC Vol. 5 606 instead of being asked a neutral question such as what was the cause of the economic hardships? Also "Do you agree in what has been said as to the bad effect they had upon the lower orders?" JRC Vol. 5 607 instead of asking what were the effects on the lower orders?

Newspapers and fiction

Another important reference was the newspapers in Jamaica, which were published at least once every fortnight in the nineteenth century. Newspapers were published in all but one or two principal towns in Jamaica.³⁶ They, therefore, covered a wide area and many major events. They also reflected a variety of political positions, for example, *The Kingston Chronicle* and the *Jamaica Courant*, took opposing positions.³⁷ The editor of the *Jamaica Courant* advocated emancipation³⁸ while the *Kingston Chronicle* was pro-planter. But there was a change in outlook in the *Jamaica Courant*, which Peter Duncan, missionary, said called for the “blood of missionaries” after the 1865 Native Baptist War.³⁹ The *Watchman* was known for its anti-slavery stance⁴⁰ and was regarded by the planters as “an enemy.”⁴¹ Some of the editors and publishers used their newspapers to champion their causes. Most Jamaican newspapers gave an understanding into the worldview of the dominant class of the colony and

³⁶ Senior, *Jamaica* 122.

³⁷ Senior, *Jamaica* 122.

³⁸ Studholme Hodgson, *Truths from the West Indies. Including a sketch of Madeira in 1833* (London, 1838) 196. Hodgson also reported that journals, which advocated the cause of humanity, were denied advertisements and supply of paper: Hodgson 196-97.

³⁹ Peter Duncan, *A Narrative of the Wesleyan Mission to Jamaica; with occasional remarks on the state of the society in the colony* (London, 1849) 373.

⁴⁰ Senior said that it was an inferior publication, which received little patronage because it attacked the “respectable part of community”: Senior, *Jamaica* 122. Duncan said that Jordon, editor of the *Watchman* and a Wesleyan, fearlessly advocated the rights of all missionaries: Duncan, *Narrative* 324. Heuman said George William Gordon helped to establish the *Watchman* in the interest of the peasantry: Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport: Greenwood P, 1981) 163.

⁴¹ Duncan 373.

imperial Britain and therefore yielded important information about the planters' interests, orientation and thinking. Some newspaper publications were organs of a particular denomination such as *The Baptist Herald*, which gave valuable information from the perspective of the missionaries. Then there was the *Times* of London, which in addition to repeating extracts from Jamaican newspapers, also had reports from special correspondents and published what the English public thought about what was happening in Jamaica.

Literary works also played an important role in shaping how groups were perceived. Twentieth century literary works by Francis Berry, Derek Walcott, and V. S. Reid were examined to ascertain how they, along with sculptors Malica 'Kapo' Reynolds and Edna Manley, portrayed the Native Baptist leaders. Though these works were not in themselves evidence for the historical reality about the subject matter, they influenced perception about the Native Baptists.

African and Female writers and oral tradition

Hutton was critical of the methodological approaches of Western colonial and post-colonial intellectual tradition and Caribbean scholarship. He claimed that the dominant view was that philosophy, worldview and ideology were "the product and the purview of a white, male, middle-class western educated and Euro-centric mind" and there was a failure to conceive of Caribbean thought as

“African, proletarian, feminine, non-European or oral.”⁴² This study consulted African scholars, such as John Mbiti, African theologian, to avoid the mistake of European scholarship that addressed African religious beliefs and practices with insensitivity and superiority, by judging African religious beliefs and practices against European religious beliefs and practices, with the latter being held as the standard. The writings of female scholars were consulted and the activities and spirituality of women were recorded.

Oral tradition and oral testimony are legitimate sources of information. This writer did not discount the value of accounts transmitted orally from one generation to another since most accounts are transmitted orally before being codified. In addition, though oral tradition and oral testimony might not be precise with details, such as dates, it usually provides accurate information about the subject matter under investigation. Because of the respect for oral tradition and oral testimony, this writer visited sites where Native Baptist Churches were once located to obtain information from older residents about their knowledge of Native Baptists of the nineteenth century. Such locations were visited between November 2004 and July 2005. Those who knew nothing about the Native Baptists included community members who lived on Text Lane, Kingston where a Native Baptist Church was once situated,⁴³ a congregation of 500 persons at

⁴² Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss. , UWI, 1992, 5. Hilary Beckles, leading Caribbean historian, also bemoaned that previous works on a history of Barbados have ignored or suppressed the island’s African traditions: Hilary Beckles, A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) xiv.

⁴³ Visited on 28 Jan. 2005.

Morant Bay Circuit of Baptist Churches held at Lieth Hall, St. Thomas and 92-year-old Louise Johnson, former leader and organist in the Morant Bay Baptist Church, ⁴⁴ Rev. Herbert Hall, pastor of Cave Valley Baptist, Veta Spence, senior Baptist member of Clarendon, ⁴⁵ 90-year-old, Deacon Gladstone Hemmings of Mizpah Baptist, ⁴⁶ Greta Spence of Rest Square, ⁴⁷ 97-year –old Ms. Bryan of Elim Baptist and 80-year –old Maud Brown of Hosanna Baptist, Milk River, Clarendon ⁴⁸ as well as members of Jericho and Ewarton Baptist Churches. ⁴⁹ In addition, letters were sent to all ministers of the Jamaica Baptist Union (see Appendix 1 for sample letter) seeking information or material about the Native Baptists. This did not unearth any information. There was widespread ignorance concerning Native Baptists. In addition, a visit was made to the Memory Bank of the African and Caribbean Institute of Jamaica in Kingston, Jamaica but there was nothing on Native Baptists.

Limitations

The major limitation had to do with missing data. The First Annual Report of the Native Baptists spoke about additional information that would be in the second

⁴⁴ Visit and interview was done on 3 Apr. 2005 in St. Thomas.

⁴⁵ Telephone interview done on 18 Nov. 2004.

⁴⁶ Telephone interview on 8 Dec. 2004.

⁴⁷ Telephone interview with Spence, a lady in her 70s, on 17 Nov. 2004.

⁴⁸ Visited on June 26, 2005.

⁴⁹ Visited on July 24, 2005.

Annual Report to be published in 1842.⁵⁰ However, this writer was unable to locate a second report by the JNBMS.

Another problem was the ambiguous nature of some of the writings when reference was made to Native Baptists. There were references to “native Baptists” which at times could mean those who were part of the organization of “Native Baptists” or just colloquial speech for Baptists who were not connected to the English Baptist mission. At times, one was not sure what was meant.

Summary

This study relied heavily on archival material and primary sources. Locating this dissertation in the social history of religion and examining the Native Baptists sociologically, anthropologically and theologically unearthed valuable information about the Native Baptists and their thinking and operations. To buttress this approach, missionary writings, newspapers of the era and a Commission of Enquiry were consulted. In addition, literary works, the writings of seminal scholars, African writers, women authors, also assisted this study.

⁵⁰ First Annual Report 30.

CHAPTER THREE: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIVE BAPTISTS

This chapter examines the origin, organization, and development of the Native Baptists. It will concentrate on the two main Native Baptist organizations.

Were Liele, Baker and Sharpe Native Baptists?

George Liele was referred to as a Native Baptist and or founder of the Native Baptists by nineteenth century writings/writers such as Jamaica Almanack,¹ Panton,² the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS),³ and its Secretary, Edward Underhill,⁴ H. M. Waddell, Presbyterian missionary,⁵ and the *Baptist Herald*.⁶

¹ Jamaica Almanack 1838 69.

² Philip Wright, Knibb 'the Notorious': Slaves' Missionary 1803 -1845 (London: Sidgwick, 1973) 202-03.

³ Baptist Missionary Society 1842 2. The document claimed that the organization founded by American teachers [Liele and Baker] had 6,000 to 8,000 members in 1842 and some of them were called Native Baptists.

⁴ E. B. Underhill, The West Indies: The Social and Religious Condition (London, 1862) 201, 203-04. Clark in commenting on the same situation said Compere went to Kingston on "the pressing invitation of the Negro Baptists": John Clark, W. Dendy and J. M. Phillippo, The Voice of Jubilee (London, 1865) 146. Since Underhill's book was published three years prior to Clark's then it meant that Clark either interpreted "Native Baptist" to mean "Negro Baptist" or was correcting Underhill. Additionally, it could be that they were quoting two different sources.

⁵ H. M. Waddell, Twenty-nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa 1829-1858 (2nd ed. 1863; London: Cass, 1970) 7.

⁶ "The Insurrection in Jamaica," Missionary Herald 802 in Baptist Magazine 1865. It was said that the Native Baptists, "originated in the labours of Mr. George Lisle, an American Negro."

Liele⁷ was born about 1751,⁸ in Virginia, USA and died no earlier than 1830.⁹ As a member of Matthew Moore's Buckhead Creek Baptist Church, Liele was accorded "a semblance of equality" including participating in baptism and the Lord's Supper with "whites."¹⁰ He was an ordained pastor¹¹ and while a resident in New Georgia, USA, he established the first Baptist Church in Savannah.¹² He left the USA, after the War of Independence, because he supported the Loyalists

⁷ John Rippon, The Baptist Annual Register: For 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of 1793. (London, [c. 1793]) 332, 334. Liele was also called George Sharp because his owner's surname was Sharp and among friends was commonly called "Brother George": Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 332. In addition, he called himself, "George Liele the Elder" perhaps because his son had the name George Liele: The Last Will and Testament of George Liele 12 June 1830 [1, 3] in Registrar General's Department, Jamaica. His surname was also spelt "Lisle": John Clarke, Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica (London, 1869) 10 and Underhill, West Indies 195.

⁸ Liele in a letter dated December 18, 1791 said, "I have no account of my birth, but I suppose I am about forty." Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 335. Therefore, forty from 1791 is 1751. Some said Liele was born in 1750: Horace Russell, "Understandings and Interpretations of Scripture in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth- Century Jamaica: The Baptists as a Case Study" Religion, Scripture and Tradition in the Caribbean eds. Hemchard Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell (New York: St. Martin P, 2000) 95 and Clement Gayle, George Liele: Pioneer Missionary to Jamaica Rev. ed. (1982; Nashville: Bethlehem 2002) 20, 62. However, Russell in another publication speculated on 1759: Horace Russell, The Baptist Witness: A Concise Baptist History (El Paso: Carib Baptist Publications, 1983) 111.

⁹ There was uncertainty about the date of the death of Liele with support for the dates 1750 – 1828: Horace O Russell, Foundations and Anticipations: The Baptist Story in Jamaica 1783-1892 (Columbus: Brentwood P, 1993) 11; However, Russell in another publication speculated it was 1830? Russell, Baptist Witness 111. Gayle's said "1825?": Gayle 20, 62. Brown said 1826: Beverly Brown, "George Liele: Black Baptist and Pan-Africanist 1750-1826," Savacou 11/12 (1975): 58. Clarke said Liele visited England in 1822 and after he returned to Jamaica he died a few years later: Clarke, Memorials 11. There is a Will for Liele dated 1830: The Last Will and Testament of George Liele 12 June 1830. There is no probate document associated with this Will, which could have had the date of the testator's death. Therefore, this writer would put his death no earlier than 1830 based on the last Will.

¹⁰ Thomas J. Little, "George Liele and the Rise of Independent Black Baptist Churches in Lower South and Jamaica," Slavery and Abolition 16 (1995): 189.

¹¹ James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843; Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 279.

¹² Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 332. He also founded a church in South Carolina: Little 188.

who lost and there were persons who wanted to re-enslave him. Therefore, he came to Jamaica as the indentured servant of Colonel Moses Kirkland.¹³ In 1783,¹⁴ Liele formed a small congregation of four Believers of African ancestry, who were refugees from USA.¹⁵ By 1793, he built the first dissenting chapel in Jamaica, the Windward Road Chapel.¹⁶ Several gentlemen of the House of Assembly made subscriptions valued at £40 toward the church building which was erected on three acres of land in the eastern end of Kingston.¹⁷ He later extended his ministry to Spanish Town.¹⁸ Liele also worked for the colonial government.¹⁹ He also had a “few white people” in the congregation.²⁰

¹³ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 334 and Underhill, West Indies 195.

¹⁴ The Covenant of the Anabaptist Church Began in America December 1777 and in Jamaica, December 1783 (London 1796) in W. Indies Pamphlets 1823 to 51, Angus Library, Regent's Park, Oxford; Jamaica Almanack 1838 69; The First Annual Report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society (N. p. [c. 1841]) 4; “Jubilee of the Jamaican Mission,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 57; Underhill, West Indies 190-91. Raboteau claimed that Liele “First preached in Jamaica in 1787”: Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 28. But he gave a different date later when he said of Liele, “in 1784, he organized at Kingston the first Baptist church on the island”: Raboteau 140. Others claimed that Liele began in 1784: English Baptist missionary Tinson said about 1784: The Report on the Moral and Religious Improvement of the Slave Population 368 [1832] in National Library of Jamaica. Liele did write that he started “about September 1784”: Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 334. However, the overwhelming evidence was that Liele began the work in 1783 and the Covenant said it started in “December 1783” which could be equivalent to Liele’s “about September 1784.” Therefore, either date is plausible.

¹⁵ Clarke, Memorials 10 and Underhill, West Indies 195.

¹⁶ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 31; Clarke, Memorials 10; Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 336; Underhill, West Indies 195-97. Knight said this first church was located at the corner of Victoria Avenue and Elletson Road: R. A. L. Knight, ed., Liberty and Progress: A Short History of the Baptists of Jamaica (Kingston: Gleaner, 1938) 1.

¹⁷ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 336. Another account said “white gentlemen” gave “liberal aid” toward the erection of a chapel: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 31.

¹⁸ An unnamed member of Liele’s Church introduced the gospel into Spanish Town: Underhill, West Indies 210.

¹⁹ Underhill, West Indies 199 and Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542.

²⁰ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 334, 337.

Liele and his congregations were of “the Anabaptist persuasion.” ²¹ Liele utilized the Anabaptist’s Covenant, ²² which had a big influence on his spiritual outlook. Anabaptist was a nickname given to the group that disagreed with Infant Baptism. The European Anabaptists of the sixteenth century influenced the Free Church movement in England and also America. They believed in the separation of church and state meaning that the state should not interfere in matters of religion. In addition, they upheld religious liberty, wherein people should be free to practice their religious beliefs. ²³ Underhill said Anabaptist was a term of “reproach” ²⁴ and for Liele to have applied this term, which was perceived as demeaning, showed that Liele was of strong conviction and firm belief.

Liele was also comfortable with the English Baptist tradition and was in correspondence with Dr. John Rippon, who later served as president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. ²⁵ He sought and received financial assistance from the Baptist Societies in England to complete a church building in 1793. Liele’s group saw them as “our father, friend, and brother.” ²⁶ He also reported to

²¹ The Last Will and Testament of George Liele 12 June 1830 [2]. See also Underhill, West Indies 197 and Covenant of the Anabaptist.

²² Covenant of the Anabaptist. Russell has in the title “begun” instead of “began” Understandings 97. See Underhill for a summary of Liele’s articles: Underhill, West Indies 197-98.

²³ R.H. Bainton, Studies on the Reformation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) 129-99.

²⁴ Underhill, West Indies 197.

²⁵ Underhill, West Indies 203. Little said Liele was in close connection with American Baptists Little 197. He gave no reference or example to validate his assertion.

²⁶ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 336-37.

Rippon on the size of the membership of the congregations.²⁷ In 1822, he visited England.²⁸ There was a fraternal relationship between the Liele group and the English Baptists.

In 1816, Lee Compere, English Baptist missionary, was invited to pastor Liele's large congregation in Kingston.²⁹ Six years later, another missionary Joshua Tinson received an invitation to assume "pastoral charge of a society of Baptists gathered together by Mr. Liele, and previously connected with the Missionary Society."³⁰ There was a link between Liele and the BMS. East likened what Liele and Baker did for the BMS as to what John the Baptist was to the mission of Christ.³¹ The English Baptists were building on the heritage of Liele and Baker.

There were many contemporaries of Liele who identified the Liele group as Baptists. Dr. Thomas Coke, Methodist pioneer to the Caribbean region, writing six years before the first English Baptist missionary arrived in 1814 said, "The Baptists have had societies among the Negroes of Jamaica for twenty years."³²

²⁷ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542.

²⁸ Clarke, Memorials 11 and The Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity by the Baptist Missionary Society 1864 Pam 286 Ja Pro 94n in National Library of Jamaica.

²⁹ Underhill, West Indies 204 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 146.

³⁰ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 174.

³¹ David Jonathan East, "The West Indies," The Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1892, ed. John Brown Myers, (London, 1892) 189.

³² Thomas Coke, A History of the West Indies (2nd ed. 2 Vols. 1808; London: Cass, 1977) 410.

George Blyth, founder of the permanent Presbyterian ³³ mission in Jamaica, said that Liele and the other pioneers “took the name Baptist.” ³⁴ An English Baptist missionary periodical hinted: “the Baptist mission may be said to have had its beginning with the introduction of George Liele.” ³⁵ Tinson was asked by the committee inquiring into the moral and religious improvement of the slave population since 1823: “Do you know of any class of people called Baptists, who do not belong to your sect?” He replied, “There are persons in the island called Baptists, who are not connected with the Baptist society in England.” He was then asked, “Do you know at what period they came to the country?” and he responded, “I believe they came from America about the year 1784, after the American war.” ³⁶ Tinson was claiming that Liele and his followers were Baptists.

In addition, the 1841 report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society (JNBMS) and a mural tablet in the churchyard, at the corner of Elletson and Windward Roads, Kingston, which was erected by Independent Baptists made reference to Liele as “the founder of the Baptists in Jamaica.” ³⁷ Native Baptists

³³ The Presbyterian Church was the Established Church of Scotland: Watchman 4 Apr. 1832: 2.

³⁴ George Blyth, Reminiscences of Missionary Life: With Suggestions to Churches and Missionaries (London, 1851) 154.

³⁵ “Jubilee of the Jamaican Mission,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 58.

³⁶ The Report on the Moral and Religious Improvement of the Slave Population 368 [1832]. Baptists, Methodists, Moravians were called sects: G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Vol. II (London: Epworth P, 1921) 129.

³⁷ First Annual Report 4 and Philip Wright, comp., Monumental Inscriptions of Jamaica (London: Society of Genealogists, 1966) 34.

and Independent Baptists called Liele the founder of the Baptists and not founder of either the Native Baptists or the Independent Baptists.

The Liele group was also labeled as “American Baptists”,³⁸ “negro Baptists”³⁹ and “poor Ethiopian Baptists in Jamaica.”⁴⁰ Panton styled the Liele group “original Baptists.”⁴¹ This writer will use the term “Original Baptists” to describe the Liele group, since they were the first Baptists to start a mission in Jamaica.

Liele established the Baptist Church in Jamaica and he was an inspiration to subsequent Baptist work and was the foundation on which the English Baptists built but was never accorded the title of founder of the JNBMS. With the arrival of the English Baptists in 1814, the nineteenth century writings in attempting to make a distinction between the European Baptists and Liele started to retroactively refer to him as a Native Baptist, perhaps meaning nothing more than to claim that Liele was a non-European Baptist. However, Liele was not a Native Baptist and no eighteenth century document referred to him as such. Liele can best be described as an “Original Baptist” who identified with the Anabaptist tradition, used the name Ethiopian Baptist, co-operated with the

³⁸ Church Missionary Society, West Indian Missions 35 Reel 2 in UWI Library and Edward Steane, Statement and Extracts of Correspondence Relating to the Baptist Mission in Jamaica Occasioned by the Misrepresentations of the Rev. Richard Panton (London, 1840) 5-6.

³⁹ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 146.

⁴⁰ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542.

⁴¹ Steane 5.

English Baptists and was revered by the Native Baptists of the nineteenth century.

Moses Baker

In 1814, English Baptist missionary John Rowe (1788-1816) visited Moses Baker at Flamstead and preached to Baker's congregation of 500 ⁴² and in 1821, another missionary, James Coultart (1785? -1836), visited Baker's little chapel at Crooked Spring, a congregation of enslaved and freed persons of 120 children and some adults, which was conducted by the blind Baker. He was described by Coultart thus: "Baker was neither superstitious nor enthusiastic" and of the worship he said, "I have not seen so pleasing a sight in the island." ⁴³ Baker, who was baptized by Liele, invited English Baptists to supplement his work and the BMS sent Rowe in 1814. ⁴⁴ There was continuity between Baker and the English Baptists but no evidence he was a Native Baptist.

Moses Baker was born in New York, USA and married to a fellow New Yorker, Susanna Ashton, a dressmaker, on September 4, 1778. ⁴⁵ In 1783, with wife and

⁴² Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 139.

⁴³ Clarke, Memorials 29 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 47. See also Wright, Knibb 78.

⁴⁴ Underhill, West Indies 204 and Clarke, Memorials 164. In 1822, Mr. Vaughn, proprietor of Crooked Spring and Flamstead made a request to the BMS for a missionary to instruct the enslaved because of the ill health of Baker: "Salter's Hill," Missionary Herald Feb. 1840: 130 in Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1841. Another example of continuity between BMS and Baker.

⁴⁵ Clarke, Memorials 19.

daughter, he went to Jamaica. While in Jamaica Susanna was instrumental in her husband's conversion and she approached Mr. Winn for a piece of land and eventually Baker started a ministry on Winn's property. ⁴⁶

Sam Sharpe

In 1831, Bleby said that when Sam Sharpe spoke at the meeting at Retrieve to outline his strategic strike for wages, "he was the youngest of the party, apparently not more than [sic] twenty-five or twenty six years of age" ⁴⁷ which meant he was born around 1805/1806. ⁴⁸ While there is uncertainty about the exact date of Sharpe's birth, there was no doubt about his death, as he was executed on 23 May 1832. ⁴⁹

Sharpe was a member ⁵⁰ and deacon within the First Baptist Church, Montego Bay of English Baptist missionary, Thomas Burchell. ⁵¹ He functioned as a pastor

⁴⁶ Clarke, Memorials 20, 22.

⁴⁷ Henry Bleby, Scenes in the Caribbean Sea: Being Sketches from a Missionary's Notebook (London, 1854) 17.

⁴⁸ Lawson said Sharpe was thirty-one in 1831: Lawson 169. Lawson quoted Higman who posited that thirty-one was "the average of the majority of the aspiring Creoles in rural Jamaica": Lawson 193 90 en. This is hardly an appropriate way to determine someone's age. Brathwaite stated that Sharpe was born 1801 but gave no reference: Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Nanny, Sam Sharpe and the Struggle for People's Liberation (Kingston: API, 1977) 4. Since Bleby knew Sharpe, this writer will accept his estimate.

⁴⁹ Henry Bleby, Death Struggles of Slavery (London, 1853) 117; Returned Missionary, "The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica," Baptist Reporter July 1864: 305.

⁵⁰ "Execution of Samuel Sharpe, the Rebellious Slave," Watchman 6 June 1832: 7; Bernard Senior, Jamaica, As It Was, As It Is, and As It May Be (1835; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 196; Bleby, Death Struggles 118 and Bleby, Scenes 16.

with “several free men,” some of whom claimed that “they had been for several years professedly connected with the Baptist Society; but they had never seen a white Baptist minister . . . the only instruction which they had received being that which they had obtained from Sharpe.”⁵² Sharpe operated as a minister in an outstation. Among the English Baptists, deacons giving oversight to church stations were common.⁵³ Therefore, Sharpe was not establishing a Native Baptist congregation or even an independent congregation but was operating under the auspices of the English Baptists.

In addition, concerning the 1831 Baptist War, it was well known that “the ringleaders on every estate have been Baptists.”⁵⁴ And since Sam Sharpe was the leader of the resistance, it meant that Sharpe was a Baptist.

Some scholars associated the title “daddy” with a leadership role within the Native Baptist Church and since Sharpe was called a “daddy” they concluded that Sharpe was a Native Baptist. Reckord argued, “Sharpe, however, was not content to serve simply within the church; he built up an independent connection with

⁵¹ Underhill, West Indies 28; Clarke, Memorials 101; Returned Missionary, “The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter July 1864: 301; Returned Missionary, “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter June 1864: 246 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 57.

⁵² Bleby, Death Struggles 120.

⁵³ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 83; “Jamaica: Kingston,” Missionary Herald May 1841: 75 and Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer July 1855: 206.

⁵⁴ “Rebellious State of the Slaves in Trelawny and St. James’s, [sic]” Watchman 7 Jan. 1832: 1.

the 'native' Baptists among whom he figured as a 'daddy' or 'ruler.' ”⁵⁵ Gordon said, “Sam Sharpe, the leader, and his 'captains' were daddies in their Native Baptist groups.”⁵⁶ Heuman said that Sharpe was “a leader in the Baptist church as well as a “Daddy” or “Ruler” in the Native Baptist church.”⁵⁷ Neville Callam, Baptist scholar, said of Sharpe: “This deacon was ‘Daddy’, or ‘ruler’, in the Native Baptist movement.”⁵⁸ In addition, a Jamaican government website said, “Sam Sharpe became a ‘daddy’ or leader of the native Baptists in Montego Bay.”⁵⁹ Curtin believed that “Daddy Ruler” was a title indicative that the office holder was a Native Baptist or a myal man. However, he did not believe that Sharpe was a “daddy.”⁶⁰ Historian, Richard Hart said that Sharpe as a Baptist preacher was referred to as Daddy in recognition of his authority in the church.⁶¹ Hart was correct based on Bernard Senior, military officer, who said that Sharpe was a

⁵⁵ Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 27. Wright defined a “daddy” as a leader who exercised “an absolute sway over the minds and persons of their spiritual children.” In addition, Wright defined a “bush Daddy” as someone who more than likely had been expelled from the missionary church for misdemeanour, or had all along “rejected the white man’s pretensions”: Wright, Knibb 78-79. However, Foulks used the word “daddy” as a stereotypical name for Africans: Theodore Foulks, Eighteen Months in Jamaica; With Recollections of the Late Rebellion (London, 1833) 24.

⁵⁶ Shirley Gordon, God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica (Indiana: Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1996) 11.

⁵⁷ Gad Heuman, ‘The Killing Time’: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 36. See a similar observation in Brian Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1992) 75, 85.

⁵⁸ Neville Callam, “Hope: A Caribbean Perspective,” Ecumenical Review 50 (1998): 138.

⁵⁹ Jamaica Information Service, “National Heroes-Sam Sharpe” JIS 1996-2001 <http://www.jis.gov.jm/special_sections/Heroes/Heroes1.htm#Sam> which was visited on 23 Jan. 2006.

⁶⁰ Philip Curtin, Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Country, 1830-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard UP 1955) 86.

⁶¹ Richard Hart, Slaves who Abolished Slavery (Vol. II ISER, Kingston, 1985) 252-53.

leader and preacher “in the Baptist church” and was therefore “designated in the following style, ‘*daddy, ruler, general, Samuel Sharp.*’”⁶² Sharpe was called “daddy” because he was a leader and preacher in the Baptist church and had nothing to do with the Native Baptist church. At the court hearings of 1832, no one accused Sam Sharpe of being a Native Baptist or asked him if he was one.⁶³ In addition, there was no evidence that the term Native Baptist was in existence in 1832. The irresistible evidence was that Sharpe was not a Native Baptist but was a member and leader serving within the parameters of the English Baptist denomination.

Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society (JNBMS)

In 1837, John Duff and George Lyon were unable to say how many congregations had native preachers but knew that there were “seven of us connected together” and that they occupied 17 stations.⁶⁴ In 1838, there were eleven congregations with six “Native Baptist Preachers.” The six preachers were William Killick, John Duff, John Davis, William Duggan, George Trueman and George Lyon.⁶⁵ In addition, John Clarke, Baptist missionary, mentioned, “a station was begun by

⁶² Senior, Jamaica 184. Senior spelt Sharpe without the “e”.

⁶³ See Colonial Office 137/185

⁶⁴ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837, Angus Library, Regent’s Park, Oxford.

⁶⁵ Jamaica Almanack 1838 69.

Mr. Henry Brown, a Native Baptist Preacher, at Port Antonio, in 1838.”⁶⁶ And in an 1840 government publication, Henry Brown and his congregation were listed among the “Baptist (native) Preachers.”⁶⁷ These preachers and their congregations were the nucleus of the JNBMS.

The Native Baptists became a formal, constituted organization when the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society was founded.⁶⁸ And according to the Native Baptists the formation of the JNBMS began “a new era in the history of Missions.”⁶⁹ Indeed, the formation of the first missionary society in the Western Hemisphere within two years after emancipation was an outstanding feat.

Dating the JNBMS

Catherine Hall posited that the JNBMS was established in 1841.⁷⁰ She, perhaps, came to that conclusion because the Annual General Meeting of the JNBMS was held on June 24, 1841.⁷¹ However, this gathering was “the first annual Meeting of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society”, which implied that the Society

⁶⁶ Clarke, Memorials 219.

⁶⁷ Jamaica Almanack 1840 107. JNBMS has his name as “John” and not “Henry” but it appears to be the same person with both sources identifying Brown with Port Antonio: First Annual Report 18.

⁶⁸ First Annual Report iii, 1.

⁶⁹ First Annual Report 19

⁷⁰ Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867 (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 143.

⁷¹ First Annual Report 2, 30.

was formed earlier. Furthermore, the document stated “this Society was grateful to acknowledge . . . their increase for the past year being 5,323, making in all 13,687.” ⁷² This demonstrated that the Society was in existence from before “the past year”, meaning before 1841. Moreover, the Society had printed “an abstract of the Reports read at our first annual meeting” ⁷³ which meant that this First Annual Report catalogued what had happened in the preceding year.

Additionally, at the 1841 AGM, a resolution was moved requesting that the Treasurer and Secretary be retained. ⁷⁴ That they were retaining their positions in 1841 meant that they held it previously, at least the preceding year in that said organization. Furthermore, the report on the Spanish Town station said, “Sunday, July 18th, was a day of peculiar interest here. The Chapel connected with the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society . . . was opened for Divine Worship.” ⁷⁵ And since this report was delivered at the 24 June 1841 Annual Meeting which recorded a significant event of the Society on July 18, it meant that it could not be a reference to 18 July 1841 because it would be reporting on an event before it happened. Therefore, that statement meant that the JNBMS was in existence at least from 18 July 1840. In addition, an English Baptist Missionary document confirmed that “In 1840 was formed the Native Baptist Missionary Society.” ⁷⁶ What is more, Rev. George Truman, twenty-five year

⁷² First Annual Report 1-2.

⁷³ First Annual Report iii.

⁷⁴ First Annual Report 2.

⁷⁵ First Annual Report 21.

⁷⁶ Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity Pam 286 Ja Pro 95n.

veteran in the JNBMS and an executive member of the JNBMS, ⁷⁷ in testifying about the Native Baptists said that his organization was “formed in the time of Sir Charles Metcalfe.” ⁷⁸ Metcalfe (1839-42) arrived as governor and assumed the government on 26 September 1839. ⁷⁹ Since the JNBMS was formed during the time of Metcalfe’s governorship and since we know that it was in existence in July 1840 then the JNBMS must have been established as an organization between September 1839 and July 1840.

In 1838, the name “Native Baptist” as reference to a distinct group became official when the Jamaica Almanack mentioned it. ⁸⁰ In addition, since that document was compiled in the preceding year ⁸¹ then the term “Native Baptist” could have been applied to Baptists of African ancestry who had formed independent congregations from at least 1837. Apparently, in April 1837, it was not a title that persons of African origin had appropriated to themselves, as two founding members of the JNBMS called themselves Native Preachers ⁸² and not Native Baptist Preachers. There was also no evidence in the Court Trials of 1831-32 of any enslaved person being classified as a Native Baptist and even the Report

⁷⁷ First Annual Report 2-3. His surname was also spelt as Trueman: Jamaica Almanack 1838 69.

⁷⁸ JRC Vol. 5 416.

⁷⁹ Jamaica Almanack 1846 53. See also Frank Cundall, Chronological Outlines of Jamaica History (Kingston: IOJ, 1927) 32.

⁸⁰ Jamaica Almanack 1838 69.

⁸¹ The data is related to 1837, such as, the House of Assembly members list; a school list; the lists of Properties and Proprietors while the church expenditure was for 1836: Jamaica Almanack 1838 50, 65, 101, 161. There was no list that mentioned 1838.

⁸² John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

on the Moral and Religious Improvement of the Slave Population investigating the enslaved from 1823 and which had an examination of John Clark on the 15 November 1832, did not mention Native Baptists among the enslaved population. Therefore, these documents show that the term “Native Baptist” was not in existence in 1832. The word “Native Baptist” came into being at earliest, late 1837 while Native Baptists became an organization, as the JNBMS, around 1839/40.

The establishment of the JNBMS about 1839/40 was a major feat because the English Baptists in Jamaica did not establish an independent missionary society until 1842 ⁸³ and the Church of England only established the Jamaica Home and Foreign Missionary Society in 1861 for the purpose of ministering to persons who lacked a church and to support a mission to West Africa. ⁸⁴

The date when the JNBMS ceased to be is shrouded in mystery. The First Annual Report spoke about additional information that would be in the second annual report to be published in 1842 ⁸⁵ but this writer, with the help of many librarians, could not find it. In addition, apart from Underhill who mentioned “the Native Baptist Association, in 1841” ⁸⁶ and an English Baptist Missionary document

⁸³ Russell, Foundations 48. See also Arthur Charles Dayfoot, The Shaping of The West Indian Church 1492-1962 (Kingston: Press, 1999) 214.

⁸⁴ “Ecclesiastical: Church of England” Ecclesiastical Index 5/1/6 [1/6] in the Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

⁸⁵ First Annual Report 30.

⁸⁶ Underhill, West Indies 232.

which stated that there was “the Native Baptist Missionary Society”⁸⁷, this writer was unaware of any other contemporary document that spoke about a Native Baptist organization.

In 1862/3, the House of Assembly made a financial grant to the Native Baptist chapel on Text Lane, Kingston.⁸⁸ This chapel was affiliated to the JNBMS. In addition, Truman of the JNBMS⁸⁹ testified before the 1866 Commission of Enquiry that he was “a minister of that division of the Baptists called Native Baptists.”⁹⁰ These references demonstrate that some JNBMS congregations were in existence in the 1860s.

Founders/Leaders of the JNBMS

Catherine Hall, avowed, that “Duff, Lyon and others” established the JNBMS.⁹¹ This was a reasonable claim based on the letter Duff and Lyon wrote to the BMS in 1837 bemoaning the refusal to permit persons of African origin to become pastors.⁹² However, the JNBMS First Annual Report does not state explicitly who was the leader(s) or founder(s) of the JNBMS, though H. P. Bethune, Esq.

⁸⁷ Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 95n.

⁸⁸ Votes of Assembly 1862-3 131.

⁸⁹ First Annual Report 3.

⁹⁰ JRC Vol. 5 416.

⁹¹ Hall, Civilising Subjects 143.

⁹² John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

chaired the meeting. This position of chairman was not an executive one; it was apparently ceremonial. The two offices of the JNBMS mentioned were those of treasurer and secretary, which William Killick and John Duff filled respectively. Nevertheless, Killick appeared to be the leader based on his name being at the top of the list of the executive committee members and above Duff's and since "All communications must be addressed to the Rev. Wm. Killick, Native Baptist Missionary House, Kingston, post-paid" ⁹³ and not to the secretary as to be expected, then it probably was indicative that Killick was the *de facto* leader.

Significant denomination

A time of religious fervour preceded the birth of the JNBMS and was also concurrent with the establishment of these congregations. There were overflowing crowds attending many churches in celebration of emancipation on 1 August 1834. ⁹⁴ Church attendance and membership experienced growth in Moravian ⁹⁵ and English Baptist churches ⁹⁶ in the aftermath of emancipation. People walked miles to church. ⁹⁷ The Africans built a chapel in Recess, St.

⁹³ First Annual Report 2, 31.

⁹⁴ Jamaica Moravian Church, The Breaking of the Dawn, or, Moravian Work in Jamaica, 1754-1904 (London: Jamaica Moravian Church, [c. 1904]) 63, 70 and Kingston Chronicle 2 Aug. 1834: 723.

⁹⁵ Jamaica Moravian Church 64.

⁹⁶ "Jamaica: Salter's Hill," Missionary Herald Feb. 1840: 131 and "Jamaica: Brown's Town," Missionary Herald Dec. 1842: 393.

⁹⁷ Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1843: 116. It was not unusual for the people to travel three to four miles to church "Jamaica: Kingston," Missionary Herald May 1841: 75.

Thomas in the Vale and met every other night for worship ⁹⁸ and some Baptist deacons spent “five evenings in the week in teaching the young and the old on some of the estates.” ⁹⁹

Under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a nondenominational group, a committee was formed on 20 October 1830 in Jamaica and by the following year 2,000 Bibles and New Testaments were distributed. ¹⁰⁰ In 1834, the British and Foreign Bible Society donated a copy of the New Testament and the book of Psalms to every apprentice ¹⁰¹ and by 1835, 40,000 copies were in the hands of the apprentices. ¹⁰² In 1840, a Bible Society official, Mr. Wheeler surmised, “it will soon be thought quite discreditable to any one not to possess a Bible.” ¹⁰³ The Bible played a central role in the life of the African and facilitated them doing their own interpretation of the Bible, separate and apart from what they were taught. This was the context in which the JNBMS flourished.

⁹⁸ Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, The West Indies in 1837 (London, 1838) 330.

⁹⁹ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 83. The surname of one author was spelt differently on page 27, “Narrative by the Rev. John Clarke.” It is possible that it was the same John Clarke who wrote another book based on both sources saying the same thing in the same way, that is, that Baker was “neither superstitious nor enthusiastic”: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 47 and Clarke, Memorials 29.

¹⁰⁰ The Twenty-Seventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society (London, 1831) lxi in Cambridge U Library.

¹⁰¹ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 73.

¹⁰² Clarke, Memorials 84.

¹⁰³ The Twenty-Sixth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society (London, 1840) lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

The Native Baptists developed also in the situation where there was a growing awareness that it was necessary to develop an indigenous pastoral ministry, which incorporated persons of African ancestry. Phillippo, in a letter dated 14 July 1831 to John Dyer, first Secretary of the BMS, said he was “convinced that there needed to be the employment of native labourers” because he believed they would be “far more efficient than Europeans” in the “interior of the country.” ¹⁰⁴ In 1839, the Presbyterians thought of confining them to serve in Africa. ¹⁰⁵ The Moravians saw a wider role and recognized that after churches were established among the Africans, they should, “as soon as possible, be presided over by men of their own nation and colour.” ¹⁰⁶ The JNBMS was the pioneer.

Membership

Shirley Gordon categorically said, for the Native Baptists “their statistics are nonexistent” and “it is impossible to quantify their membership.” ¹⁰⁷ However, reports showed the Native Baptists having 8,264 members ¹⁰⁸ (see Table 2).

¹⁰⁴ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 96.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Robb, The Gospel to the Africans: A Narrative of the life and labours of the Rev. William Jameson in Jamaica and Old Calabar (London, 1862) 105.

¹⁰⁶ J. H. Buchner, The Moravians in Jamaica, History of the Mission of the United Brethren's Church to the Negroes in the Island of Jamaica, From the Year 1754-1854 (London, 1854) 133-34.

¹⁰⁷ Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 46, 69.

¹⁰⁸ Jamaica Almanack 1840 107; Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41 and Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 95n.

Table 2: Estimated Membership of Main Denominations 1830s –1860s

Denomination	1839	1840s	1859	1865
English Baptist ¹⁰⁹	21,337	33,658	20,000	19,360
Native Baptist ¹¹⁰	8,264	13,687	N/A	N/A
Methodists ¹¹¹	18,100	22,884	18,478	16,219
Moravians ¹¹²	1,738	15,000 ¹¹³ *	4,182	4,460
Anglicans	N/A	42,000 ¹¹⁴ *	N/A	31,638. ¹¹⁵ *

* These are not members but attendance at church or influence of church

Table 2 also revealed that the Native Baptists was a significant denomination based on membership. This was a phenomenal achievement when it was factored that the Native Baptists, unlike English operated denominations, did not receive

¹⁰⁹ For data for 1838, 1842 and 1865 See Edward Underhill, The Jamaica Mission, in Relations With the Baptist Missionary Society From 1838-1870 (London, 1879) 3, 16. For contrary figures See Freedom in Jamaica (London, 1838) 23, “Tabular View of the Churches in Connexion with the ‘Jamaica Baptist Association’ for 1842,” Baptist Herald 1 Feb. 1843: [1] and Blue Book, for the Island of Jamaica, for the Year 1865 T11. This writer accepted the data from Underhill because he was an official of the BMS. For data on 1865, See Emancipation in the West Indies (London, 1861) 31 but Phillippo said 15, 682 (1859): Underhill, Life 299.

¹¹⁰ First Annual Report 2 and “Jamaica,” Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41.

¹¹¹ See Minutes of the Jamaica District Meeting begun in Kingston January 11th 1838 5, Minutes of the Jamaica District Meeting Begun in Kingston, Thursday January 16th 1840 [6]. Minutes of the Annual District Meeting Begun in Wesley Chapel, Kingston, Thursday January 27, 1853 96, Minutes of the Annual District Meeting begun in Wesley Chapel, Kingston, on Friday January 25th 1861 [15] in Jamaica Archives and Findlay and Holdsworth, Vol. II 328.

¹¹² Sturge and Harvey lxxxv. Jamaica Moravian Church, Breaking 185-86. However, Buchner had different figures: Buchner 153. This writer accepted the official figures for 1853 and 1863.

¹¹³ Figures for 1840: “Jamaica,” Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41.

¹¹⁴ Figures for 1840: “Jamaica,” Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41.

¹¹⁵ Underhill, Life 362 n. Figures related to average attendance in 1869.

financial help from England. In addition, all the other listed denominations had a head start over the Native Baptists with the Anglicans arriving in 1665, the Moravians in 1754, the Methodists in 1789 and the English Baptists in 1814.¹¹⁶

During a 1859-60 tour of Jamaica, Underhill observed the decline of the English Baptist controlled churches while noting the growth of the Native Baptists. He stated that, “There appears to be a gradual drifting away of the black population from the European clergy and ministers, to the ministry of men of their own colour; and as black men become better educated and intelligent teachers, this tendency is likely to increase.”¹¹⁷ He further stated that in Kingston there were six or seven thousand churchgoers of all denominations with 13 places of worship and estimated that there were 5200 persons as regular attendants. Added to that he speculated that there were five Native Baptist congregations, three having “about 1700” another having “over a thousand members”, and another having 640 members.¹¹⁸ For the Native Baptists to have approximately 3340 members compared to 7, 000 churchgoers and 5200 regular attendants in all other denominations reveal strength of numbers.

¹¹⁶ Underhill, West Indies 194, 202, 204.

¹¹⁷ Underhill, West Indies 190-92. See other accounts of English Baptists decline and Native Baptists increase in Underhill, Life 299; John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837 and Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 95n.

¹¹⁸ Underhill, West Indies 190-91. Underhill’s figures appeared credible because in 1841 the JNBMS recorded that there were 4,200 Native Baptists in Kingston: First Annual Report 6.

Generally, the congregations of the JNBMS were of significant sizes with twenty congregations having one hundred and fifty members or more (Table 3). This phenomenal growth could be attributed to the people identifying with leaders of their own colour, the use of language that was easily understood and dealing with issues that were relevant to them.

The growth in membership among the Native Baptists was, however, outstripping the supply of pastors and there was a need for a pastor for the Marley Station, St. John's which had 105 members and for the 416 -member Hayse's Savannah Station.¹¹⁹ Because of the shortage pastors, Lyon, John Turner, Peter Messias and John Mamby had three stations over a large area while Duggan and Robert Blackwell had four stations each.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ First Annual Report 6-7, 10.

¹²⁰ First Annual Report 6-7, 13-17, 21-25.

Table 3: Size of JNBMS Congregations

	Congregation	# of members
1.	Pleasant Hill, St. Mary's	30
2.	Pilgrim's Cottage, Clarendon	30
3.	Gethsemane, St. John's	58
4.	Bella's Gate, St. Dorothy's	58
5.	Zion's Hill, Manchester	60
6.	Port Antonio, Portland	62
7.	Present Hill, St Mary's	71
8.	Paradise, St. Dorothy's	71
9.	Croft's Hill, Clarendon	71
10.	Gravel Hill, Clarendon	90
11.	Burry's Hill, St. Thomas in the Vale	91
12.	Prospect Hall, St. Andrew's	91
13.	Grant Hill, St. Andrew's	93
14.	Unison Park, St. Dorothy's	100
15.	Marley Hill Station, St. John's	105
16.	Bethlehem, Vere	110
17.	Mamby View, St. Andrew's	150
18.	Station, Old-Harbour Bay	150
19.	Milk-River Station, Vere	150
20.	Mount Olive, St. Thomas in the Vale	160
21.	Buff Bay, Portland	175
22.	Bethany Chapel, St. David's	179
23.	Station at Chapelton, Clarendon	201
24.	Sandy Bay, Vere	207
25.	Bullard's Chapel, Clarendon	250
26.	Knight-Street, Kingston	256
27.	Station, Morant Bay	300
28.	Zion's Hill, St. Thomas in the Vale,	336
29.	Bethel Chapel, Morant-Bay	357
30.	Half-way Tree, St. Andrew's	368
31.	Rest Station, Clarendon	416
32.	Hayse's Savannah Station, Vere	416
33.	Hillsyth, Clarendon	443
34.	Marley Station, St. Mary's	500
35.	West-Street, Kingston	500
36.	Highgate, St. Mary's	810
37.	Text-Lane Chapel, Kingston	1002
38.	Windward Road Chapel, Kingston	3700

Source: First Annual Report 4-25

Table 4 shows that the maximum number of stations the JNBMS had was 38.

The Native Baptist churches were numerous. ¹²¹

Table 4: Number of Stations in the Top Five Denominations

Denomination	1838	1841	1859
Native Baptist ¹²²	6	38	5 *
English Baptist ¹²³	55	46	69
Methodist ¹²⁴	14	69	70
Moravian ¹²⁵	N/A	13	12
Wesleyan ¹²⁶	N/A	14	N/A

* Kingston figures only.

The JNBMS was located in nine of 14 parishes ¹²⁷ (see Map 2). It was said that the people in the parish of St. Mary's knew little about the people in Trelawny and there were thousands of people who have never passed from one parish to

¹²¹ Clarke, Memorials 221 and Jamaica Tribune and Daily Advertiser 20 Dec. 1865: [4].

¹²² Jamaica Almanack 1838 69, First Annual Report 2-24 and Underhill, West Indies 190-91. Underhill's figures for 1859 were for Kingston only.

¹²³ Freedom in Jamaica 23, Jamaica Almanack 1843 61, 91- 93, and "General Summary," Missionary Herald 331 in Baptist Magazine 1866. The last reference was for the West Indies but most would be in Jamaica.

¹²⁴ Minutes of the Jamaica District Meeting Begun in Kingston January 19th 1837, Jamaica Almanack 1846 102 and Minutes of the Annual District Meeting Begun in Wesley Chapel, Kingston, Thursday January 27, 1853 96.

¹²⁵ Jamaica Almanack 1843 61, 91- 93 and Buchner 153.

¹²⁶ "Jamaica," Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41 and Jamaica Almanack 1840 107.

¹²⁷ "A parish in Jamaica, in proportion to the size of the island, is equivalent to a county in England": Sturge and Harvey 170 n.

the other, although they were not fifty miles apart.¹²⁸ It was therefore, quite an achievement for an indigenous organization such as the JNBMS to be so large when communication within the island was so inadequate.

Table 5: Number of Preachers/Pastors in Selected Denominations

Denomination	1830s	1840s	1850s
Native Baptists ¹²⁹	6	20	N/A
English Baptists ¹³⁰	15	27	36
Methodists ¹³¹	28	36	26
Moravians ¹³²	8	12	13
Wesleyans ¹³³	16	8	N/A

¹²⁸ "Revivals and Awakenings: The Late Revival in Jamaica," Baptist Reporter Jan. 1862: 21.

¹²⁹ Jamaica Almanack 1838 69. First Annual Report 2-24. This related to 1841.

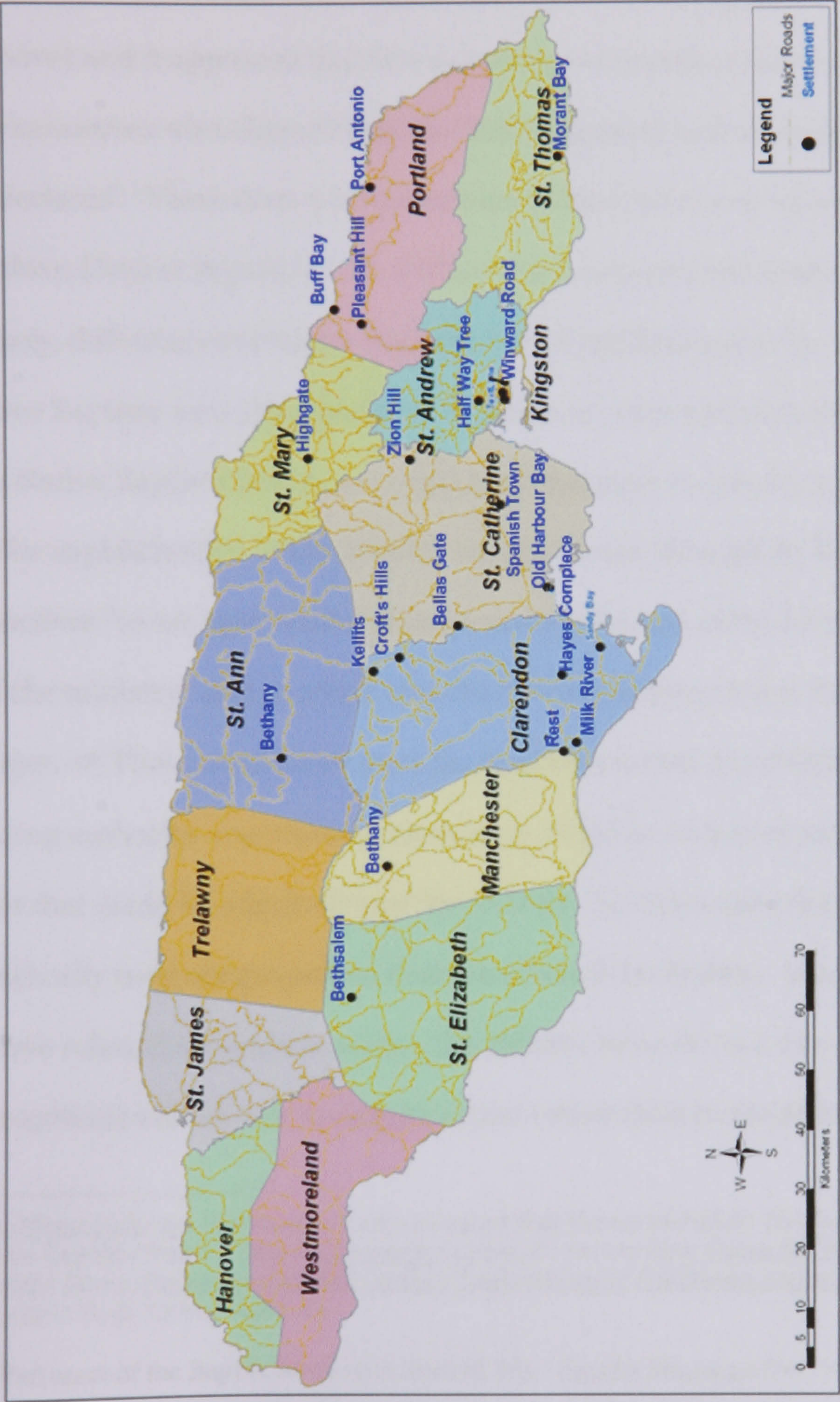
¹³⁰ Freedom in Jamaica (London, 1838) 23; Jamaica Almanack 1843 61, 91- 93, Phillippo, Jamaica 290; Christian Missions in the East and West: In Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1873 2nd ed. (London, 1873) 12, 59, Underhill, Life 96 and William Burchell, Memoir of Thomas Burchell: Twenty-Two Years a Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1849) 325.

¹³¹ Minutes of the Jamaica District Meeting Begun in Kingston January 19th 1837 in District Book: Minutes 1830 to 1837; Jamaica Almanack 1846 102 and Minutes of the Annual District Meeting Begun in Wesley Chapel, Kingston, Thursday January 27, 1853 96 in District Meeting Minutes.

¹³² Phillippo, Jamaica 290 in 1831; Jamaica Almanack 1843 61, 91- 93 and Phillippo, Jamaica 290 and Buchner 153.

¹³³ Phillippo, Jamaica 290; "Jamaica," Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41 and Jamaica Almanack 1840 107. Phillippo, Jamaica 285.

Map 2: Locations of Native Baptist congregations in 1840



Source: First Annual Report 4-25.

Organization

Some modern writers assert that Native Baptists were disorganized (see pages 70-71 above) and it appeared that this assertion was based on the comments of some missionaries who claimed that the Native Baptists lacked organization. Clarke declared: "There does not appear ever to have been any organization among them [Native Baptists]." ¹³⁴ William Teall, experienced English Baptist missionary, differentiated Native Baptists from English Baptists by implying that the Native Baptists were disorganized. ¹³⁵ However, Chevannes and Sheller stated that the Native Baptist Church was organized (see page 71 above), and they were right. The sophistication of the JNBMS was discerned through its five rules. It had objectives "to set apart and ordain, persons of known piety, for the important work of the ministry" and to admit into the Society congregations that were fit and proper. ¹³⁶ These regulations gave the impression that the JNBMS had sanctioning authority over those persons who would be ordained and those churches that could be admitted into the JNBMS. In that sense, the JNBMS had some authority over congregations that constituted the Society. However, in the other three rules, the members within the JNBMS behaved as a free association of congregations with ability to inspire action rather than to mandate it. So, it

¹³⁴ Clarke, Memorials 221. The scholars who accepted that theory included: Gordon Catherall, "The Native Baptist Church," Baptist Quarterly 24 (1971): 72; Gordon, Cause for His Glory 107 and Kortright Davis, Emancipation still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology (New York: Orbis, 1990) 46.

¹³⁵ "Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay," Baptist Magazine Dec. 1837: 815.

¹³⁶ First Annual Report 3. For a contrary view see Gordon, Cause For His Glory 106. She believed that the first attempt at a collective Native Baptist Church with rules was in 1860s.

had the role to “stimulate and encourage each other” in preaching in Jamaica and when funds permitted to send missionaries to Africa; another feature was to “promote” the Christian education of the young and finally to “maintain the unity of the spirit” and work with similar institutions.¹³⁷ While it was the JNBMS, which approved ordination, it was based on the testimonials of the congregations claiming that the candidate possessed “suitable talents.”¹³⁸ There was, therefore, co-operation between the JNBMS and the congregations on the issue of ordaining suitable candidates. The JNBMS appeared to be an association of autonomous congregations in which the Society had the authority to decide which congregations would be accepted as new members and who were appropriate candidates to be ordained as pastors. They may also have had criteria to guide them, which were not stated in the Annual Report. However, from the report, it can be garnered that the JNBMS had an elaborate, flexible and clearly defined organization.

The JNBMS was so well organized that it had schools for the promotion of education and religious instruction among the young. Shirley Gordon claimed otherwise that the Native Baptists did not offer schooling immediately following emancipation.¹³⁹ However, the JNBMS Annual Report of 1841 highlighted the

¹³⁷ First Annual Report 3.

¹³⁸ First Annual Report 3.

¹³⁹ Gordon, Cause For His Glory 4. Carl Campbell stated, “Shirley Gordon found one or two native Baptist schools, one being at Mount Zion in Clarendon . . .”: Carl Campbell, “The Abolition of Slavery and Education in Jamaica 1834-1865” Jamaican Historical Society Bulletin 11 (2001): 165. This assertion was not referenced. However, Gordon claimed that the Native Baptist day school at Mount Zion could not be the only one: Gordon, Cause For His Glory 75. This was a school in existence by 1843, which Gordon interpreted as late post-emancipation.

Native Baptists' Sunday and Day Schools at Rest Station in Clarendon; Croft's Hill, Clarendon and at St. Dorothy's Bella's Gate, and at the latter station the Society employed a "Master" to teach the 50 scholars.¹⁴⁰ This indicated that the central body had assigned resources and that there was centralized planning for education.

The JNBMS also had an executive committee operating the Society, with a chairman, secretary and treasurer and a Missionary House to which subscriptions, donations and all correspondence should be addressed.¹⁴¹ It was also reported that the land for the Mount Olive station was "generously given to the Native Baptist Society."¹⁴² This indicated that the JNBMS had the capability to accept land and was a legal entity in order to receive and own land.

In the 1840s and 1850s there was political networking done by the Native Baptists (see pages 67-68 above). This also was indicative of some level of organization.

The JNBMS was a properly organized, distinctive Christian community with a significant membership. The pastors were screened to ensure they were capable

¹⁴⁰ First Annual Report 11, 15-16.

¹⁴¹ First Annual Report 2, 34.

¹⁴² First Annual Report 23.

to discharge pastoral duties. The Native Baptists were willing to co-operate with other Christians for the spreading of the gospel in Jamaica and in Africa.

Reasons for the JNBMS

Catherall in attempting to explain the development of the Native Baptist group said, “The very nature of the Baptist concept of the church made it easier for independent groups to be formed, owning no allegiance at all to the B.M.S.” ¹⁴³

Any group of persons can form a church and call itself “Baptist” without receiving any official blessing from an existing Baptist group.

However, in spite of the nature of the Baptists, the first group to attempt a non-European independent ministry was the Methodists, through a schism in the 1830s, led by Edward Jordon, Mulatto politician and newspaper publisher, who with others formed the “Independent Methodists.” They solicited Thomas Pennock, English missionary, to join their group, who acceded and resigned in 1834 as Chairman of the Methodist District. ¹⁴⁴ After Jordon and Pennock joined forces the new body, which had a rival synod in September 1834, was known as “the Jamaica Wesleyan Methodist Society.” ¹⁴⁵ The Roman Catholics also experienced the development of an independent congregation when Father Edmund Murphy refused to recognize the authority of Father Benito Fernandez

¹⁴³ Catherall, Native Baptist 70.

¹⁴⁴ Findlay and Holdsworth, Vol. II 329-30.

¹⁴⁵ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 166.

and early in 1833 opened a chapel at Jasper Hall on High Holborn Street, Kingston. ¹⁴⁶ The Methodists and Roman Catholics had independent groups although they had a governance structure that differed from the Baptists.

The answer for the development of the Native Baptists lies not in the church polity of the Baptists but in other reasons as outlined in the document the First Annual Report. One of the reasons given for the establishment of the JNBMS was that some Baptists of African origin felt that “we have not been treated by the Missionaries sent to this Island with Christian charity” ¹⁴⁷ and on assessing the ministry of the founders of the Baptist mission in Jamaica by their ancestors there was not the appreciation of the work and worth of their forefathers. And there was support for that allegation. The English Baptist missionaries produced a document in 1833 that said that the Baptist mission commenced in Jamaica in 1814. ¹⁴⁸ The Committee of the BMS also said, “The Baptist Mission in Jamaica was established in 1813.” ¹⁴⁹ The English Baptists gave the impression that Baptist work started when they arrived. But Baptist work had begun three

¹⁴⁶ Francis X. Delany, A History of the Catholic Church B. W. I. 1494 to 1929 (New York: Jesuit Mission P, 1930) 44.

¹⁴⁷ First Annual Report i.

¹⁴⁸ See The Baptist Missionaries, A Narrative of Recent Events Connected With the Baptist Mission in the Island, From its Commencement, in 1814, to the End of 1831 (Kingston, 1833) 1 in Jamaica Tracts Vol. 3 Godw. Pamph. 2665 in Bodleian Library.

¹⁴⁹ Baptist Missionary Society Jan. 1842 2 in W. Indies Pamphlets 1823 to 51 at Angus Library, Regent's Park. This BMS document got both dates wrong, regarding the start of English Baptist missionary work in Jamaica and also when Baptist work in general was established in Jamaica. Other claims that English Baptists were founders of Baptist work in Jamaica can be seen in: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 16.

decades before, through the instrumentality of Liele ¹⁵⁰ and later Baker, who started Baptist work in western Jamaica in 1788. ¹⁵¹ In fact, when the BMS missionary arrived in 1814, there were 7,000-8,000 Baptists. ¹⁵² The pioneers of Baptist work in Jamaica, who were of African origin, were not getting their due recognition.

In addition, in Jamaica, at the Jubilee celebration of the founding of the BMS in 1864, the English Baptists invoked the names of Carey, Fuller, Rowe, Wesley, Luther and Paul as part of the festivities. ¹⁵³ They mentioned Luther and Wesley, two non-Baptists, but failed to mention even one missionary of African ancestry, not even Liele. The Native Baptists were justified in charging that the English Baptists were disrespectful.

It also appeared that the English Baptist missionaries made it unnecessarily difficult for those of African origin to become members. Concerning questions asked in the 1830s of the Africans as preliminary to being accepted as a member of the English Baptist congregations, Phillippo admitted they would have been offensive if asked of someone under similar circumstances in England, such as “Are you in debt? – Are you married? – if not married, do you live with any one

¹⁵⁰ Wright, Monumental 34.

¹⁵¹ “Jubilee of the Jamaican Mission,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 58. It was also claimed that he requested the BMS to come to Jamaica “Crooked Spring –Jamaica,” Missionary Herald in Baptist Magazine Mar. 1868: 189. This claim has support in Handbook of Jamaica for 1894 (Kingston, 1894) 352. Clarke said Liele baptized Moses Baker: Clarke, Memorials 10.

¹⁵² Clarke, Memorials 69-70.

¹⁵³ “The Jubilee in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1843: 111.

according to the old customs of the country?”¹⁵⁴ That these Africans found it hard to gain membership appears to be borne out by the high number of inquirers, that is, those under instruction waiting to become members. For example, in 1837, the record showed that there were 16,820 members and 16,146 in the Inquirers Class in the Western Union.¹⁵⁵ The numbers of inquirers and members were almost equal. These requirements frustrated and estranged persons of African ancestry.

Moreover, congregations became part of the JNBMS because of perceived maltreatment by the English Baptists. The West -Street station, Kingston, was established in 1838 as a result of the alleged arrogant treatment by Francis Gardiner of the members of his congregation. In addition, the formation of the Haye’s Savannah Station, Vere can be attributed to tyrannical behaviour by another missionary H. C. Taylor which was resisted by one of his deacons on the matter of the “subject of subscription”, which subscriptions the deacon considered was “contrary to the usage of the Baptist churches in England.”¹⁵⁶ Subscriptions can be for a specific reason such as “for the purpose of building a temple for the worship of the most high” or it can be for the general support of the JNBMS.¹⁵⁷ Apparently, Taylor was collecting subscriptions and sending it to

¹⁵⁴ Phillippo, Jamaica 327.

¹⁵⁵ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 100.

¹⁵⁶ First Annual Report 9.

¹⁵⁷ First Annual Report 9, 31.

England while the church building remained unfinished for lack of funds.¹⁵⁸ Duggan parted company with Phillippo because of unreasonable financial demands made by Phillippo on him to relinquish his business and give full -time service without even getting travelling expenses. Duggan also claimed that Phillippo “severely rebuked” him “for standing up to instruct my class-people” and had to endure “much misrepresentation and slander.”¹⁵⁹ Duggan felt humiliated. These types of conflicts led to separation.

Another reason for the founding of the JNBMS was to redress the sidelining of male persons of African descent who could augment the pastoral ministry.¹⁶⁰ Lyon and Duff outlined their grievances in a letter to the BMS:

When Mr. Angus one of your Committee [members] was in the island, it was proposed that some of the useful leaders should be sent out, by their pastors as helpers among that number was John Duff of Kingston and William Duggan of Spanish Town, but was rejected by a Body of your missionaries meeting at St. Ann’s Bay without any just reasons assigned, and ever since it was held [] that we should be sent out, but has from time to time put off, waiting as they say for answer from your committee.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ First Annual Report 6-7. H. C. Taylor was pastor of Four Paths Circuit 1834-37: Clarke, Handbook 10.

¹⁵⁹ First Annual Report 21.

¹⁶⁰ Phillippo, Jamaica 313. In the 1840s, there was an unnamed “respectable female of colour, who has been for many years the leader of a class of females connected with the Baptist Church in Spanish Town.” The JNBMS was not agitating for females becoming pastors.

¹⁶¹ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

The authors of the letter were frustrated, confused and felt that the BMS had gone back on a decision and that the missionaries were less than candid. The English Baptist missionaries had reneged on a decision to use persons of African descent.

In addition, Duff and Lyon felt hurt that after being instructed by missionaries for twenty years, missionaries had to travel 4,000 miles from England, at great cost, to preach the gospel in Jamaica while there were persons of African ancestry on the island who could be mandated to preach to the people.¹⁶² This showed that the missionaries had little regard for the ability and spirituality of those of African origin to be preachers.

The formation of the JNBMS was due to the obstacles placed in the way of persons of African origin becoming pastors. They said:

We cannot but lament the many discouragements that have been from time to time thrown in their way, and which has continued till very lately to retard the progress of others of our countrymen - men of zeal and piety, who would willingly 'spend and be spent' in the service of the Divine Redeemer.¹⁶³

¹⁶² John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

¹⁶³ First Annual Report i. There was once a "Slave Law" in 1810 which prohibited any further teaching or preaching by men of African race: G. Henderson, Goodness and Mercy (Kingston: Gleaner, 1931) 12.

Patrick Bryan has a different view and in unflatteringly comparing Native Baptists to the Black Church in USA stated:

Racism enforced the formation of black churches under black institutional leadership, which led ultimately to greater black solidarity, or reinforced black solidarity. In Jamaica, there was never quite the same experience, in spite of the presence of the Native Baptist Church, which had the closest association with Afro-Jamaican religious perception.¹⁶⁴

But the formation of the JNBMS was mainly a response to racism shown to the Native Baptists by the English Baptists.

The Native Baptists came into being as a response to the prejudice and spiritual snobbery meted out to Baptists of African origin by English Baptist missionaries. Therefore, Hindu practitioners, Laxmi and Ajai Mansingh were incorrect to claim “During the nineteenth century, the Africans fought for the abolition of slavery, but never against religious and cultural colonialism.”¹⁶⁵ Evidently the Mansinghs were not aware of the Native Baptists who fought against religious and cultural colonialism, a reason for the establishment of the JNBMS.

¹⁶⁴ Patrick Bryan, The Jamaican People 1880-1902: Race, Class and Social Control (Kingston: UWI P, 2000) 58.

¹⁶⁵ Laxmi Mansingh and Ajai Mansingh, Home Away From Home: 150 Years of Indian Presence in Jamaica 1845-1995 (Kingston: Randle, 1999) 117.

These Africans also perceived educational snobbery towards them and took umbrage and affirmed that, “We doubt not it was under the impression that those only ought to be encouraged to preach the Gospel, who had acquired a classical education.” ¹⁶⁶ They believed they were fully capable to execute pastoral ministry. They also claimed that they were in the apostolic line, with Joseph Silva praying that “the Apostolic Spirit may still remain in the Church, so that men will continually be raised up, ‘who will not count their lives dear to themselves’ - that they may preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” ¹⁶⁷ While the English Baptists were denying the probity of having persons of African descent as pastors, the Native Baptists were tracing their lineage to the Apostles. The Apostolic Spirit, and not the acquisition of a classical education, gave the empowerment and legitimacy to become a minister of the gospel.

That the Native Baptists were made to feel that they needed a classical education to be a pastor was a paradox because one of the most outstanding English Baptist missionaries, William Knibb, never benefited from a classical theological education ¹⁶⁸ and his apprenticeship was in printing. ¹⁶⁹ In spite of this precedent, there were many adverse references to the Africans as being unsuitable for

¹⁶⁶ First Annual Report i. In 1840s, Knibb in a speech in London asked whether it was necessary to have Greek and Latin to preach the gospel in Africa. He was inadvertently supporting the position of the JNBMS. Knibb’s disdain for a classical theological education could be due to the fact that he went to Jamaica as a teacher and not as a pastor: Russell, Foundations 31, 59.

¹⁶⁷ First Annual Report 19-20.

¹⁶⁸ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 213-14.

¹⁶⁹ Clarke, Memorials 99.

pastoral ministry because of their perceived lack of education. In 1836, Thomas Burchell (1799-1846), leading English Baptist missionary, who served 1823-46, in arguing that Jamaica was not ready for a native agency, highlighted the difference between the “mental development of the partially educated Hindoos and the utterly untutored descendants of Ham” and asked rhetorically, “is piety the only needed qualification for the ministerial office? Or will piety combined with ability to read the scriptures suffice?” and then proposed a “Jamaica Domestic Mission” instead of a seminary to prepare the natives for pastoral ministry.¹⁷⁰ In addition, Phillippo said of his forty native assistants that they “have not been ordained to the work of evangelists” and “were not eligible for the office of pastor” because “not more than two or three can read intelligibly.” The reasons for the use of these native assistants had little to do with empowerment of the enslaved persons or a belief in their capabilities but was forced upon the missionaries out of necessity “because the overseers of estates regarded with extreme jealousy the visits of strangers to the homes of the slaves on their properties, and because no others could be found.”¹⁷¹ There was also a widespread belief among all European - controlled denominations that the Africans were less than adequate to execute pastoral responsibilities or manage a mission.¹⁷² Underhill, on his arrival in Jamaica, was advised against placing “the churches under the

¹⁷⁰ Burchell 324-26.

¹⁷¹ Underhill, Life 205-07.

¹⁷² J. Taylor Hamilton, A History of the Moravian Church: During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Bethlehem, PA: Times, 1901) 139; Burchell 324-26; Robert Gordon, The Jamaican Church. Why It Has Failed (London, [1872]) 6, 18 and Robert J Stewart, Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1992) 94-95.

government and teaching of black men” because it would produce “manifold evils.”¹⁷³ An unnamed writer said in *The Weekly Dispatch*, that, “far from the negroes being converted to Christianity, they have converted Christianity to African idolatry.”¹⁷⁴ That observation was indicative of the fear the European missionaries had about persons of African origin becoming pastors. Therefore, it was not surprising that, one of the motivations for launching the JNBMS was a reaction to obstacles in the path of those who wished to become pastors.

The Native Baptists also asserted:

And until we can learn from the word of God, at what College the disciples of Jesus derived the supposed necessary qualifications for the faithful discharge of their ministerial duties, we shall be content still to believe that the primary qualifications requisite to be sincere Love to God, and an ardent desire to promote his glory.¹⁷⁵

This was not a disregard for education on the part of the Native Baptists but rather having a proper perspective as to the value of the education in preaching and the preeminence of the role of the Holy Spirit for effective preaching. In fact,

¹⁷³ Underhill, *West Indies* 303. See William Jameson, Presbyterian missionary, who condemned the English Baptists saying, “Evils, many and great, have arisen from employing an ill-instructed native agency”: Robb 199.

¹⁷⁴ *A Thirty Years' Resident. Jamaica; Who is to blame? Reprinted from two articles in the "Eclectic Review," "The Problem," and "Jeopardy of Jamaica." With introduction and notes by the editor of the "Eclectic Review."* (London, [n. d.]) vi in Cambridge University Library.

¹⁷⁵ *First Annual Report* i-ii.

Native Baptists quoted from the “Nine Sermons by the late Dr. Watts, preached in 1718-19.”¹⁷⁶ Isaac Watts (1674-1748), was the writer of 600 hymns, sermons, and works on logic and astronomy, which were used at Harvard and Cambridge Universities.¹⁷⁷ The Native Baptists were not against the use of scholarship in the execution of the gospel. The language of their Annual Report demonstrated, not only that they could read and write but, also, that they were sophisticated in their reasoning and logic and had more than passing acquaintance with scholarly writings. They, who were acquainted with scholarly writings, justified their paradoxical position of familiarity with scholarly sermons and lack of obsession with a classical education as a prerequisite for pastoral ministry by wittily observing:

We are fully sensible of the many advantages learned Ministers possess over others, but we mean to express our firm conviction as to the inutility of displaying the scholar in the pulpit, and whether doing so to our congregations, particularly those in country parts, be not ‘speaking to them in an unknown tongue.’¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ First Annual Report ii. These sermons were delivered from the pulpit based on the easy, plain, unadorned and colloquial forms of expression, which is consistent with apostolic injunction “using great plainness of speech”: Nine Sermons, Preached in the Years 1718-19, by the late Isaac Watts, D. D (Oxford, 1812) iv, v, vii in the British Library. This reference to plain speaking comes from 2 Cor. 3:12. The Native Baptists would later adopt this manner of speaking in which it was intelligible to the hearers.

¹⁷⁷ <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/28888>> 1.

¹⁷⁸ First Annual Report i-iii.

This quote about “unknown tongue” was derived from 1 Cor. 14:2, “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God . . .”

However, the emphasis of the English Baptists was demonstrated in 1843 when Calabar College taught Greek, Latin and Hebrew to the native ministers in training for the pastorate.¹⁷⁹ But Duff and Lyon did not believe that preachers had to be trained in Greek, Hebrew and Latin before he or she could preach.¹⁸⁰

It was foolhardy to believe that a classical education was a prerequisite to preaching and it would be futile for a preacher to speak in a language that the congregation did not know or understand. The Native Baptists defended the use of simple speech, which was not “clothed in elegant language” and “all the graces of diction.” They insisted on “plain preaching” in the pulpit.¹⁸¹ They affirmed that effective communication, and not erudition and diction, was necessary for the propagation of the gospel.

The creation of the JNBMS was not only a reaction to the bad treatment by the English Baptist missionaries but was out of a deep desire for “the extension of the kingdom of our dear Redeemer, among our perishing countrymen in Jamaica and

¹⁷⁹ Underhill, West Indies 296.

¹⁸⁰ John Duff and George Lyon to John Dyer, Secretary BMS, 1 Apr 1837.

¹⁸¹ First Annual Report ii-iii. See also John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837. In the 1840s, Robert Graham, “a free man of colour” who left the church at Windward Road, came under the tutelage of Tinson at the Church at Hanover Street. Tinson wished to “instruct him in pronunciation and English grammar” but Graham refused because he “believed Mr. Tinson’s way of pronouncing words was the way in England” and he “was sure his method was the Jamaica method, and the way best understood by the people”: Clarke, Memorials 210.

Africa . . .”¹⁸² The Native Baptists were willing to go to the rural mountainous regions because their main concern was the proclamation of the gospel. Duff and Lyon observed, “your missionaries are only settled in Town places and in the country places . . . while in the high mountains the people are in a state of gross ignorance.”¹⁸³ They were willing to go to the outer -most parts of the country and also to Africa.

Another reason for instituting a missionary society was a reaction to non -natives wanting to wrestle ownership of church property from “native Trustees.” William Duffus in relating the history of his church in Grant Hill, St. Andrew’s said:

The remaining people then injudiciously selected a person from America, named Reinshaw, as their Minister, and who continued with them until June 1840, when he evinced a disposition to wrest the premises from the native Trustees, and vest the same in Trustees of his own countrymen, but was happily frustrated in such an attempt.¹⁸⁴

The “native Trustees” wanted to manage and control their church premises. A pious unnamed 100-year-old lady gave a small house on West Street, Kingston to the work of the Native Baptists.¹⁸⁵ The Native Baptists wanted to have control

¹⁸² First Annual Report iii.

¹⁸³ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

¹⁸⁴ First Annual Report 17.

¹⁸⁵ First Annual Report 6.

over such properties that belonged to them. In addition, Robert Blackwell, pastor in Sandy Bay, Vere said that his station was formerly under the pastoral care of H. C Taylor but he relinquished the church before 1840 because they did not permit him to “make out the title for the land which they had purchased for the good of the Society, in his own name.” Blackwell saw this as an “injustice” and “in a way utterly at variance with the principles of the doctrines of the Gospel.”¹⁸⁶ They were jealous to protect their rights and were not willing to abdicate their responsibility and privileges. The Native Baptists and English Baptists differed over the rights of the membership and the independence and ownership of the churches.

What’s in a Name?

It was significant that the Native Baptists called their organization a “missionary society.” Alexander Robb, Presbyterian missionary, said that the London Missionary Society was “emphatically undenominational,”¹⁸⁷ which was a feature of some British missionary societies.¹⁸⁸ Russell mentioned that the London Missionary Society was inter-confessional in their appeal and was therefore,

¹⁸⁶ First Annual Report 24-25. See also a dispute between Rev. Samuel Oughton, English Baptist missionary and Lagourgue, a Native Baptist leader, over the property on which a Class-house was located; “The Baptist Again,” Falmouth Post 6 May 1845: 8.

¹⁸⁷ Alexander Robb, Letter. Daily Gleaner 2 Oct. 1882 in MST 51 44 in National Library of Jamaica.

¹⁸⁸ Russell, Foundations 58. Russell asserted that missionary societies were “inter-confessional in their appeal and structure” but there were exceptions such as the BMS and the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), which were specifically denominational in structure.

funded by London businessmen. He also highlighted that there was a time when Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Quaker business interests supported the BMS.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, by calling its organization a “missionary society”, the Native Baptists were probably indicating that they were willing to co-operate with persons from different denominations for the purpose of evangelization and overseas mission and that they were open to financial contributions from persons of different denominational persuasions.

The Native Baptists also perceived their missionary society as similar to other missionary societies: “We rejoice greatly at the success which attended similar Societies in Jamaica.”¹⁹⁰ They felt equal to the other foreign-based missionary societies and they also celebrated the accomplishments of the others. The formation of the JNBMS was based on a belief in equality, ecumenism, evangelization and mission.

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary the word “Native”, from the Latin *nativus*, became generally current after the sixteenth century. The dictionary gave various shades of meaning for “native” including “belonging to, or connected with, a person or thing by nature” and also “connected with one by birth or race.”¹⁹¹ There were examples in the nineteenth century of “Native” being applied as a generic, non-offensive term to indicate one’s place of origin,

¹⁸⁹ Russell, Foundations 58.

¹⁹⁰ First Annual Report iiiii.

¹⁹¹ “Native,” The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1950 ed. Vol. II.

such as Tinson, “a native of Gloucestershire, England.”¹⁹² It described one’s place of origin. “Native” was also used to signify origin outside of Europe, that is, having West Indian, African or Indian origin.¹⁹³

In the context of the West Indies, John Gilmore said that “native” was an offensive word to non-white clergy, and they objected to being so styled.¹⁹⁴ The title “native” was a derogatory word used to distinguish “non-white” Christians from their European counterparts. “Native” carried similar negative connotations as “nigger”. “Nigger” was a demeaning word used to describe persons of African origin who were intrinsically unwholesome. This was the sense in which one Chaplain to the Bishop of Barbados, Richard Hurrell Froude, on a tour of the West Indies between 1833 and 1835, used it of the people in the West Indies. He said, “There is something . . . so unpleasing about the niggers that they spoil the scenery.”¹⁹⁵ Neither “native” nor “nigger” was a complimentary word. Therefore, when in 1866, John M’Laren was asked if he

¹⁹² Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 181.

¹⁹³ People of Asian origin were called natives. See Christian Missions in the East and West in Connection with the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1873 (2nd ed. London, 1873) and “Reception of Mr. Knibb and his Companions at Falmouth,” Missionary Herald Apr. 1841: 50.

¹⁹⁴ John Gilmore, Toiler of the Sees: A life of John Mitchinson Bishop of Barbados (Barbados: Barbados National Trust, 1987) 65. It was first mentioned in John Gilmore, Episcopacy, Emancipation and Evangelization: Aspects of the History of the Church of England in the British West Indies diss. , (U of Cambridge, 1984) 128.

¹⁹⁵ John Gilmore, “Hurrell Froude and The West Indies: An Episode in the History of the Oxford Movement,” Journal of The Barbados Museum and Historical Society 36 (1980): 145. See another instance of Africans being styled as “nigger”: Studholme Hodgson, Truths from the West Indies. Including a Sketch of Madeira in 1833 (London, 1838) 104.

belonged to “a Buckra Society or a Nigger Society”,¹⁹⁶ it was a query, seeking to ascertain whether he was affiliated to the English Baptist mission (Buckra) or the Native Baptists (Nigger). This was insulting to equate “native” to “nigger.” Even in 1866, the ruling class was not enamoured with the term “Native Baptist.” For them, it was not a title of honour.

“Native” in nineteenth century usage also referred to a second tier leadership, which functioned under supervision within the church, for example, the English Baptists and Moravians who had “native assistants.”¹⁹⁷ And in the Church of England, “native catechists” specifically referred to persons who were deemed to be lower in rank ecclesiastically and paid accordingly.¹⁹⁸ When “native” was associated with ministers of religion, “native ministers,” it would indicate that the person was not properly ordained for pastoral ministry or was “ignorant.”¹⁹⁹ Some missionaries also believed there was a “native Character” which was different and inferior to the European character.²⁰⁰ “Native” was primarily a negative word.

¹⁹⁶ JRC Vol. 5 246.

¹⁹⁷ Buchner 103 and Underhill, Life 205-07.

¹⁹⁸ Letter of Rev Richard Panton to Society Secretary May 1840 Church Missionary Society, West Indian Mission Records 1819-1861 Vol. 5 1839-1840.

¹⁹⁹ Gordon, Jamaican Church 12, 16.

²⁰⁰ Secretary of Church Missionary Society, D. Coates in a letter dated 28 Nov. 1837, 539 West Indian Records 1818-61. See also Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 231.

Therefore, when Europeans utilized the word “native”, it was mainly as an offensive term to describe non-European, indigenous people who inhabited a colonized place and who were considered inferior because of race and/or religion. The Native Baptists in ascribing the word ‘Native’ to themselves were creating their own identity. In addition, they were rejecting any negative connotation associated with “native” and re-interpreting it, giving it new meaning and dignity. They were following in the footsteps of Liele who did a similar thing in appropriating the name Anabaptist, which was a name of scorn, and wore it as a badge of honour. The Native Baptists were using “native” in a positive way.

The Native Baptists in using the word “native”, which was a term for non-Europeans including Africans, was affirming things African. This Afro-centric declaration in a context where things African were considered second-rate, backward and idiotic, was an outrage to the colonial society and a bold act of defiance. This stance of affirming African heritage was also demonstrated in the urgency and primacy given to spreading the gospel to Africa. It was also a statement that Africa was their homeland and that they had a responsibility to home. The Native Baptists were of African pedigree with confidence in their distinctiveness. This enlightened attitude to Africa was first observed with Liele, who referred to his congregation as the Ethiopian Baptists of Jamaica.²⁰¹ Both groups were acutely aware of their African heritage and were affirming it.

²⁰¹ Rippon, Baptist 542 and Russell, Understandings 102.

So the Native Baptists, in ascribing “native” as part of their name and identity, were making a declaration about their race, their heritage, and their pride. The appropriation of the term “native” was a means of describing their uniqueness in the Christian community. They were affirming that they were an autonomous, indigenous missionary group, which was not accountable to any foreign mission agency. It was a statement that they were different from the English Baptists. It was, therefore, an indication of the resolve of those of African descent to establish a distinctive organization when they called it the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society.

Native Baptist Communion

There is little information about the activities of the JNBMS in the 1850s and by the 1860s it was another group of Native Baptists that came to the forefront. This group came to prominence subsequent to the Great Revival 1860-61,²⁰² which revival boosted church attendance.²⁰³

The interaction between the commissioners of the JRC and American-born, Rev. Richard Warren, went thus: “What body you belong to? -The Baptists” and “you

²⁰² The Great Revival started in 1860 in the Moravian Church: Jamaica Moravian Church 117. The Revival was marked by confessions, restitution of stolen property, burning of clothes and jewelry that was obtained as a result of the wages of sin, recommitment to the marriage vows, fasting and all night praying: “Great Revival of Religion in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter Jan. 1861: 11. See also Underhill, Life 304-18 and Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, late of Jamaica (London, 1867) 67.

²⁰³ Great Revival of Religion in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter Jan. 1861 9, Jamaica Moravian Church 117 and The Sixtieth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 241.

are one of the native Baptists? -Yes.”²⁰⁴ They also asked Warren if he belonged to the “Native Baptist Communion,” to which he said “yes.”²⁰⁵ In addition, in the JRC’s summary, it stated that George William Gordon belonged to “the Native Baptist Communion.”²⁰⁶ This writer will therefore, use the name, Native Baptist Communion, to describe the group to which Warren and Gordon were identified and which came to prominence in the 1860s. One of its leaders, Warren, called “Parson Warren”, had responsibilities as “co-preacher in the ‘Tabernacle,’ ”²⁰⁷ pastor for congregation at Spring and itinerant preacher at Stony Gut and at Styehut.²⁰⁸

When Warren was asked if Gordon was a member of his congregation, he replied that, “he always attended; he took a general interest in it” and during the interaction between Warren and the commissioners it was revealed that Gordon was the Secretary: “Was he [Gordon] a member of the Native Baptist

²⁰⁴ JRC Vol. 5 1069. A British newspaper identified Warren as “a native Baptist preacher”: From Our Special correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Apr. 1866: 9.

²⁰⁵ JRC Vol. 5 1069. The JRC Report identified Native Baptists and Baptists interchangeably. Rev George Truman identified himself as a Native Baptist: JRC Vol. 5 414, but the Commissioners later in the testimony referred to him as a “Baptist minister”: JRC Vol. 5 415. In addition, in the list of witnesses, none who identified themselves as Native Baptists in testimonies was so classified in the list but was instead called a Baptist i.e. Rev. Richard Warren: JRC Vol. 5 1x.

²⁰⁶ JRC Vol. 4 515. See also G. A. Catherall, Baptist War and Peace: A Study of British Baptist Involvement in Jamaica 1783-1865 (Liverpool: [1982]) 206 and William A. Green, British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1976) 387.

²⁰⁷ “The Rebellion in St. Thomas-in-the-East,” Colonial Standard 6 Nov. 1865: 2.

²⁰⁸ JRC Vol. 5 1067. In some nineteenth century documents it was spelt “Stoney Gut.” Warren was also the featured speaker at the opening of Bogle’s chapel: JRC Vol. 5 158.

Communion?” and Warren replied, “He was Secretary.” ²⁰⁹ In a letter dated 25 July 1862, Bogle, Bowie and Clarke told Gordon to contact Warren concerning making arrangements for baptism. ²¹⁰ This also indicated that both Warren and Gordon had leadership roles in the Native Baptist Communion. If an unnamed critic of Gordon were to be believed, Gordon had an exalted position among the Native Baptists because it was said that the Native Baptists hailed him as “an archbishop or high priest.” ²¹¹ An unnamed person gave an unflattering reason for Gordon being a Native Baptist. He said:

Mr. Gordon was not of a disposition to submit to the discipline and government of any regular church or to play second fiddle to any one. He aspired to be a leader and preacher, and this could only be done by identifying himself with the native Baptists and setting up his own tabernacle. ²¹²

Gordon was a leader within the Native Baptist Communion.

²⁰⁹ JRC Vol. 5 1069. Catherall said Gordon was a Native Baptist: Catherall, Baptist War 206 and Catherall, Native Baptist 71. Green said Gordon became a Native Baptist in 1861: William A. Green, British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1976) 387. He was probably associating the time of Gordon’s baptism by Phillippo with Gordon becoming a Native Baptist. Robotham also posited a similar date: Don Robotham, “The Notorious Riot”: The Socio-Economic and Political Bases of Paul’s Bogle’s Revolt (Working paper 8. Jamaica: UWI, ISER, 1981) 20.

²¹⁰ JRC Vol. 5 1150.

²¹¹ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865: 9.

²¹² “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9.



Figure 4: Picture of George William Gordon (National Library of Jamaica)

Nevertheless, there was confusion about the denominational affiliation (s) of Gordon. Fletcher in his personal reflections on Gordon said that Gordon was “an elder of the United Presbyterian Church at Kingston” who benefited from the

ministry of Gardner ²¹³ but Andrew G. Hogg said of Gordon in a letter dated 23 October 1865 to Dr. Thomas, of Broughton Place Missionary Society, Edinburgh, “he has belonged to all denominations and is now a Baptist preacher.” ²¹⁴ Eyre also called him a “Baptist preacher” ²¹⁵ and a “Baptist member.” ²¹⁶ Gordon was identified as a member of the English Baptist Church because Phillippo baptized him “on Christmas-day, 1861.” ²¹⁷ However, Underhill wrote that Gordon “continued to maintain his connection with the United Presbyterian Church” while “on various occasions he sought Mr. Phillippo’s advice.” ²¹⁸ There were others who said Gordon was not a member of the English Baptist Church. In a correspondence to the *London Times*, S. Morton Peto, treasurer of the BMS, said Gordon “never joined a Baptist church” and lately in a court of law declared himself “a member of the Church of England.” ²¹⁹ Rev. Mr. E. Blake, a Wesleyan Missionary in Jamaica, said at a meeting at Cirencester, on 28 October 1865, “Mr.

²¹³ Fletcher 53.

²¹⁴ A. G. Hogg, “Rev. A. G. Hogg’s Letter,” *Jamaican Historical Society* 11 (2000): 139.

²¹⁵ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [*London*] *Times* 20 Nov. 1865: 9.

²¹⁶ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” *Missionary Herald* 801 in *Baptist Magazine* 1865. English Baptist missionary, John Bee, quoting from Charles H. Spurgeon’s biography of George William Gordon also claimed that Gordon was a “faithful member of the Baptist Church and a local preacher”: *Gleaner* 4 Nov. 1960: 4. This writer was unable to locate this biography.

²¹⁷ Underhill, *Life* 319. See also Fletcher 54, “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [*London*] *Times* 16 Dec. 1865: 9 and Edward Underhill, *The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865* (London, 1895) 89n.

²¹⁸ Underhill, *Life* 320-21. Fletcher said that after Gordon’s immersion he did not join the English Baptist Church but nevertheless, he was “coldly treated by Mr. Gardiner [sic]: Fletcher 54.

²¹⁹ S. Morton Peto, Letter. [*London*] *Times* 18 Nov. 1865: 6. See also “The Baptists in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1865: 783 and “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [*London*] *Times* 16 Dec. 1865: 9.

Gordon was not a Baptist, but a member of the Church of England.”²²⁰ By Gordon’s own admission, he was an Anglican, at least in 1863. Gordon at a sitting on 24 November 1863 in the House of Assembly made the distinction between his great and serious objections to the Anglican Church as a State Church while embracing the Church of England in Jamaica. He said he was christened by the Rev. Alexander Campbell, the late Rector of St. Andrew, and confirmed by Bishop Lipscomb, and had communion with the church. He never departed from the principles of the church but when he became older he adopted the principle laid down by Christ and was baptized by immersion.²²¹ B. T. Williams, a barrister, said the Custos decided to remove Gordon as a churchwarden of the parish on the grounds that Gordon was not a member of the Established Church but “according to our practice, the fact that Gordon went to dissenting chapels would not affect the question, unless he was really excommunicated.”²²² Gordon’s membership can only be revoked if he was officially excluded from the Anglican Church and not on the basis of attending other non-Anglican congregations.

Gordon was baptized as a child in the Church of England and became a member and he never withdrew his membership and was never ex-communicated. He

²²⁰ H. R., The Insurrection in Jamaica [1865] 8 and H. R., The Troubles in Jamaica (London, 1866) 11 in UWI Library.

²²¹ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, And Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 (Spanish Town, 1865) 188.

²²² B. T. Williams, The Case of George William Gordon, With Preliminary Observations on the Jamaica Riot Of October 11th, 1865 (London, 1866) 9 in Cambridge University Library.

also had membership in the Presbyterian Church. He was also baptized by immersion in an English Baptist Church though he never became a member of that church. He had authority over the Native Baptist Communion and worked closely with Warren, Bogle and Bowie both religiously and politically. Based on the evidence, Gordon was a member of the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church and a leader in the Native Baptist Communion. Gordon's association with various churches was, likely, due to the fact that while he admired some aspects of certain denominations, he was most comfortable with the Native Baptists because it facilitated him using his leadership gifts and wealth to establishing churches, which based on the Anglican and Presbyterian structures would not be possible. Furthermore, Gordon, as the political representative for St. Thomas in the East, would not harm his political fortunes by identifying with the religious expression of the majority of the masses who were Native Baptists.

George William Gordon (1815-65) ²²³ was helped towards prosperity by an anonymous lady who loaned him £1,000. ²²⁴ He acquired extensive business and

²²³ An entry in the Parish Registry for St. Andrew said George Gordon was about three months old when he was baptized on December 27, 1815 "Baptism in 1815," St. Andrew Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1907-1826 Vol. 2 53 in 1B/11/8/1/2 St. Andrew 1807-26 in Island Record Office Jam 88 JA 1B/11 in Jamaica Archives. Lindo posited two other dates for Gordon's birth, namely 1819 or 1817": David Lindo, Time Tells Our Story: The History of the Jamaica Mutual Assurance Society 1844-1994 (Kingston: Randle, 1994) 52. Catherall said Gordon was born 1820: G. A. Catherall, "George William Gordon: Saint or Sinner?" Baptist Quarterly XXVII (1977): 164 while Sherlock and Bennett said 1815: Philip Sherlock, and Hazel Bennett, The Story of The Jamaican People (Kingston: Randle; Princeton: Wiener, 1998) 248. This writer accepted the Parish Registry account. Gordon was hanged on October 23, 1865: "The Traitor George W. Gordon," Gleaner 28 Oct. 1865: 2.

²²⁴ Fletcher 29.

vast properties ²²⁵ with estates in many parishes ²²⁶ and was “one of the largest landowners in the country.” ²²⁷ And wherever Gordon had properties, he tried to establish chapels ²²⁸ and to promote the gospel in the parishes in which his property lay. ²²⁹ Fletcher said that Gordon, at his own expense, “Superintended and supported a most important and extensive missionary enterprise . . . in some of the most destitute localities where he established churches and schools, with an efficient staff of missionaries and teachers.” ²³⁰ Gordon was also founder of the chapel named Tabernacle, at Parade in Kingston. ²³¹ This chapel could have been a Native Baptist chapel, again indicating his attachment to the Native Baptists.

²²⁵ Fletcher 25, 28.

²²⁶ JRC Vol. 4 515 and Fletcher 33. See King who argued for Gordon’s commercial integrity: David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 7. Fletcher said, Gordon never became “insolvent”: Fletcher 33.

²²⁷ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 (Spanish Town, 1865) 26. For details of Gordon’s acquisition of lands See Ansell Hart, The Life of George William Gordon (Kingston: IOJ, 1972) 14-15 and Douglas Hall, Free Jamaica 1838-1865: An Economic History (3rd ed. London: Caribbean UP, 1976).112.

²²⁸ Fletcher 51.

²²⁹ Underhill, Life 320. See also Fletcher 48.

²³⁰ Fletcher 48.

²³¹ JRC Vol. 5 1069; JRC Vol. 4 527 ; “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9 and Fletcher 69-70. Sibley said Gordon, “had his own independent Baptist chapel in Kingston known as “Freeman’s Chapel”: Inez Knibb Sibley, The Baptists of Jamaica (Kingston: JBU, 1965) 52. She gave no reference for giving it a different name.

There was not that type of confusion about Bogle's denominational membership as there was about Gordon's. Phillippo testified that Bogle's congregation and Mr. Warren's were called Native Baptists.²³² Bogle was said to belong to the " 'Native Baptists,' a sect, so-called as being independent of and distinguished from the London Baptist Mission."²³³ Bogle was attached to the Native Baptists.

There was no explicit reason given for the establishment of the Native Baptist Communion or when it came into being. The members who constituted the Native Baptist Communion could have been in existence in 1862 based on the contents of a letter dated 23 May 1862, and written by Gordon:

Our visit here is twofold: first, to open a mission station at Bath and Spring, both of which have been done . . . On Sunday, the 18th, services were held at the Missionary Bethel- a temporary place of worship . . . Mr. Warren, late of America, one of those seeking a rest here, is the temporary pastor.²³⁴

In December 1861, Phillippo commissioned Gordon to start an "independent cause."²³⁵ It was after such a mandate that Gordon wrote the above letter. And since Warren was associated with Gordon and he identified himself in 1865 as a

²³² JRC Vol. 5 923.

²³³ JRC Vol. 4 527.

²³⁴ Fletcher 51.

²³⁵ Underhill, Life 320-21.

Native Baptist, then these mission stations at Bath and Spring, founded by Gordon and with Warren as the leader, were highly likely to be Native Baptist churches.

Furthermore, in 1865, Warren had a congregation in Spring, St. Thomas in the East ²³⁶ which was the same one he had in 1862. It could be concluded that he was a Native Baptist in 1862 and the Native Baptist Communion was in place in 1862. In addition, this would mean that Gordon was the founder of the Native Baptist Communion.

Paul Bogle, a close associate of Gordon, was born 1820 ²³⁷ and was captured on 23 October 1865, and was transferred to Morant Bay on the 24th ²³⁸ and hanged on the same day. ²³⁹ He was referred to as a “Native Parson” ²⁴⁰ but it was not clear if the newspaper writer meant that Bogle was a Native Baptist pastor or was just an attempt to classify Bogle being an indigenous self-proclaimed pastor.

²³⁶ JRC Vol. 5 1067.

²³⁷ This was an estimate based on the newspaper report which stated that Bogle “looked 45 years old”: “Paul Bogle,” Colonial Standard 28 Oct. 1865: 2. Bogle was said to be born free but to parents who were enslaved: Salute to our Heroes. Jamaica Information Service. Video Cassette Jamaica Information Service, 2002. However, there was no reference to support this claim or how two enslaved persons could produce a child that was born free.

²³⁸ JRC Vol. 4 537 and “Capture of Paul Bogle,” Gleaner 26 Oct. 1865: 2.

²³⁹ JRC Vol. 5 1136. However, Heuman said it was the following day, October 25, 1865: Heuman, Killing Time 139. Eyre in a dispatch dated October 26 said Bogle would be hanged at 5pm “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 20 Nov. 1865: 9. This gave the impression that he would be hanged at 5pm on the 26th.

²⁴⁰ Gleaner 10 Nov. 1865: [2].

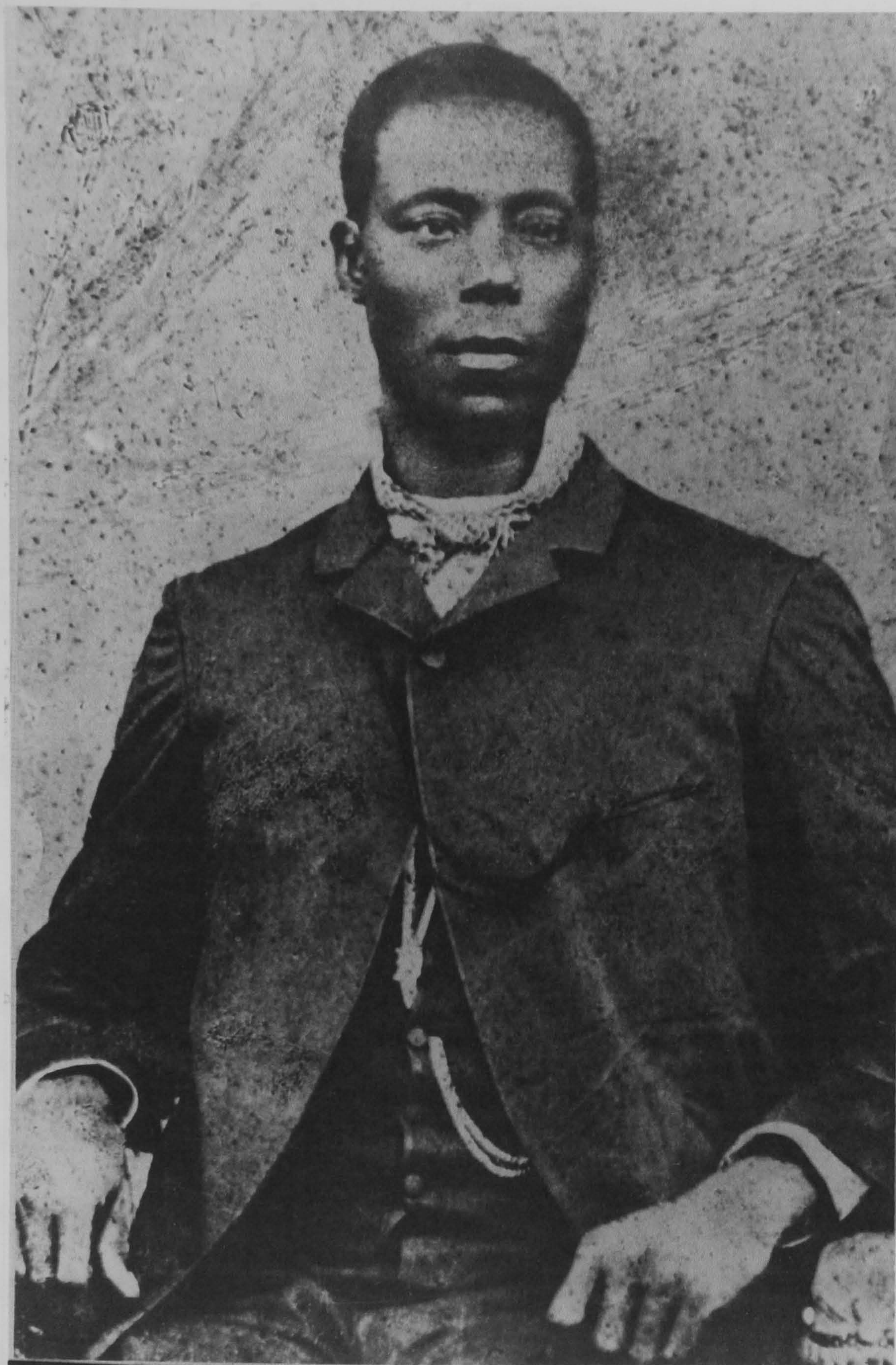


Figure 5: Picture of Paul Bogle (National Library of Jamaica)

But was Bogle a leader of the Native Baptist Communion in 1862? A Will of 9 March 1862 spoke to Bogle as a Baptist leader, “I James, and Minna Bryan, do give and bequeath to Mr. Paul Bogle, leader of the Stoney Gutt [sic] Baptist class,

one chain of land square for the purpose of building a class house, and for the benefit of he and his members and followers . . .” This Will showed that Bogle was a Baptist leader in March 1862 and had a following. However, it is not clear if he was a Native Baptist leader at that time. Nevertheless, of the six trustees to the Will, two were George W. Gordon and George B. Clarke, ²⁴¹ who were later identified as Native Baptists. It is therefore, possible that in 1862 Bogle was connected to Native Baptists. Furthermore, a letter dated 25 July 1862 to George William Gordon and signed by Paul Bogle, James Bowie and George B. Clarke made reference to arranging a baptism at Spring at which Gordon was expected to attend. ²⁴² Bogle was involved with the Native Baptist Communion, at the latest July 1862.

The Native Baptist Communion experienced church growth as observed by baptisms in July and preparations for others to be baptized in October 1862 at the same congregation at Spring. ²⁴³ It was also remarked that there were many Native Baptists “in Morant Bay and the neighbourhood” ²⁴⁴ and an unnamed opponent of Gordon said of the Native Baptist Communion churches, “all the miserable little chapels studding the parish of St. Thomas in the East.” ²⁴⁵ Rev. Mr. D. Campbell, who replaced Rev. Stephen Cooke in the St. Thomas Parish

²⁴¹ JRC Vol. 4 232.

²⁴² JRC Vol. 5 1150.

²⁴³ JRC Vol. 4 233.

²⁴⁴ “The Lesson from Jamaica,” Missionary Herald 383 in Baptist Magazine 1866.

²⁴⁵ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9.

Church, stated that there were “native Baptist chapels” or meeting rooms at every free settlement, such as, at Stony Gut, Honeycomb and Hell Gate. ²⁴⁶ There was also a Native Baptist class-house in Spring Garden, about a mile from Stony Gut and between Morant Bay and Stony Gut. ²⁴⁷ Other signs of church growth included the opening of new chapels at Mount Zion, Sunning Hill District on 1 November 1862 ²⁴⁸ and the opening of the Stony Gut chapel on Christmas Day 1864. ²⁴⁹ There was also a chapel at Mount Pisgah. ²⁵⁰ Bogle was also associated with the Mount Lebanon Chapel ²⁵¹ and Gordon visited the Chapel Highland Castle at Stony Gut. ²⁵² In addition, there was a Baptist chapel in Font Hill that belonged to John M’Laren, father of James M’Laren. ²⁵³ It was implicit that when M’Laren told the Commissioners that he belonged to the “Nigger Society” ²⁵⁴ it meant he was affiliated with the Native Baptists, just like his son, James. Another Native Baptist station would have been “The St. Andrew’s Mission.” ²⁵⁵ It

²⁴⁶ JRC Vol. 5 842.

²⁴⁷ JRC Vol. 5 124, 126.

²⁴⁸ JRC Vol. 4 235. The letter stated that the chapel was opened in November without mentioning a year but Gordon reminded Bogle in that letter about the Voters List, indicating a pending Election. An Election was held in March 1863: Underhill, Life 320. Therefore, the November before the Election would have been in 1862.

²⁴⁹ JRC Vol. 4 235.

²⁵⁰ JRC Vol. 5 126.

²⁵¹ JRC Vol. 4 515 and JRC Vol. 5 156.

²⁵² “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6.

²⁵³ JRC Vol. 5 245-46. The surname was also spelt “McLaren”: “Capture of Paul Bogle,” Gleaner 26 Oct. 1865: 2. So sometimes it is James M’Laren and at another time it is James McLaren.

²⁵⁴ JRC Vol. 5 246.

²⁵⁵ Fletcher 51.

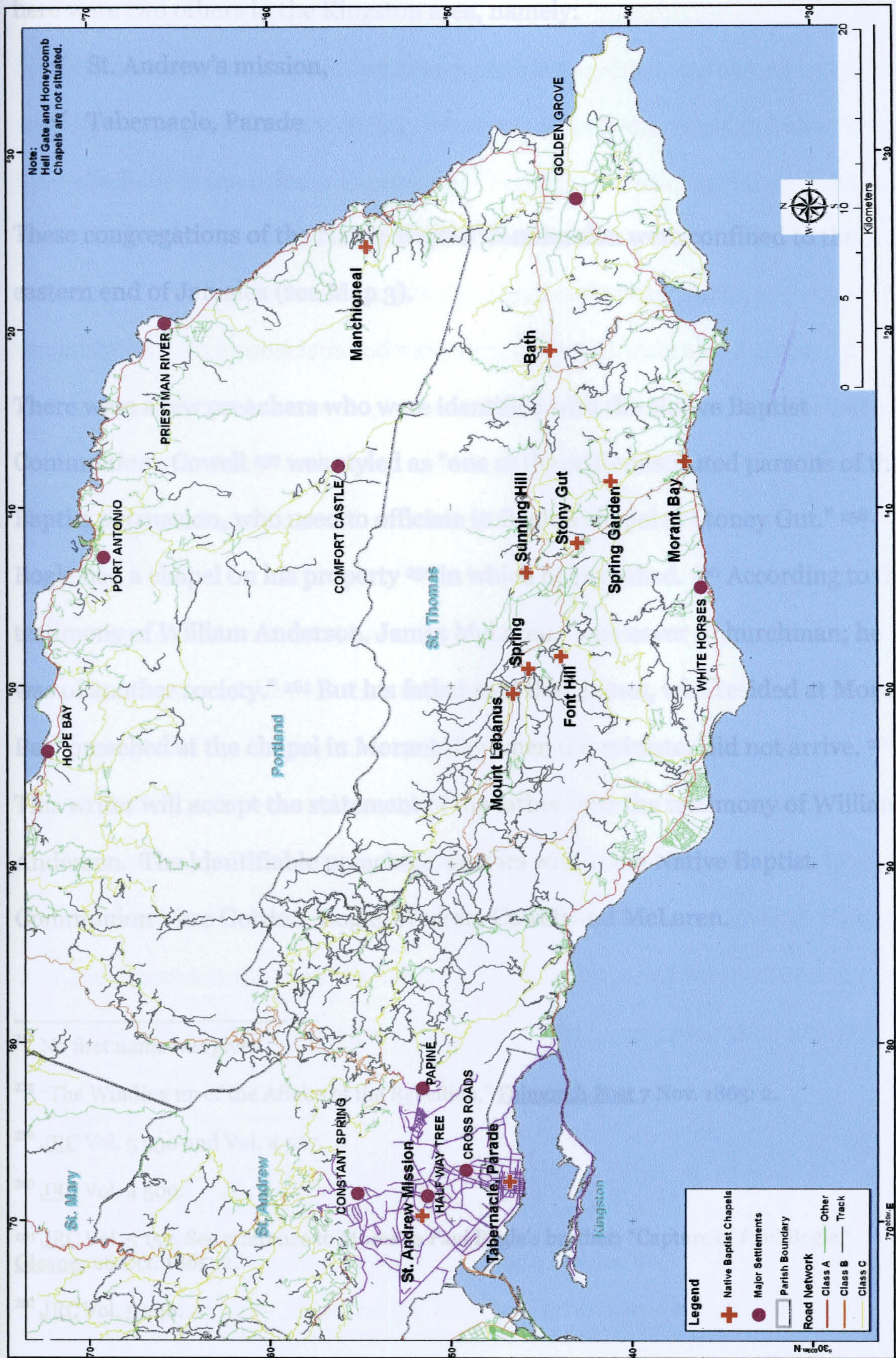
is also likely that Thomas McKean's station in Manchionel, St. Thomas-in-the East was connected to the Native Baptist Communion where Bogle had some influence.²⁵⁶

Therefore, the chapels associated with the Native Baptist Communion in St. Thomas-in-the-East were:

- ✓ Font Hill,
- ✓ Bath,
- ✓ Spring,
- ✓ Mount Zion, Sunning Hill,
- ✓ Spring Garden,
- ✓ Stony Gut,
- ✓ Honeycomb,
- ✓ Hell Gate,
- ✓ Mount Pisgah,
- ✓ Mount Lebanon,
- ✓ Manchionel,
- ✓ Morant Bay.

²⁵⁶ Clarke, Memorials 223.

Map 3: Chapels Associated with the Native Baptist Communion



here were two others in the Kingston area, namely:

- ✓ St. Andrew's mission,
- ✓ Tabernacle, Parade

These congregations of the Native Baptist Communion were confined to the eastern end of Jamaica (see Map 3).

There were a few preachers who were identified with the Native Baptist Communion. Cowell ²⁵⁷ was styled as “one of the self-constituted parsons of the Baptist persuasion, who used to officiate in Bogle’s chapel at Stoney Gut.” ²⁵⁸ Bogle had a chapel on his property ²⁵⁹ in which he preached. ²⁶⁰ According to the testimony of William Anderson, James McLaren, “was never a churchman; he was of another society.” ²⁶¹ But his father said that James, who resided at Morant Bay, preached at the chapel in Morant Bay when the minister did not arrive. ²⁶² This writer will accept the statement of the father over the testimony of William Anderson. The identifiable preachers/pastors within the Native Baptist Communion were Gordon, Bogle, Warren, Cowell and McLaren.

²⁵⁷ No first name was given.

²⁵⁸ “The Winding up of the Affairs of the Rebellion,” Falmouth Post 7 Nov. 1865: 2.

²⁵⁹ JRC Vol. 5 930 and Vol. 4 527.

²⁶⁰ JRC Vol. 4 509.

²⁶¹ JRC Vol. 5 157. See reference to Moses as Paul Bogle’s brother: “Capture of Paul Bogle,” Gleaner 26 Oct. 1865: 2.

²⁶² JRC Vol. 5 246.

The Native Baptist Communion displayed a leadership structure and evidence of being well organized. Bogle's ordination certificate, which was signed by Warren and Gordon as president and acting secretary respectively, said "and in all things to be obedient to the rules of the church."²⁶³ Shirley Gordon said that statement was an indication that the Native Baptists were "growing into a collective church with 'rules' "²⁶⁴ It was more than growing into a collective church, it was an organization with a president and secretary. The certificate also indicated a central organization because Bogle was not ordained at his Stony Gut chapel but "in the presence of the whole congregation, 'Tabernacle' Kingston."²⁶⁵ The Native Baptist Communion was a well-structured organization.

Persons associated with this Native Baptist group were also politically active. Both *The Times* and the JRC recorded that in 1863, at a house in Morant Bay, in a street opposite the Wesleyan chapel, a meeting was held to form an Anti-Slavery Society, which was chaired by Mr. Henry Clyne at which meeting William Chisholm was appointed as agent and Paul Bogle, Moses Bogle, William Bowie and Richard Warren became signatories to the Society. George William Gordon was also present at the meeting. Money was collected and sent to the parent body in London.²⁶⁶ Warren also signed memorials, that is, complaints or requests, to

²⁶³ JRC Vol. 4 30.

²⁶⁴ Gordon, Cause For His Glory 106.

²⁶⁵ JRC Vol. 5 1150. The Tabernacle was a historic and significant church. Fletcher said that the Great Revival began in Kingston in Gordon's Tabernacle: Fletcher 69.

²⁶⁶ JRC Vol. 5 1067-68. The *Times* said that the house where the Anti-slavery Society was established belonged to Gordon: From Our Special correspondent, "The Outbreak in Jamaica,"

the Custos. ²⁶⁷ The Mount Lebanon Chapel used the building as a meeting place to discuss protest actions. ²⁶⁸ William Bailey, an old Baptist preacher, hosted a meeting at Spring Garden in his meeting-house where the oath was administered just prior to the protest march in 1865. ²⁶⁹ Gordon went to the Chapel Highland Castle at Stoney Gut, where a meeting was held to discuss the issue of the rights of the peasants to back lands. ²⁷⁰ Bogle and his followers gathered at a chapel at Mount Pisgah where a meeting was held on 9 October 1865 to discuss the implications of the fracas at the Morant Bay courthouse. ²⁷¹ In addition, Bogle was chairman of the Liberal School Society, which was a political movement to support Gordon's candidacy for political office. In a correspondence dated 25 July 1862, Bogle borrowed money from Gordon with John B. Sterling, James Bowie, Stephen Smith, Joseph Kelly, and George B. Clarke signing as sureties. This loan of £150 was to enable one hundred taxpayers to qualify for the voting franchise and be placed on the electoral roll. They paid back this money quarterly without interest. ²⁷² Bogle in a letter to Gordon on 12 July 1865 wrote, "I have also my title here, which I will send down to you that you may get it record as quick as possible, for I expect to have William upon the list of voters for

[London] Times 30 Apr. 1866: 9. The Anti-slavery Society was formed in April 1838 at Exeter Hall, England to promote the abolition of slavery worldwide: Underhill, Life 190.

²⁶⁷ JRC Vol. 5 1067, 1069. The Custos was the representative of the Governor in each parish and acted as chief magistrate in that parish.

²⁶⁸ JRC Vol. 5 156.

²⁶⁹ JRC Vol. 5 131.

²⁷⁰ "The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon," [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6.

²⁷¹ JRC Vol. 5 126.

²⁷² JRC Vol. 5 1150. It was spelt as "Joseph B. Storling" here but "J. B. Sterling" in JRC Vol. 4 234.

next year.”²⁷³ He mobilized voters. James M’Laren’s testimony at Gordon’s court-martial was that Bogle always voted for Gordon.²⁷⁴ After winning a seat as an Assemblyman in March 1863, Gordon acknowledged the role of the Native Baptists.²⁷⁵ The Native Baptists engaged in political activism.

The Native Baptists can also be credited with cementing the political career of Gordon. Gordon’s electoral victory demonstrated a high level of organization and strategic planning. In addition, the people were not asking for handouts and neither did Gordon charge interest. It was a partnership based on respect, hard work, and no exploitation in order to be politically engaged in society. This Native Baptist grouping played an activist role in the society.

Connection between JNBMS and Native Baptist Communion

William Anderson, servant of Colonel Hobbs testified that, in 1864, he knew Paul and Moses Bogle as “chapel brothers” as they “always met at the chapel at Morant Bay.”²⁷⁶ This chapel was not associated with the English Baptist mission because an English Baptist periodical identified a Baptist chapel at Morant Bay, which was not connected to the English Baptist mission.²⁷⁷ The English Baptists had no

²⁷³ JRC Vol. 4 233.

²⁷⁴ “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6.

²⁷⁵ Underhill, Life 320.

²⁷⁶ JRC Vol. 5 157. See another reference to Native Baptist chapel in Morant Bay: JRC Vol. 5 126.

²⁷⁷ “The Outbreak in Jamaica: The Underhill Meetings,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 61. G. B Clarke, a Native Baptist, confirmed “there is not a single Baptist minister in the whole parish,

chapel there. The only Baptist church that was in Morant Bay was associated with the JNBMS and, in 1843, John Davis of the JNBMS was the pastor for that church known as the Jubilee Chapel in Morant Bay.²⁷⁸ And it was at the Jubilee Chapel in Morant Bay that George B. Clarke, chairman of a group of Baptists, held a meeting on 12 July 1866.²⁷⁹ Clarke was one of the leaders who arranged with Paul Bogle and Gordon for baptism in 1862.²⁸⁰ It was also said that a congregation had moved from a church, meeting in a house under the leadership of the said John Davis,²⁸¹ to become known as “Killick’s chapel”²⁸² and Killick was a member and leader within the JNBMS.²⁸³ Davis was not a pastor of two different congregations but was pastor of Jubilee Chapel, which was also nicknamed as “Killick’s chapel.” Therefore, Paul Bogle and Moses Bogle attended and were affiliated to the JNBMS chapel in Morant Bay. Though no evidence was unearthed that there was an administrative link between the Native Baptist Communion and the JNBMS, the JNBMS would have influenced the Bogles when they attended chapel. There was, therefore, more than likely a hermeneutical connection between the Native Baptist Communion and the JNBMS.

except the Rev. Henry Harris of Manchioniel”: George B. Clarke, “From Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 791.

²⁷⁸ Jamaica Almanack 1843 93.

²⁷⁹ Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 792.

²⁸⁰ JRC Vol. 5 1150.

²⁸¹ First Annual Report 12.

²⁸² “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay: A Hearty Welcome,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662.

²⁸³ First Annual Report 2, 4.

Some common features of the Native Baptists of the JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion include independence from the English Baptists whether in England or Jamaica.²⁸⁴ Both groups emphasized the oppression experienced by the people of African descent²⁸⁵ and both were politically active.²⁸⁶ And both, as Turner observed, devised interpretation that mirrored their needs for freedom from injustice.²⁸⁷ In addition, there was no evidence to link the Native Baptists with the use of folk songs; instead both groups used English hymns and both groups utilized the scholarship of Isaac Watts.²⁸⁸ Furthermore, both groups were once in a relationship with the English Baptists, the JNBMS through Lyon and Duff,²⁸⁹ and the Native Baptist Communion through Gordon.²⁹⁰ There were many similarities between the JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion.

Nevertheless, at the JRC Inquiry in 1866, George Truman, member of the JNBMS, made a distinction between the JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion. He said, "I may state that the Native Baptists, as they have been

²⁸⁴ "The Outbreak in Jamaica," Baptist Magazine 1866: 55. See also JRC Vol. 4 527. Some became Native Baptists and gained independence having "broken off" from the English Baptists: "Jamaica," Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41. See also JRC Vol. 5 782.

²⁸⁵ Clarke, Memorials 221, 223-24 and First Annual Report 17.

²⁸⁶ Underhill, Life 320. Wilmot, Stake in the Soil 318.

²⁸⁷ Mary Turner, Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaica Slave Society 1787-1834 (Urbana: U of Illinois, 1982) 58.

²⁸⁸ First Annual Report ii; "Hymns Selected and marked by Paul Bogle," Gleaner, 4 Nov. 1865: 4 and King, Sketch 6

²⁸⁹ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837.

²⁹⁰ Underhill, Life 319.

called, are not the Native Baptists that I am connected with.”²⁹¹ There was an understandable reason for making that distinction. It was due to fear of reprisals from the authorities who might blame the JNBMS for the 1865 Native Baptist War. Some persons, whose only crime was that they were native ministers were blamed, although they were innocent. For example, on 23 October 1865, the authorities captured J. B. Service, native pastor in Port Antonio.²⁹² Edwin Palmer, native pastor of Hanover Street Baptist, was imprisoned for approximately two months without trial.²⁹³ Twenty native pastors, including J. H. Crole and H. B. Harris, who were part of the English Baptist mission, were accused of complicity with a plot to rebel.²⁹⁴ Since native ministers not associated with the Native Baptists were experiencing serious persecutions, then persons identified as Native Baptists were more liable to harassments. And there was precedence for such expectation in that in the aftermath of the 1831 Baptist War, the English Baptist missionaries were blamed for it²⁹⁵ and their chapels were destroyed²⁹⁶ although they were not directly involved. Therefore, it was natural for Truman to distance himself from the Native Baptist Communion to preserve his property and life.

²⁹¹ JRC Vol. 5 416.

²⁹² “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 20 Nov. 1865: 9.

²⁹³ Underhill, Life 335fn.

²⁹⁴ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866 61. See also “Editorial Topics: The Rebellion,” Falmouth Post 31 Oct. 1865: 1.

²⁹⁵ Senior, Jamaica 183.

²⁹⁶ “Revivals and Awakenings: The Late Revival in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter Jan. 1862: 21.

Independent of the JNBMS and Native Baptist Communion

There were several ministers, at least one independent Native Baptist pastor, at least one pastor of two independent Baptist congregations and many native ministers within European missions who were not affiliated to either the JNBMS or the Native Baptist Communion.

Underhill mentioned an unnamed “black man” who was “the pastor of the Native Baptist Church” in the parish of St. Dorothy who “seceded in 1841, during Mr. Taylor’s ministry” from the English Baptists but who “declined to join the Native Baptist Association, in 1841.” ²⁹⁷ This was an independent Native Baptist church.

Then there was “the other Baptist Chapel” on White Church Street, which was known as “The Independent Baptist Chapel” and was built by Rev. Thomas Dowson and his followers after the court case with Phillippo in 1846. ²⁹⁸ In 1861, Dowson started another Independent Baptist mission at St. Faith station in St. John, seventeen miles from Spanish Town. ²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Underhill, West Indies 231-32. In JNBMS Report, the parish is spelt as “St. Dorothy’s”: First Annual Report 16-17.

²⁹⁸ W. A. Feurtado, A Forty-Five Years’ Reminiscence of the characteristics & characters of Spanish Town (Kingston, 1890) 25. In 1863, an official document said the members of the breakaway church in Spanish Town were called “Independent Baptists” Votes of Assembly 1862-63 86. Clarke said this “Independent Baptist Chapel” could seat 600: Clarke, Memorials 192. Robertson claimed that the name of the church was “the Ebenezer or Independent Baptist Chapel”: James Robertson, Gone is the Ancient Glory: Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1534-2000 (Kingston, Miami: Randle, 2005) 177.

²⁹⁹ Clarke, Memorials 193.

In 1843, Rev. Mr. Collins, a former Moravian missionary, changed his views on the subject of baptism, and practised Believers' Baptism and became "pastor of a newly formed church in Westmoreland."³⁰⁰ One was not sure whether Collins led an Independent Native Baptist or an Independent Baptist Church or just an Independent Church. However, since it was mentioned in a Baptist newspaper it was probably a sign that it was affiliated to a Baptist communion.

Underhill mentioned there were native ministers among the Wesleyans, the Independents and the Presbyterians.³⁰¹ There were also native pastors among the Baptists such as Thomas Henry, who assisted John Clark of Brown's Town³⁰² and Richard and Joseph Merrick³⁰³ By 1864, there were nineteen native pastors associated with the English Baptist mission, who were trained at Calabar, including Mr. Smith (Mount Angus 1843), Mr. Johnson (Clarksonville 1844), Mr. Fray (Refuge 1847) and Mr. Dalling (Stacy Ville 1848).³⁰⁴ In all, between 1843 and 1860, thirty-one persons became native ministers in the English Baptist controlled mission.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Baptist Herald, & Friend of Africa 1 Feb. 1843; [1].

³⁰¹ Underhill, West Indies 303-04.

³⁰² John Clarke, "Death of Mr. Thomas Henry of Jamaica," Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 791.

³⁰³ "Freedom in Jamaica: Or, the First of August, 1838 (London, 1838) 23 and Missionary Herald Sept. 1839: 58 in Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1841. Richard Merrick was the first person of African origin to become an accredited BMS missionary: Catherall, Baptist War 111.

³⁰⁴ Underhill, West Indies 297, 322.

³⁰⁵ Underhill, West Indies 301. See the Jamaica Almanack which listed three categories of Baptist ministers namely, "Baptist Missionaries", "Baptist (Native) Preachers" and "Baptist Congregational Churches": Jamaica Almanack 1843 92- 93.

Sociological features

In 1866, according to English Baptist missionaries, the African members spoke “broken English.” ³⁰⁶ They made disparaging comments about the educational standard of the Native Baptists, claiming that, “The Black and Coloured preachers of the Native Baptist churches were generally exceedingly ignorant. Some of them could neither read nor write, and were not even able to utter a single sentence intelligibly.” ³⁰⁷ Rev. Mr. Campbell, Anglican rector in St. Thomas in the East, in a testimony before the Jamaica Royal Commission, said that the preachers of the “native Baptist chapels” were illiterate and “were not competent to teach religion.” ³⁰⁸ A newspaper report said of Bogle and his fellow native preachers that they were “men who can barely spell their way through a passage in the Bible, and who eager for distinction, set up to be preachers.” ³⁰⁹

However, according to John Clarke, in a letter dated 24 May 1839, “reading is becoming more common” among the Negroes. ³¹⁰ The JNBMS First Annual Report was a well-argued, well-written report in Standard English. In addition,

³⁰⁶ “From Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 791. See also Emancipation 33. In 1866, the Commissioners did not understand the answers of the Negroes and they appointed a Mulatto policeman to be an interpreter who would pose a question in the vernacular and translate the answer into “more or less plain English”: From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 17 Mar. 1866: 9. There was bias against the speech of the people who could not speak their “plain English.”

³⁰⁷ Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 96n.

³⁰⁸ JRC Vol. 5 842. Hobbs also claimed that the Native Baptist preachers in 1865 were unable in many cases to read or write: JRC Vol. 5 1129. See also Hutton, Colour 174.

³⁰⁹ Morning Journal 16 Jan. 1867: [2].

³¹⁰ Missionary Herald Sept. 1839: 60 in Baptist Reporter, and Tract Magazine 1841.

Joseph Silva was a teacher with “some education.” ³¹¹ Robert Hamilton, who would in subsequent years succeeded John Davis, ³¹² wrote a thank you letter for the gift of a Bible on the second day of freedom. ³¹³ Furthermore, Underhill described an unnamed Native Baptist pastor as being intelligent but “his knowledge of books was very limited.” ³¹⁴ Moreover, Robert Madden, a special magistrate administering the apprenticeship system in Jamaica, was pleasantly surprised at the way Killick expounded the word and the “application of scriptural knowledge.” ³¹⁵ Killick was knowledgeable before he became a Native Baptist.

In 1865, a group of Native Baptists wrote a narrative, which was a fine example of the art of rhetoric. ³¹⁶ In addition, a knowledgeable reporter said of a district in St. Thomas-in-the-East that “most possessed the ability to read and very many to write” and “in their house might be found the island newspapers, cheap English periodicals, and tracts and religious books of different sorts” and they “were not ignorant of the principal features of the constitution under which they lived, or

³¹¹ Clarke, Memorials 223. Clarke spelt Joseph’s surname as “Sylva” however, the JNBMS has Silva so this writer will accept the official report’s spelling First Annual Report 3. Either spelling would be pronounced the same way.

³¹² Clarke, Memorials 223.

³¹³ Robb 167.

³¹⁴ Underhill, West Indies 232.

³¹⁵ Robert Madden, A Twelvemonth’s Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition From Slavery to Apprenticeship Vol. 1 (London, 1835) 100.

³¹⁶ Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 792. See another example in “Release of the Rev. Edwin Palmer,” Baptist Magazine Aug. 1866: 521-22.

acquainted with the laws by which they were governed.”³¹⁷ In 1866, another reporter said, “Many of the Negroes seemed intelligent. They read their newspapers in the streets, when perhaps, they should be at work.”³¹⁸ Twenty-two year old James M’Laren, Native Baptist preacher, attended school in Morant Bay and was literate.³¹⁹ Gordon was largely self-taught³²⁰ and was well read and utilized Shakespearean language in criticizing the awful conditions in which the Indians existed, saying, “Every man who has a drop of the milk of human kindness in his breast, must weep at the sad state of the poor Coolies.”³²¹ The claim that the Native Baptist preachers were largely illiterate was overstated.

There were persons who equated the peculiar speech pattern of the Native Baptists and others of African origin with inability to read and write which was inaccurate. Gordon was correct to claim that there were literate Native Baptist preachers and leaders.³²² And the generalization by persons, such as Campbell, that many cannot read and write was counter to the evidence that many were reading their Bibles and newspapers.

³¹⁷ Jamaica Tribune and Daily Advertiser 21 Dec. 1865: [4].

³¹⁸ From Our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866:9.

³¹⁹ JRC Vol. 5 246.

³²⁰ King, Sketch 6.

³²¹ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under The New Constitution Vol. X (Kingston, 1864) 137

³²² Gordon, Cause for His Glory 107, 121.

John Candler, a member of the Society of Friends, said “The Baptist (native) preachers are coloured or black men . . .”³²³ Clarke described Sylva as “a coloured free man of good parts”; Duff was a “free man of colour”; George Truman was “coloured”³²⁴ and Hamilton was born on a “slave ship.”³²⁵ Clarke in making a distinction between English Baptists and Native Baptists identified Native Baptists as being served by pastors of African extract.³²⁶ The Native Baptist leaders were mainly Mulattoes and persons of African ancestry. In 1835, Madden said of the Kingston congregation of Killick: “all of whom were Negroes like himself.”³²⁷ Assuming that Killick’s church was indicative of the JNBMS churches, then the members were primarily of persons of African origin. American -born, Richard Warren, James McLaren and George B. Clarke, leaders within the Native Baptist Communion were described as “black.”³²⁸ The baptismal record of George William Gordon said he was “a Quadroon slave on Cherry Gardens.”³²⁹ A Quadroon is the offspring of a “white and a mulatto.”³³⁰

³²³ “Jamaica,” Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41. Phillippo used this source: Phillippo, Jamaica 294.

³²⁴ JRC Vol. 5 414.

³²⁵ Clarke, Memorials 223.

³²⁶ Colin G. Clarke, Kingston Jamaica: Urban Development and Social Change, 1692-2002 (Kingston: Randle, 2006) 117.

³²⁷ Madden 100. Heuman said, “In Kingston, free coloreds comprised half of the membership and two-thirds of the attendance at the Wesleyan missions”: Gad J. Heuman, Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865 (Westport: Greenwood P, 1981) 12. This was a difference between the Native Baptists and the Methodists.

³²⁸ JRC Vol. 5 124, 1069. James’ father, John M’Laren was described as “black”: JRC Vol. 245.

³²⁹ “Baptism in 1815,” St. Andrew Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1907-1826 Vol. 2 53 in 1B/11/8/1/2 St. Andrew 1807-26 in Island Record Office Jam 88 JA 1B/11 in Jamaica Archives. The baptismal record identified a “George Gordon” who was about three months old when he was christened. Gordon’s parents “managed to conceal their precious treasure for the space of three months”: Fletcher 14. This baptism record was about George William Gordon.

The members within the Native Baptist Communion appeared to be primarily of African origin.

Little is known about the economic background of individual Native Baptists but an examination of the annual taxes paid in St. Thomas in the East was indicative of the economic worth of some leaders within the Native Baptist Communion. For example, Moses Bogle had 32 acres at Rhine, Paul Bogle had 500 acres at Dumobbin and George Bassett Clarke had a carriage at Rhine. In St. Thomas in the East, there were only 38 planters who had 500 acres or more.³³¹ Therefore, Bogle's 500 acres would put him in the top echelons of the society. Moses Bogle paid £1 12s in taxes for that property, while Paul Bogle paid £2 1s and 8d and Clarke paid £3 in taxes.³³² Paying direct taxes to the amount of £3 a year would have entitled George Clarke to be a voter, one of the 1% of the population who could vote.³³³ He was, therefore, financially strong.

In addition, Native Baptists paying their taxes was a testament to being law-abiding subjects. And although the taxes were exorbitant and unjust they made every attempt to comply with the taxation policy.

³³⁰ Stewart, View 324; Madden Vol. 1 89; Hodgson 60-61 and Godfrey Lagden, The Native Races of The Empire (London: Collins, 1924) 314.

³³¹ Heuman, Between Black and White 119.

³³² JRC Vol. 4 234. Underhill said, "carriage is costly": Underhill, West Indies 231.

³³³ Hall, Free 2, 177. See also Table 1.

It also appeared that the leading Native Baptists had income or assets above the average person. Bogle was a baker.³³⁴ He also produced cane and sugar³³⁵ and had a boiling house and a crushing house for his canes.³³⁶ Matthew Lutas was a tailor and landowner.³³⁷ James Hill, Native Baptist leader, donated via a “Deed of Gift”, a chapel for the use of the JNBMS at Bethany, St David’s, which had 179 members.³³⁸ In the 1849 Elections, Rev. John Davis was a registered voter.³³⁹ This meant he was one of the 2,235 registered voters³⁴⁰ out of a population of 377,433 (see Table 1). To be a voter, he had to be a freeholder or a tax paying person.³⁴¹ Hobbs said that the peasants who lived in Somerset, Mount Lebanon and Mount Pisgah were wealthy.³⁴² Though this was an exaggeration, it also appeared that the members of the churches were not the poorest. The cost of the buildings was funded mainly from the pockets of the members, so the size of the buildings signified the depth of the members’ pockets. Liele’s church was built

³³⁴ JRC Vol. 5 693. See also Hutton, Colour 226.

³³⁵ JRC Vol. 4 235.

³³⁶ From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 17 Mar. 1866:9.

³³⁷ Swithin Wilmot, “The Politics of Samuel Clarke: Black Creole Politician in Free Jamaica, 1851-1865” Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston: Randle, Oxford: Currey P, 2002) 229.

³³⁸ First Annual Report 6.

³³⁹ Swithin Wilmot Stake in the Soil 318.

³⁴⁰ Hall, Free 177.

³⁴¹ Hall, Free 177. Hall said that in post-emancipation Jamaica, “the right to vote was open to every sane adult male who owned and had paid taxes on a freehold of £6 value, or paid an annual rent of £30, or paid direct taxes to the amount of £3 a year”: Hall, Free 2.

³⁴² JRC Vol. 5 1122. See also Hutton, Colour 174.

on three acres and was 57 ft in length, by 37 ft in breadth.³⁴³ This church became part of the JNBMS under Killick with a membership of 3,700.³⁴⁴ A place of worship was opened on 27 June 1840 at the Half-Way-Tree station, with 363 members.³⁴⁵ Duggan of Spanish Town said, “We have recently purchased a large dwelling for £3000, which is converted into a House of Worship.”³⁴⁶ Underhill described an Independent Native Baptist chapel, which was built in 1842 at a cost of £900 that could seat between 350 and 400 persons.³⁴⁷ This independent chapel could be used to give an idea of the cost of the Half-Way-Tree station and the seating capacity of the Spanish Town station. Since the independent station and the Half-Way-Tree station had a similar seating capacity, it could be assumed that the Half-Way-Tree station cost approximately £900. And since Duggan’s place of worship cost three times as much as the independent chapel, it was likely that Duggan’s chapel would be able to hold more worshippers. Some of the Native Baptist chapels were substantial buildings, which was an indication that some congregants had wealth. Gordon would have been the wealthiest of them all with properties in many parishes.³⁴⁸ However, he had acquired most of his wealth before he identified with the Native Baptists. James McLaren, a Native Baptist preacher was a labourer, and his father who was also described as a

³⁴³ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 336.

³⁴⁴ First Annual Report 4.

³⁴⁵ First Annual Report 14.

³⁴⁶ First Annual Report 21.

³⁴⁷ Underhill, West Indies 231.

³⁴⁸ JRC Vol. 4 228-29; Fletcher 42-43, 50 and [London] Times 20 Feb. 1867: 5.

labourer, owned a chapel and was able to send him to school in Morant Bay. ³⁴⁹ As labourers, they were earning a decent wage. George B. Clarke was a carpenter, small landowner and a vestryman of St. Thomas in the East. ³⁵⁰ Clarke said the Native Baptists relied on lower class support. ³⁵¹ It is highly possible that the members were from the lower classes while some of the leaders had income above that level.

Between 1838-65, the English Baptist missionaries facilitated the establishment of Free Villages in Sligoville, Sturge Town, Kitson Town and Clarkson Town, all within a 10 miles radius of Spanish Town, and Vale Lionel, Porus in Manchester, and at the Alps, Calabar, Clark Town, Granville, Kettering, Hoby Town and Waldensia in Trelawny, Victoria in St. Thomas in the Vale, Bethel Town and Mount Carey in St. James, Clarksonville near Spanish Town, ³⁵² Wilberforce and Buxton in St. Ann, Freedom in St. Catherine and Thompson Town, Clarendon. ³⁵³ Others established included Maldon (1840) in St. James ³⁵⁴ and Stephney St. Ann. ³⁵⁵

³⁴⁹ JRC Vol. 5 246.

³⁵⁰ JRC Vol. 5 124.

³⁵¹ Clarke, Kingston 117.

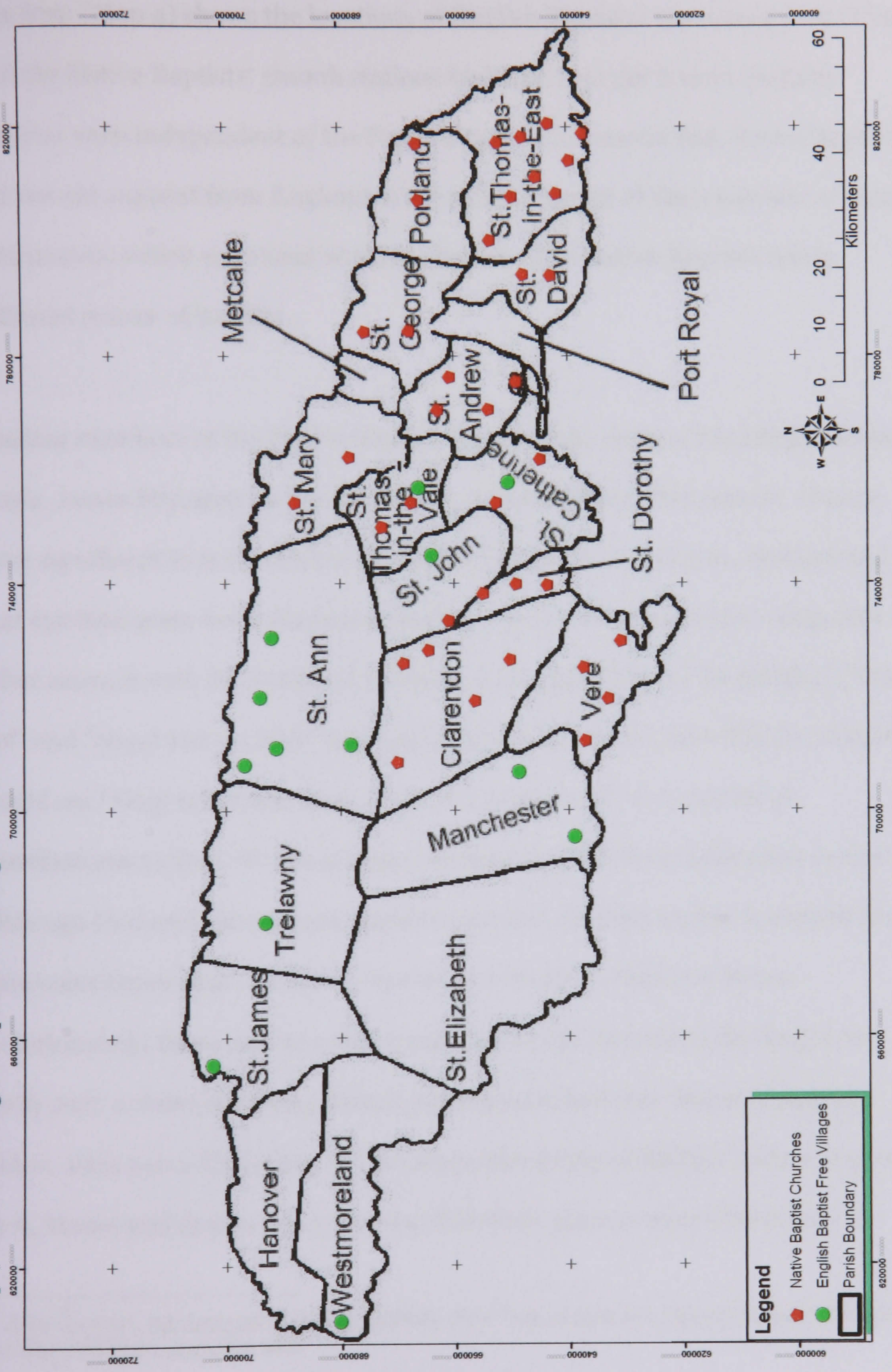
³⁵² Underhill, Life 209.

³⁵³ Phillippo, Jamaica 221-22, Underhill, Life 185-88 and Clark 116.

³⁵⁴ Hall, Free 23.

³⁵⁵ Audley G. Reid, Community Formation: A Study of the 'Village' in Postemancipation Jamaica (Kingston: Canoe, 2000) 50.

Map 4 Locations of English Baptists' Free Villages and JNBMS churches



The map (Map 4) shows the locations of English Baptists' sponsored Free Villages and the Native Baptists' church stations highlight that the Native Baptists' stations were independent of the Free Villages. This meant that Native Baptists did not get support from England in the establishment of their stations or their settlements, which were near to these chapels. The Native Baptists had a different source of income.

Leading members of the Native Baptist Communion, such as Paul Bogle, Moses Bogle, James McLaren and James Bowie, all had Biblical first names. Names were significant to both English Christians as well as to Africans. Stewart said that spiritual gems were displayed through the names given to their dogs and other animals with the Puritans in England naming theirs as "be faithful"; "faint not" and "stand fast on high" as a sign of commitment to God while the Africans would say "*Keep what you have, take care of yourself*" as a symbol of steadfastness to God.³⁵⁶ The assigned names signified their dedication to God. Although Paul and James were popular names in English society it seemed more than coincidence that one family named two brothers Paul and Moses. Unfortunately, there was no written material on the parents of the Bogles to verify such a claim but it has already been established that James McLaren's father, John was a Christian.³⁵⁷ Therefore, the giving of Biblical names, such as, Paul, Moses and James was indicative that their parents were Christians. It

³⁵⁶ John Stewart, An Account of Jamaica (1808; New York: Books For Library P, 1971) 247-48. See also: Phillippo, Jamaica 202.

³⁵⁷ JRC Vol. 5 245-46.

would appear that some of the members of the Native Baptist Communion would have been reared in Christian homes, and received Christian instructions and be exposed to Christian lifestyles from an early age.

What happened to the Native Baptists?

Between 1841 and 1843, a medical gentleman in a letter to a friend in England said:

During the Lord's Day I spent at Sligoville, a party of people came from a distance to beg Mr. P to go to take possession of a chapel belonging to some Native Baptists who could not get on alone. These people, about six in number, came the Sunday previous . . . Mr. P. invited me to accompany him, and early on the appointed morning we set off, with another medical man, to the place called the 'Above Rocks' in St. Thomas in the Vale . . . and went to the chapel . . . ³⁵⁸

A Native Baptist church was indeed at Above Rocks ³⁵⁹ but in mid 1840s there was only a Baptist church associated with the JBU, which meant that that Native Baptist church was absorbed into the English Baptist mission.

³⁵⁸ Phillippo, Jamaica 298-300.

³⁵⁹ Clarke, Memorials 223.

John Clarke believed that “as an educated Native ministry” developed then “the class of preachers we have been noticing will disappear.” ³⁶⁰ Calabar College was established in 1843 because there were not enough European missionaries to service the numerous churches. ³⁶¹ Therefore, Clarke’s desire that a more educated native ministry through Calabar College would be the demise of self-constituted preachers and the numerous Native Baptist pastors who lacked formal theological training was an additional intent. There were some English Baptists who wanted to use Calabar College to train natives to take over the responsibility for Native Baptists congregations. This happened in 1852, when Richard Dalling, a native, trained at Calabar College, began his labours at Staceyville, Paradise and Shady Grove which it was claimed that, “This station [Shady Grove] and Paradise were at one time under native ministers not connected with the Baptist Missionary Society.” ³⁶² And, indeed, in 1841, Paradise was part of the JNBMS. ³⁶³ Lieth Hall station, St. Thomas in the East was “formerly under Native Baptists” but after the outbreak in 1865 it came under the superintendence of Henry Bartholomew Harris, a native minister associated with the English Baptist mission. ³⁶⁴ The Port Antonio station was founded by Henry Brown in 1838 and was part of the JNBMS in 1843 ³⁶⁵ and in

³⁶⁰ Clarke, Memorials 223.

³⁶¹ Underhill, Life 206. Another related reason was that the BMS was not prepared to fund additional missionaries.

³⁶² Clarke, Memorials 214-15.

³⁶³ First Annual Report 16.

³⁶⁴ Clarke, Memorials 216.

³⁶⁵ Jamaica Almanack 1843 93; Clarke, Memorials 219 and First Annual Report 18.

1855 became part of the English Baptist mission, manned by a native minister, J. J. Porter.³⁶⁶ According to Clarke, after 1865, “surviving members of the little Native Baptist Churches” were “glad to come under the care of those they had previously shunned [English Baptists].”³⁶⁷ In 1864, English Baptist missionaries, J. E. Henderson and Edward Hewitt on an island tour preached to a Native Baptist congregation in Morant Bay, St. Thomas and after the resistance in 1865, William Teall preached in a JNBMS building associated with Mr. Killick.³⁶⁸ This was a prelude to the English Baptists taking over these congregations. A resolution was passed with the support of “the most influential philanthropists of every Christian denomination” that Teall was “to collect the numerous individuals and churches who had been previously under the influence of teachers not recognized by the regularly organized churches in the denomination in connection with the parent society, with a view of instructing them in the ‘way of the Lord more perfectly.’ ”³⁶⁹ The Native Baptists associated with the Native Baptist Communion at Middleton/Stony Gut said they would join the English Baptists.³⁷⁰ In the aftermath of the 1865 Native Baptist War, the English Baptists

³⁶⁶ Clarke, Memorials 219.

³⁶⁷ Clarke, Memorials 224.

³⁶⁸ “Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1837: 816 and “A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea,” Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453.

³⁶⁹ From the Jamaica Morning Journal, “Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1867: 815.

³⁷⁰ “A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea,” Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453 and “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866 662.

were absorbing the membership and churches of the Native Baptists in St. Thomas-in-the-East, ostensibly to teach them more properly about God.

The ruling class also wanted the demise of the native churches, of which the Native Baptists was the most numerous and most influential. After Martial Law was proclaimed in 1865, there was an edict to thwart all teaching by all bodies except the Church of England, Rome, Scotland and the Jews in order to preserve the “worship of God from scandalous abuses, superstitious practices, and sedition.” ³⁷¹ The effect of the bill for the Regulation of Religious Worship would have “closed up all native churches.” ³⁷² The Bill did not become law but the intent was there and there was a clear and present danger to the existence of the Native Baptists. And by June 1866, William Teall reported that “the people had not been able to meet since martial law, and no song of praise had been heard for months.”³⁷³ And in a resolution moved by Brother George Stephens and seconded by the general consent of the meeting held at Jubilee chapel, Morant Bay on 12 July 1866, it said, “we have not a single chapel in our midst of worth, or meeting-house to assemble in any of great value, as they have all been destroyed.” ³⁷⁴ The authorities destroyed the Native Baptist chapels, which provided an opportunity

³⁷¹ Underhill, Life 333.

³⁷² Jamaica Tribune and Daily Advertiser 20 Dec. 1865: [4].

³⁷³ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662. See also Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 792.

³⁷⁴ Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 792.

for the English Baptists to acquire the members of the Native Baptist congregations.

Underhill said of Native or Independent Baptists, “Few of them now remain; they have either been absorbed by the various missionary bodies, or have been beneficially influenced by the increase of intelligence and of evangelical labourers around them.” ³⁷⁵ And in 1874, the official ecclesiastical account did not list any Native Baptist minister but mentioned ministers associated with the English Baptists and one Independent minister. ³⁷⁶ However, in 1882, there was a contrary statement from an anonymous concerned letter writer who noted that the Native Baptists were strong numerically and therefore suggested that the JBU and the Native Baptists co-operate or engage in an organic union with the benefit to the Native Baptists being a more disciplined organization while the Baptist Union would increase numerically. ³⁷⁷ Nevertheless, a year later, in a publication written by representatives of the JBU, it was said, “with the exception of a few small ‘Native Baptist’ congregations, nearly all the Baptist Churches of the island are now in association with the Jamaica Baptist Union.” ³⁷⁸ There was conflicting evidence about the extent of the demise of the Native Baptists but some Native

³⁷⁵ Underhill, West Indies 201.

³⁷⁶ Jamaica Almanack 1895 160-61.

³⁷⁷ An Observer to the Editor of the Gleaner, “The Congregational Church and its Minister,” Gleaner [30 Sept. 1882-5 Oct. 1882] in MST 51 43-44 in National Library of Jamaica.

³⁷⁸ Handbook of Jamaica for 1883 (Kingston, 1883) 284.

Baptist congregations were absorbed into the English Baptist mission and some chapels were destroyed in 1865.

Table 6: State Expenditure on the Anglican Church for 1854-58

Year	Ecclesiastical Expenditure (£)
1854	37,691
1855	36,777
1856	29,067
1857	27,928
1858	25,063
Total	156,526

Source: Underhill, West Indies 212 n.

In addition, lack of financial resources could have caused the decline of the Native Baptists. This would not have been unique to the Native Baptists because Curtin argued that one of the reasons for the decline of the Native Wesleyans was the lack of financial support.³⁷⁹ Apart from the general economic malaise³⁸⁰ that would have affected the Native Baptists they also suffered because they did not have any overseas support like the other British controlled missionary societies and instead were supported by their people. Clarke also recalled one such Native

³⁷⁹ Curtin, Two Jamaicas 166.

³⁸⁰ Clarke, Memorials 224 and Catherall, Baptist War 206.

Baptist pastor who fell into poverty.³⁸¹ There was an unnamed Native Baptist pastor of congregations with 250 members whose income was £40 annually in 1859/60, which previously was £70.³⁸² This was in stark contrast to the salary of the bishop of Kingston, which was £3000.³⁸³ In 1835, Madden said of Killick, before his congregation had experienced rapid growth “the income of the poor black parson is very scanty, his congregation consists of about one hundred and fifty, each of whom pay him five-pence currency or about one hundred pounds sterling for his own support and the expenses of his chapel.”³⁸⁴ By 1840, there were 19 congregations with 150 or fewer members³⁸⁵ and if Killick’s congregation in 1835 was indicative of congregations of that size then half of the JNBMS churches would be in an adverse pecuniary situation.³⁸⁶ Although the JNBMS got contributions from the State, between 1840 and 1863, which when tabulated amounted to £356,³⁸⁷ this amount was minimal when compared to the Anglican ecclesiastical expenditure of State funding of £156,526 over a five-year period (see Table 6). The Native Baptists also sought financial assistance from benevolent persons³⁸⁸ which was also woefully inadequate. It seemed, therefore,

³⁸¹ Clarke, Memorials 222.

³⁸² Underhill, West Indies 231-32.

³⁸³ Underhill, West Indies 211.

³⁸⁴ Madden 101.

³⁸⁵ First Annual Report 4-35.

³⁸⁶ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay: A Hearty Welcome,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662 and Madden 101.

³⁸⁷ Underhill, West Indies 201; Votes of Assembly 1862-3 131 and Clarke, Memorials 223.

³⁸⁸ First Annual Report 26-30.

almost inevitable that the JNBMS would not survive. In 1866, in Morant Bay, there was a large decrepit chapel associated with the JNBMS.³⁸⁹ The Native Baptist Communion was dependent on the financial fortunes of Gordon and so his execution would have adversely affected their financial survival. The economic crunch also affected the viability of the Native Baptists.

Summary

Those who claimed that there were no distinctive groups of congregants called Native Baptists are incorrect. Though it is always difficult to identify and be precise about the origin of many things, and the Native Baptists were no exception, one set of Native Baptists became an institution between September 1839 and July 1840 when it was established as the JNBMS with a structure, buildings, schools, financial base, regulations, membership, quality leaders, clearly defined mission and a central office. There was also another Native Baptist group, referred to as the Native Baptist Communion, to which Gordon and Bogle were affiliated and which operated mainly in Eastern Jamaica, from at least 1862. Both groups of Native Baptists shared significant commonalities.

Native Baptists were those persons who were predominantly of African ancestry, untrained theologically in the formal setting of a seminary, but nonetheless educated and having their own interpretation of the Bible and understanding of

³⁸⁹ "A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea," Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453.

God. The Native Baptists were native-born and native-bred and were specific to Jamaica. They felt that they were rightful ministers of the gospel and were confident that they could do a competent job. They also wanted to be in charge of their church property and wanted to have independence from European management. They were well organized.

The Native Baptists were a social construct born out of a response to discrimination and a desire for equality and justice. The Native Baptists grew from a movement propelled by ideas for a social change to become a well-supported institution. They developed their distinctive forms of worship, they earned, garnered and controlled their funds and were self-governing; developing and implementing their own rules and regulations. This was an outstanding achievement from persons largely of the lower classes.

George Liele established the Baptist Church in Jamaica and his group could be identified as Baptists, Original Baptists, Ethiopian Baptists and Anabaptists but not Native Baptists. He invited the English Baptists and co-operated with them. He gave inspiration and impetus to leaders, who formed the JNBMS. Both the English Baptists and the Native Baptists were bequeathed members from the labours of Liele.

This chapter looked at the origin and development of the Native Baptists and the next chapter will examine their beliefs and practices

CHAPTER FOUR: NATIVE BAPTISTS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

There were some fundamental characteristics of the Native Baptists' main beliefs and practices which will be outlined in this chapter. Many modern scholars have claimed that these beliefs and practices were African-derived religious expressions, especially aligned to Obeah and Myal (see pages 54-63 above). The relationship between the beliefs and practices of the Native Baptists, as discovered from their writings, sayings and actions, and the allegation that they were African inspired will also be analyzed based on the writings of those in the eighteenth century and those which were contemporaneous with the existence of the Native Baptists.

Obeah

William Burdett, Overseer on a plantation for many years in Jamaica, as well as historians Edwards and Gardner, believed that etymologically Obeah was an Egyptian name for serpent¹ while Madden argued that Obeah's origin was Oriental.² In addition, Obeah has been likened to Voudou.”³

¹ William Burdett, The Life and Exploits of Three-finger'd Jack, the Terror of Jamaica (5th ed. N. p., 1802) 17; Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies II (1793; New York: Arno P, 1972) 108 and W. J. Gardner, A History of Jamaica (3rd ed. 1873; London: Cass, 1971) 187.

² Robert Madden, A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition From Slavery to Apprenticeship (Vol. 1 London, 1835) 101.

³ “Cannibalism in Hayti,” Gleaner 17 Oct. 1881 in MST 51 22 in National Library of Jamaica. It can also be spelt “Voodoo.”

Burdett stated that there were many aspects to Obeah, “a somewhat peculiarly harsh and forbidding aspect, together with some skill in plants of the medicinal and poisonous species . . .” Obeah was a means to get revenge for injury or insults, to cure disorders, to punish a thief or adulterer or to predict future events.⁴ But some writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such as Edwards,⁵ Burdett,⁶ John Henry Buchner, superintendent of the Moravian mission,⁷ the JBU,⁸ and Barclay,⁹ believed it to be or described it as witchcraft, sorcery, black magic or something evil. Along that line, J. Stewart claimed that Obeah has similarity with European witchcraft because of the ingredients used in plying the trade.¹⁰ For clergyman, Thomas Banbury, Obeah was evil personified. He claimed that the obeahman, was “the agent of incarnate Satan.”¹¹ Obeah was also called a superstition.¹² Writers who claimed that Obeah was evil and that Myal was its antidote, included Gardner,¹³ Phillippo,¹⁴ and Buchner.¹⁵

⁴ Burdett 18.

⁵ Introduction by Bryan Edwards, The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica, in regard to the Maroon Negroes: Published by order of the Assembly (1796; Stockdale Westport: Negro UP, 1970) xxix and Edwards, History, Civil and Commercial 108.

⁶ Burdett 18.

⁷ J. H. Buchner, The Moravians in Jamaica, History of the Mission of the United Brethren's Church to the Negroes in the Island of Jamaica, From the Year 1754-1854 (London, 1854) 138.

⁸ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 322.

⁹ Alexander Barclay, A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies (London, 1826) 190.

¹⁰ John Stewart, An Account of Jamaica (1808; New York: Books For Library P, 1971) 256-57.

¹¹ T[homas] Banbury, Jamaica Superstitions; or the Obeah Book: A Complete Treatise of the Absurdities Believed in by the People of the Island (Kingston, 1894) 5, 7.

¹² John Clark, W. Dendy and J. M. Phillippo, The Voice of Jubilee (London, 1865) 34.

¹³ Gardner 190-91.

Then there were the positive aspects of Obeah. It was said that when a Negro was robbed of a hog or fowl, he applied directly to an obeahman or woman to determine the thief and when a Negro, was ill, enquiries were made of the obeahman to ascertain the cause of his or her sickness and whether it would be fatal. ¹⁶ Other benefits of Obeah included: protection from danger, ¹⁷ immunization of the insurgents against the armoury of the Europeans during resistances; ¹⁸ guard against praedial larceny ¹⁹ and reason for misfortune. ²⁰

Nevertheless, Edwards said that obeahmen and women pretended to have communication with the devil and evil spirits. ²¹ Long called them, “pretended conjurers.” ²² Some, including Long and Edwards, ²³ Gardner, ²⁴ Phillippo, ²⁵

¹⁴ James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843; Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 248.

¹⁵ Buchner 138-39.

¹⁶ Burdett 20. See also Edwards, History 110-11 and Gardner 189.

¹⁷ Burdett 16.

¹⁸ Edwards, History 117, Phillippo, Jamaica 248, Douglas Hall In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86 (London: Macmillan, 1989) 98.

¹⁹ Stewart, Account 253 and J. Stewart, A View of the Past and Present State of the Island; With Remarks on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Slaves and on the Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies (1823; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 277-78.

²⁰ Madden 96-97.

²¹ Edwards, History 171.

²² Edward Long, History of Jamaica (Vol. II 1774; London: Cass, 1970) 416.

²³ Long II 416-17. Long describes the trick as “The lure hung out was, that every Negroe [sic], initiated into the myal society, would be invulnerable by the white men; and although they might in appearance be slain, the obeah- man could, at his pleasure, restore the body. The method, by which this trick was carried on, was by cold infusion of the herb branched colalue[u]; which, after the agitation of dancing, threw the party into a profound sleep.”

²⁴ Gardner 191.

²⁵ Phillippo, Jamaica 248-49.

Burdett,²⁶ Stewart,²⁷ Barclay,²⁸ and Buchner²⁹ asserted that Obeah was a fraud. Then there was Rev. J. E. Henderson, who said that obeah existed in his district, but “I have never been able to understand what it is.”³⁰ Based on the many theories about Obeah, Henderson, and others like him, could not understand the exact nature of this practice.

Obeah was outlawed in Jamaica in 1760.³¹ In addition, having the tools of obeah was punishable as a crime.³² The tools of the trade included, “grave-dirt, hair, teeth of sharks, alligators, and other animals, parrots’ beaks, blood, broken bottles, feathers, egg-shells, images in wax.”³³

The writers of the nineteenth century, who recorded the features of Obeah, at the time when Native Baptists were numerous, did not outline any feature whether negative or positive that was common among the Native Baptists.

²⁶ Burdett 19. See also Edwards for the exact quote Edwards, History 109.

²⁷ Stewart, Account 257 and Stewart, View 276.

²⁸ Barclay 190.

²⁹ Buchner 138.

³⁰ JRC Vol. 5 607.

³¹ Burdett 21, 27. Seaga gave a later date for the outlawing of the practice of obeah, that is, 1898: Edward Seaga, “Revival Cults in Jamaica: Notes Towards a Sociology of Religion” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 5. However, it was outlawed before that. In fact, the provision outlawing was repeated in 1816 and 1827. See John Lunan, An Abstract of the Laws of Jamaica (Spanish Town, 1819) 123 and The Consolidated Slave Law, passed the 22 [n] d December, 1826, commencing on the 1st May, 1827 (Courant Office, 1827) 28. In 1865, at Bath, St. Thomas, one person was convicted for Obeah practices: JRC Vol. 5 1100.

³² Bernard Senior, Jamaica, As It Was, As It Is, and As It May Be (1835; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 153. See also Edwards, History 112.

³³ Burdett 21. See also Stewart, Account 257 and Gardner 187.

Neither did those writers link Native Baptists and Obeah. The linking of Native Baptists to Obeah is a modern phenomenon. The Native Baptists did not have their faith outlawed and the tools of Obeah were never said to be found in the Native Baptist chapels. They were never associated with Voudou or classified as skilled in folk medicine or having the ability to exact revenge or described as witchcraft or consulted to prevent praedial larceny. Its origin was neither African nor Oriental. In addition, whereas Obeah is an individualistic activity, in that it is usually one person visiting an Obeah person for help with no communal ritual or responsibility; by contrast, the Native Baptists would congregate for the worship of God, the study of the Bible and for communal actions. Furthermore, this writer did not locate any record, whether ancient, contemporaneous or modern, to show that any of the beliefs or practices associated with Obeah was named among Native Baptists except that both Obeah practitioners and Native Baptists were accused of being superstitious. Those who claimed that the Native Baptists were superstitious included Mr. Milne, missionary of the LMS, a society that was founded in 1795 and mainly associated with the Congregational Church, who mentioned “cases of superstition among Native Baptists of St. Andrews and Kingston.”³⁴ The BMS and the *Missionary Herald* also claimed that the Native Baptists had superstitious practices.³⁵ This argument will have little weight in scholarly circles because one person’s superstition was another person’s faith. Classifying someone else’s belief as superstitious was a signal of disapproval as was asserted by the English Baptists who stated that “the

³⁴ The Baptist Missionary Society 1842 11. These charges of superstition were widespread 2. This Baptist document did not give the first name of Mr. Milne.

³⁵ Baptist Missionary Society 1842 2 in W. Indies Pamphlets and “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” Missionary Herald 802 in Baptist Magazine 1865. See also Underhill, Life 333.

Church of Rome” practiced “a baleful superstition” ³⁶ and an unnamed missionary calling Islam, “Mahometan superstition.” ³⁷ Superstition is a connotative word often used to discredit the beliefs and practices of opponents.

Myal

Long claimed that myal men and obeahmen co-operated ³⁸ while Gardner and Phillippo ³⁹ said Myal was an offshoot of Obeah. ⁴⁰ Buchner classified Myalmen as just “another class of sorcerers” ⁴¹ while the JBU in a Jubilee meeting in 1864 alluded to the effectiveness of its ministry in combating “the superstitious and wicked practices” of Myal. ⁴² However, according to Buchner, Myal men maintained that they were “sent by God to purge the world from all wickedness.” They also “had immediate intercourse with God”

³⁶ Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer Mar. 1855: 85. See also Baptist Herald 5 July 1843: 5. In addition, Protestants charged that the Church of Rome had a “superstitious fondness for their images and relics” British Reformation Society Tracts, The Church of Rome London, [n.d.], 8.

³⁷ William Moister, Memorials of Missionary Labours in Western Africa and the West Indies; with historical and descriptive observations (London, 1850) 170.

³⁸ Long II 416-418.

³⁹ Phillippo, Jamaica 248.

⁴⁰ Gardner 191.

⁴¹ Buchner 138 and Jamaica Moravian Church, The Breaking of the Dawn, or, Moravian Work in Jamaica, 1754-1904 (London: Jamaica Moravian Church, [c. 1904]) 89-90.

⁴² Underhill, Life 322.

and received divine revelations and made Obeah of no effect.⁴³ Like Obeah, there was much confusion about the exact characteristics of Myal.

There were examples of Myal practice in the eighteenth century⁴⁴ and in the nineteenth century, in 1841, Waddell observed Myal on Flower Hill, Spring, and Ironshore estates⁴⁵ and Baptist missionary Walter Dendy was aware of Myal being in St. Mary.⁴⁶ Buchner claimed that some persons of African origin started to practise Myal openly in 1842⁴⁷ and some interrupted divine Sunday services, including one at Salter's Hill, a Baptist Church, under the care of Dendy.⁴⁸ On 25 December 1842, Myalists entered the worship service jumping on benches and started to speak wildly. The deacons brought the situation under control but at the end of the service, the Myalists returned and injured some members.⁴⁹ Some Presbyterian missionaries charged that Myal "prevailed chiefly among Baptist Negroes."⁵⁰ The Jamaican Assembly outlawed the practice of Myal in 1855/56.⁵¹ There were significant differences between Myal and Native Baptists. Native Baptists were never outlawed. In fact, the Native Baptists had amiable and beneficial relationships with the

⁴³ Buchner 138-39. Edwards said Myal men and Obeahmen were antagonists: Edwards, History 146.

⁴⁴ Edwards, History 108.

⁴⁵ W. M. Waddell, Baptist Herald 5 July 1843: 4.

⁴⁶ Walter Dendy, "Remonstrance of the Presbytery of Jamaica," Baptist Herald 5 July 1843: 3.

⁴⁷ Buchner 138 -39.

⁴⁸ Banbury 22.

⁴⁹ John Clarke, Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica (London, 1869) 162-63.

⁵⁰ W. M. Waddell, Baptist Herald 5 July 1843: 4.

⁵¹ Votes of Assembly 1855-56 295.

governor,⁵² Mayor⁵³ and other government officials.⁵⁴ In addition, while there was record that Myalists disturbed an English Baptist worship service there is no record of a similar occurrence in a Native Baptist worship service. Moreover, the location where Myalists was most active, namely St. James, was not a place where Native Baptists established a foothold. In fact, Native Baptists did not penetrate that entire region of Western Jamaica.

Orthodox

Underhill and the *Missionary Herald* claimed that the Native Baptists had “fanatical” practices⁵⁵ while the BMS alleged that the Native Baptists were given to “impurity”⁵⁶ and Panton noted their corrupting influence.⁵⁷ An English Baptist publication said Native Baptists were “not recognized by the regularly organized churches in the denomination in connection with the parent society.”⁵⁸ The Native Baptists were regarded as “so-called Baptists,”⁵⁹

⁵² The First Annual Report of the Jamaica Native Baptist Missionary Society; Containing a Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of Several of the Stations Connected Therewith N. p. [c. 1841] iii.

⁵³ E. B. Underhill, The West Indies: The Social and Religious Condition (London, 1862) 201.

⁵⁴ First Annual Report 10.

⁵⁵ Underhill, West Indies 201 and “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” Missionary Herald 802 in Baptist Magazine 1865.

⁵⁶ Baptist Missionary Society 1842 2 in W. Indies Pamphlets.

⁵⁷ Philip Wright, Knibb ‘the Notorious’: Slaves’ Missionary 1803 -1845 (London: Sidgwick, 1973) 203.

⁵⁸ “Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1837: 815.

⁵⁹ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” Missionary Herald 802 in Baptist Magazine 1865 and Underhill, Life 340.

and differentiated from the “proper Baptists.”⁶⁰ Andrew Hogg, a Presbyterian minister in Manchester, wrote in a letter dated twelve days after the outbreak in 1865 that the protestors returned from “the scenes of their atrocities to sing Hymns and, in their own blasphemous language to ‘give God thanks for their triumph over their enemies.’ ”⁶¹ The English Baptists described Stony Gut, the residence of many Native Baptists, as a place of “great spiritual darkness and abounding iniquity” and the people as “spiritual outcasts.”⁶² These statements about the Native Baptists were indicative that they were not considered orthodox. And many modern writers, such as Wright, Catherall, Curtin, Richard Burton, Austin-Broos and Hall (see pages 63-66 above) took their cue from these earlier writings and classified the Native Baptists as unorthodox.

The word “orthodox” does not occur in the Bible but its Greek derivatives “orthos” having the meaning of “straight; upright, erect” and “doxa” which can mean “promise before God to tell the truth (John 9: 24)” are found in the Bible.⁶³ Orthodoxy was measured against the Bible as understood and practised in the first century.⁶⁴ Orthodox, therefore, has to do with right

⁶⁰ JRC Vol. 5 842.

⁶¹ A. G. Hogg, “Rev. A. G. Hogg’s Letter,” Jamaica Historical Society Bulletin 11 (2000): 138.

⁶² “A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea,” Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453.

⁶³ Barry M. Newman Jr., A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of The New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971) 48, 127.

⁶⁴ However, Orthodox can also relate to a denomination, as is the case with Eastern Orthodox. The Eastern Orthodox emanated from the Great Schism of 1054 between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity resulting in the Roman Catholic Church of the West and the Orthodox Church of the East: See William Gentz, The Dictionary of Bible and Religion (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986) 764. In addition, there is Reformed orthodoxy, Roman Catholic orthodoxy, Greek Catholic orthodoxy etc: See Jackson, Samuel MaCauley ed. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York and London: Funk, 1910) 277. Orthodoxy in those situations means conformity with the prevailing doctrines of the respective denomination.

doctrine and correct beliefs concerning Christianity. When the beliefs and practices of the Native Baptists were explored, such as belief in the Supreme God, the centrality of the Bible, use of Christian hymns and acknowledging Jesus as Lord, they were orthodox.

On one occasion, while visiting estates in St. Thomas-in-the-East, Gordon stayed in Bath until the Sunday morning. But the people of Bath had no early Sunday morning prayer meeting, as he was accustomed to, so he went into the centre of the town and shouted “Fire! Fire!! Fire!!!” and a large crowd responded with buckets of water but found no “fire.” Gordon quoted the Psalms “My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire of devotion burned. The fire is in my heart” and then invited them to prayer. Fletcher said, hundreds were converted, including a minister of religion.⁶⁵ Gordon was willing to engage in a pun on the word “fire” in order to get an opportunity to evangelize the inhabitants of the town. Gordon’s method was unorthodox but his message was orthodox.

Gordon bemoaned the spiritual apathy in Kingston whilst the Great Revival was spreading throughout the country and that no minister in Kingston would allow the use of a meeting house “without laying down conditions about the way the Spirit must convince and convict sinners.” He therefore, along with Duncan Fletcher, hosted an open- air meeting with the result that “thousands

⁶⁵ Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, late of Jamaica (London, 1867) 42-43.

were pricked in their hearts.” ⁶⁶ Gordon had a different understanding about the operation of the Holy Spirit when compared to some missionaries.

However, in hindsight Gordon’s position could be considered an enlightened view and consistent with Jesus’ explanation to Nicodemus, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one born of the Spirit.” (John. 3:8) This statement by Jesus was affirming that no one can dictate the ways in which the Spirit will operate in relation to salvation. The Spirit does move in a mysterious way.

Gordon administered the Lord’s Supper and a personal friend of his, David King, a distinguished Presbyterian minister, said in a reference to Gordon and his ilk, that there were persons, who believed that the celebration of the Eucharist did not require “an ordained ministry.” ⁶⁷ Whereas in some Christian traditions Gordon’s position would be frowned upon, in others it would be acceptable. In addition, Gordon was not against ordination, as seen by his hosting Bogle’s ordination service and also adding his signature to Bogle’s ordination certificate. ⁶⁸ Apparently, Gordon and other Native Baptists believed that every Christian, whether ordained or not, could administer the means of grace, the Lord’s Supper.

⁶⁶ Fletcher 68-69.

⁶⁷ David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 10-11.

⁶⁸ JRC Vol. 4 30 and JRC Vol. 5 1150.

In a government annual report, Jamaica Almanack, the Native Baptists pastors had the title “Rev,” affixed to their names ⁶⁹, which was a sign of recognition, and that they were respected figures. ⁷⁰ It was also a signal that the governing authorities perceived their teachings and practices as orthodox. This was no small feat because, in England at that time, many Anglicans were reluctant to accord this title to ministers of religion of non-Anglican denominations. In addition, a BMS member expressed disgust at the Native Baptists that “They, however, took to themselves and gave to one another the high-sounding title of *Reverend*.” ⁷¹ Indeed, the Native Baptists did accord themselves the title of reverend. ⁷²

Furthermore, in the Moravian listing of missionaries, the one who was an assistant was not given the title “Rev” but was referred to as “Mr. Francis B. Holland, assistant”⁷³ indicating that he did not have full pastoral responsibility and authority over the congregation. According the Native Baptist pastors with the title of “Rev” was an admission that they indeed had full pastoral responsibilities and authority for their congregations. This official recognition was a testimony to the influence, visibility and status of the JNBMS. Moreover, there was evidence that congregants were accepting the

⁶⁹ Jamaica Almanack 1840 107.

⁷⁰ Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 109.

⁷¹ Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 96n. The authorities viewed the preaching of “native Wesleyan and Baptist demagogues” as “inflammatory speeches” who appended “the title “Reverend” to their names” but who like Gordon was a “reverend (!) Imposter” and like Crole “ a “reverend scamp”: “Editorial Topics: The Rebellion,” Falmouth Post 31 Oct. 1865: 1.

⁷² First Annual Report 1-31.

⁷³ Jamaica Almanack 1843 91.

Native Baptists. Duff, who was with the English Baptists for 18 years and Lyon, who after a stint with the Wesleyans, did 20 years with the English Baptists, wrote the BMS and said that the native preachers who are connected “are just as well received by the Natives as your missionaries are.” ⁷⁴

Increasingly, the Native Baptist pastors were being accepted and respected.

There was also record of the Native Baptists conducting marriages in 1841. ⁷⁵ This meant the Native Baptist pastors were marriage officers and had official and legal status and a working relationship with the Island Secretary’s Office. They also had equal rights and privileges as other English-based dissenting churches. They were perceived as orthodox.

Another example that the JNBMS had gained acceptance and acknowledgment from the ruling class as being orthodox was that a JNBMS deputation had audience with the Governor, Sir Charles Metcalfe. ⁷⁶ The Governor by virtue of being the representative of the British Crown was the most powerful politician on the island ⁷⁷ and the office was the most prestigious, marked with pomp. ⁷⁸ While the Governor had a stormy relationship with most of the English Baptist missionaries, especially Knibb, ⁷⁹

⁷⁴ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr, 1837.

⁷⁵ Votes of the Honorable House of Assembly of Jamaica in a Session, Begun on the 15th of October (during the Administration of the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine) and ended on the 23rd December, 1844. (St. Jago De La Vega, 1845) 398.

⁷⁶ First Annual Report iii.

⁷⁷ Senior, Jamaica 160-61.

⁷⁸ Gardner 167.

⁷⁹ “The Reverend Mr. Knibb,” Falmouth Post 29 July 1840: 6 and “The Island Press: The Reverend Mr. Knibb,” Falmouth Post 29 July 1840: 7.

the Native Baptists had access to his parlour, which showed they were highly respected by the “powers that be.”

A further sign of acceptance and orthodoxy was the JNBMS receiving financial contributions from influential persons and organizations. The Native Baptists received from Governor Metcalfe, “an exceedingly rich man,”⁸⁰ £50, which was almost half of the total £116 7s 1d given by the one hundred and eighty eight contributors.⁸¹ More importantly was the fact that the contribution Metcalfe gave to the Native Baptists was equivalent to the sums he gave to the more established orthodox churches. In 1842, Knibb, acknowledged from Metcalfe “two donations of thirty pounds each.”⁸² In addition, in 1840, Metcalfe gave £50 toward the stone laying ceremony for the Bethbara Moravian Church.⁸³ Metcalfe also contributed £50 each to Methodist chapels at Bath and Kingston and a school in Falmouth. Later, he subscribed £100 annually to the Methodist school system.⁸⁴

The JNBMS was also supported by influential persons such as William Rose Esq., a Magistrate, who generously gave the land for the site of Mount Olive station, St. Thomas in the Vale.⁸⁵ Other contributions included “a munificent

⁸⁰ Hamilton Hume, The Life of Edward John Eyre (London, 1867) 109.

⁸¹ First Annual Report 26-30.

⁸² “Jamaica. To the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society,” Missionary Herald June 1842: 288.

⁸³ Jamaica Moravian Church 82-83.

⁸⁴ Peter Duncan, A Narrative of the Wesleyan Mission to Jamaica; with occasional remarks on the state of the society in the colony (London, 1849) 329.

⁸⁵ First Annual Report 22-23.

grant” from the Vestry; ⁸⁶ £200, in 1841, from the House of Assembly toward the repair and addition of galleries to the chapel of Killick, plus a grant of £106 from the Corporation of Kingston, and a liberal donation from the Mayor. ⁸⁷ This mayor was the Honourable Joseph Gordon, who was Mayor of Kingston and father of George William Gordon. ⁸⁸ Killick reported that “he likewise returns his his [sic] sincere thanks to his honor the Mayor, for his liberal donation of £55 6s 8d.” ⁸⁹ The Native Baptists asked for aid to erect a chapel and the House approved a grant of £30. ⁹⁰ In 1862/3, the House of Assembly also granted the Native Baptists £50 to repair their chapel at Text Lane, Kingston. ⁹¹ Though the date is not stated, John Duff received a State grant to aid the work at Above Rocks, in the hills of St. Thomas in the Vale. ⁹² Underhill correctly observed these financial gifts meant, “They would appear to have been held in high esteem.” ⁹³ It was also a sign that they were accepted and recognized as orthodox to be able to access these significant contributions from the State and other influential persons.

⁸⁶ First Annual Report 10.

⁸⁷ Underhill, West Indies 201.

⁸⁸ Fletcher 15-16.

⁸⁹ First Annual Report 31.

⁹⁰ Votes of Assembly 1851-2 118, 233, 331.

⁹¹ Votes of Assembly 1862-3 131.

⁹² Clarke, Memorials 223 and Horace O Russell, Foundations and Anticipations: The Baptist Story in Jamaica 1783-1892 (Columbus: Brentwood P., 1993) 20-21.

⁹³ Underhill, West Indies 201. The esteem was not universal as noticed with Colonel Hobbs placing Native Baptist chapels in quotation marks, meaning so-called chapels: JRC Vol. 5 1129.

Accepting gifts from the State was contrary to the position of leaders of African origin in English Baptist churches.⁹⁴ English Baptists held the view that the church must depend on the generosity of members rather than on State support, which they felt involved State control.⁹⁵ Perhaps the Native Baptists' rationale for accepting the gift was similar to that of a Wesleyan minister who accepted government funding on the premise that his members paid taxes and since those taxes funded the Established Church then it was proper to access some of their taxes. It could also be that unlike the English Baptists who had financial friends in England, they had none and had to depend entirely on local sources. It might have just been a practical need. And being able to garner such funds was an expression that their beliefs and practices were seen as authentic.

Persons associated with the Native Baptist Communion had great testimonials. The Commissioners inquiring into the uprising of 1865 asked Clarke, "You are Mr. George B. Clarke that the justice gives such a good character of."⁹⁶ In addition, shopkeeper, John Lewis, who witnessed some of the executions, agreed that Bogle was a "good and industrious man."⁹⁷ Gordon also got glowing tributes from his friends Duncan Fletcher,⁹⁸ David King, George Blyth, who spent a lifetime in Jamaica as a missionary, and

⁹⁴ Underhill, West Indies 321-23.

⁹⁵ "Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica," Baptist Magazine Jan. 1867: 49.

⁹⁶ JRC Vol. 5 127.

⁹⁷ JRC Vol. 5 693.

⁹⁸ Fletcher 1-23.

Reverend H. Renton.⁹⁹ In 1865, Native Baptist ministers were “respected figures.”¹⁰⁰ Attributing the label of respectability was usually an indicator of orthodoxy.

Jesus, God and Holy Spirit

Curtin’s claimed that John the Baptist was the chief religious figure for the Native Baptists and not Jesus (see page 65 above). However, for Native Baptists, Jesus Christ was the central figure. The Native Baptists’ viewed Jesus as Lord and the only way to salvation was through “faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰¹ In the 1840s, a woman at Mount Regale, who was a Native Baptist, was asked if she thought she could be saved by dreams alone and she answered by relating a story. She said that if she went to the river to wash her clothes and she fell asleep and dreamt that they were all washed would she find them washed when she awakened from the dream? She affirmed that one is saved through the blood of Jesus.¹⁰² They also had a concept of a Supreme Being who they called “Lord Almighty,”¹⁰³ or “Almighty God,”¹⁰⁴ or “Almighty”¹⁰⁵ and to whom they sought help.¹⁰⁶ The Native Baptists sought

⁹⁹ King, Sketch 7.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, Cause For His Glory 109.

¹⁰¹ First Annual Report 24.

¹⁰² Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 78.

¹⁰³ First Annual Report ii.

¹⁰⁴ JRC Vol. 4 232.

¹⁰⁵ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 781 and “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” Colonial Standard 16 Oct. 1865: 2.

God's help through prayer and fasting in order to overcome temptations.¹⁰⁷ They also believed in the Holy Spirit possessing the individual, "God has graciously poured out his spirit from on high" on his people.¹⁰⁸ The Native Baptists held orthodox beliefs concerning Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit.

Gordon served as chairman of missionary meetings "in conjunction with all denominations"¹⁰⁹ and many churches "enjoyed his good offices." Gordon being asked to participate extensively in other denominations showed that he and the Native Baptists were proclaiming sound doctrines.

The Importance of Hymns

The Native Baptists used hymns composed by European Christian hymn writers. There was no evidence that they used Negro Spirituals. None of the Negro Spirituals used by the enslaved in the United States of America was found among the Native Baptists.¹¹⁰ In addition, while Kumina did not use Christian hymns but used African and Jamaican Creole Songs (see page 60 above), the Native Baptists used Christian hymns and there was no evidence of using African or Jamaican songs. John Turner said it was the pattern of his

¹⁰⁶ JRC Vol. 5 1036 and From our Special Correspondent, "The Outbreak in Jamaica," [London] Times 30 April 1866: 9.

¹⁰⁷ Clarke, Memorials 9.

¹⁰⁸ First Annual Report 16.

¹⁰⁹ Fletcher 41, 53.

¹¹⁰ James H. Cone, The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation (New York: Orbis, 1972) 2-20.

congregants “to adopt the language of the sweet singer of Israel [David].” ¹¹¹

The JNBMS used hymns extensively in their report. Despite the best efforts, this writer was unable to ascertain who were the authors of the hymns quoted extensively throughout the report. But that they did not quote folk songs showed that they were traditional in hymn selections. The Psalms were a favorite of the Native Baptists. Gordon ¹¹² and Bogle used hymns composed by Isaac Watts with Bogle’s version of the hymnal being the Psalms of David, with the supplementary Hymns. His favourite selections as indicated by his markings were recorded as:

The Psalms marked are 3rd, Verses 1, 5, 8; 11th, 50th ‘the last Judgment’; (pause second); 115th, 2nd version; 121st, 2nd version; 139, 3rd version and 143rd. Hymns:- 44th, 46th, 136th, 140th. Book 2nd :- 4th, 57th, 89th, 97th, 107th. Book 3rd:- 23rd ¹¹³

There were other Native Baptists who used hymns composed by Watts. ¹¹⁴

Gordon had a relationship with Bogle and he, who was also inspired by the hymns written by Isaac Watts, gave a hymnbook to Paul Bogle. ¹¹⁵ The Native Baptists were attracted to the Isaac Watts’s hymns because of Watts’s emphasis on the here and now. It was a belief in a realized eschatology, in

¹¹¹ First Annual Report 15.

¹¹² King, Sketch 6.

¹¹³ “Hymns Selected and Marked by Paul Bogle,” Gleaner, 4 Nov. 1865: 4.

¹¹⁴ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9. In late nineteenth century hymn singing was part of the culture of the peasant with Pullen-Burry claiming, “sometimes they sing as they pass along, and the tune of an old familiar hymn greets your ear”: B. Pullen-Burry, Ethiopia in Exile (London: Unwin, 1903) 98.

¹¹⁵ King, Sketch 6.

that there was a cry to experience heaven now or at least have a foretaste now. It was well known that the Native Baptists were heavily involved in psalm singing. The ruling class lambasted the Native Baptists as “psalm singing apostles of butchery in the name of Divinity” ¹¹⁶ and that “After half an hour spent in psalm singing by those blood-stained wretches, one of their leaders addressed them, pointing to the favour which the Almighty had shown in delivering their enemies into their hands.” ¹¹⁷ They used Christian hymns.

The Bible as the Central Text

The Native Baptists’ central text was the Bible. ¹¹⁸ Although their First Annual Report did not indicate that they were quoting word for word passages from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, the Native Baptists were Bible centred. Their relevant biblical passages were skillfully interwoven into their everyday language indicative that God was in all aspects of their lives. This was evident in the rules of the Society when in speaking about the “principal design of the Society”, they said that they must use “every endeavour to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” ¹¹⁹ which is a statement from Eph. 4:3. Robert Blackwell began his report with, “The Lord has indeed done great things for us, whereof we are glad” ¹²⁰ which is an exact quotation

¹¹⁶ A Thirty Years’ Resident vi.

¹¹⁷ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 781.

¹¹⁸ “The Traitor George W. Gordon,” Gleaner 28 Oct. 1865: 2; Fletcher 51; King, Sketch 6 and Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss., UWI, 1992, 231.

¹¹⁹ First Annual Report 3.

¹²⁰ First Annual Report 24.

from Ps. 126: 3. They also claimed that the correct medicine for an unsaved person was “the sincere milk of the word” ¹²¹ and according to 1 Pet. 2: 2, young Christians needed to “desire the sincere milk of the word.” These Biblical quotations were not means of using texts as some magical incantations but were means of matching their experiences with commands and teachings from the Bible. These quotations continued the trend of using Scriptures to support their every utterance, which was also a feature of Liele.

Gordon’s every day communication was also saturated with Scriptural passages. At the 24 November 1863 sitting of the House of Assembly, Gordon grounded his objection to a State Church on the command of Christ which said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” ¹²² This was a reference from Matt. 22: 21. Gordon in the normal discourse of writing a letter stated, “God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble” which, though he did not say, was from Ps. 46: 1. In addition, Gordon said, at the 26 April 1864 Session, “the first and great commandment is this: “Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!” ¹²³ This was an exact reference to Deut. 6: 4.

¹²¹ First Annual Report ii.

¹²² Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th day of October, 1863, and terminating on the 22nd day of February, 1864 (Spanish Town, 1865) 188.

¹²³ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 306.

Gordon in establishing Native Baptist churches in St. Thomas-in-the-East said, “We need an assistant teacher, bibles, tracts, hymn-books, and school books.” ¹²⁴ Gordon also donated Bibles and books to the people who could not afford it. ¹²⁵ The Bible was an essential aspect of their spiritual formation. In addition, Gordon, who was “mighty in Scriptures”, ¹²⁶ just before his execution asked for half an hour to read a couple of chapters from the Bible. ¹²⁷

Bogle also had a Bible in his chapel. ¹²⁸ He also gave George Lake a Bible for him to take an oath and Lake was told to tell “the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God.” ¹²⁹ The purpose of the oath was linked to truth telling and the Bible was used to confirm the noble intent as binding. It could be argued that the Bible was being treated as a ritual object similar to the way it was used in the law courts but it appeared that for Bogle and the other Native Baptists the Bible was central to their life.

Shirley Gordon admitted of the Native Baptists in St. Thomas-in-the-East, “Most of these communities had built their own meeting houses and some had sizeable chapels, as at Stony Gut . . . a large Bible was the centrepiece of their

¹²⁴ Fletcher 51.

¹²⁵ King, Sketch 6.

¹²⁶ Fletcher 47-48.

¹²⁷ “The Traitor George W. Gordon,” Gleaner 28 Oct. 1865: 2.

¹²⁸ From Our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866:9.

¹²⁹ JRC Vol. 5 1036 and From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 April 1866: 9. See also Bogle and McLaren using the Bible to administer oaths: JRC Vol. 5 1038 and JRC Vol. 5 157-58.

meeting decor.”¹³⁰ The Bible was a significant part of the worship paraphernalia in Native Baptist churches. John Clarke described the Native Baptists’ attitude to the Bible as “A simple unquestioning obedience to God’s Word . . .”¹³¹ Indeed, the Native Baptists were embedded in Scriptures and interpreted their experiences in light of the Bible. Their thinking and actions were Scripture-based. This was not unique to the Native Baptists. The Original Baptists also had the Bible as foundational and the missionaries distributed many Bibles. Nevertheless, it was remarkable that for Africans, whose religious orientation was a religion without book and creed,¹³² the Native Baptists, who were of African ancestry, became so reliant on the Bible.

Millenarians?

Holt claimed that the Bogle/Gordon Native Baptists were millenarians (see page 65 above). It is a fact that George William Gordon expected God to act “soon” in delivering the people from oppression.¹³³ However, the expectation of God’s imminent and decisive intervention did not necessarily mean the person was millenarian. It meant that he or she believed that God was concerned with his or her political issues. For the Native Baptists, politics and religion were inseparable.¹³⁴ The religious faith inspired political action while

¹³⁰ Gordon, Cause for His Glory 107, 121.

¹³¹ Clarke, Memorials 222.

¹³² John Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) 2-4.

¹³³ JRC Vol. 4 228.

¹³⁴ Gad Heuman, ‘The Killing Time’: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 184 and Hutton, Colour 7.

political activism was the outworking of the faith of justice and righteousness. The Native Baptist Communion was not a millenarian group expecting the ushering of a new age of peace and prosperity to fall from the sky and last for 1000 years.

The Native Baptists were involved in political mobilization (see pages 67-68 above). There was no hierarchy between politics and religion for the Native Baptists because for them there was a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics. None was more important than the other. Both needed each other and both supported each other. The religious faith inspired political action while political activism was a manifestation of their beliefs. Bogle and Gordon were bonded together as political and religious allies. The spirituality of Bogle and Gordon included social justice as an integral aspect, which was consistent with the Biblical tradition of prophets such as Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

A better example of millenarian belief would be Christian groups such as Ranters and Fifth Monarchy Men, operating in England in the late eighteenth century, who believed in the “literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation and their anticipations of a New Jerusalem descending from above.”¹³⁵ However, no such belief existed among the Native Baptists. In addition, the 1831 protest in the United States of America led by enslaved American Nat Turner could be seen more as a millenarian movement because Turner was said to have acted in response to signs from heaven and killed his master’s

¹³⁵ E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London: Gollancz, 1963) 48.

family.¹³⁶ But the 1865 Native Baptist War was not in response to any sign from heaven.

The JNBMS also saw the link between evangelism and education and one of the five rules of the Society was “to promote the education and religious instruction of the rising generation.”¹³⁷ The JNBMS actively sought funds “to promote the extension of Native Schools.”¹³⁸ The Native Baptists had schools at Old Harbour and Clarkson Town, St. Catherine¹³⁹ and Mount Zion, Clarendon¹⁴⁰ and had 50 scholars at St. Dorothy’s, Bella’s Gate, 35 pupils at Croft’s Hill, Clarendon and satisfactorily performing students at Rest Station, Clarendon.¹⁴¹ This involvement in education was to facilitate social, moral, and religious improvement. The engagement in the educational development of people was a signal that they were not millenarian.

The JNBMS accepting financial gifts from the State to repair chapels¹⁴² was not a feature of millenarian groups. That the Society had no problem co-operating with the political directorate for the advancement of ministry showed that they were not millenarian.

¹³⁶ Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 27.

¹³⁷ First Annual Report 3, 16.

¹³⁸ First Annual Report 31.

¹³⁹ JRC Vol. 5 923. Phillippo testified before the JRC that the school at Old Harbour “has lately come under my supervision.”

¹⁴⁰ Carl Campbell, “The Abolition of Slavery and Education in Jamaica 1834-1865,” Jamaican Historical Society Bulletin 11 (2001): 164-167.

¹⁴¹ First Annual Report 11, 15-17.

¹⁴² First Annual Report 10, 26; Underhill, West Indies 201 and Votes of Assembly 1862-3 131.

Connected to the BMS

The *Missionary Herald* stressed that the Native Baptists were unconnected to missionary churches.¹⁴³ It is true that the Native Baptists were not accountable to the English Baptists whether in England or Jamaica because they were “apart from European superintendence.”¹⁴⁴ The JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion formed organizations that were independent of the English Baptists.

However, Benjamin Millard, Secretary of the JBU, testified about the Native Baptists saying, “some of them were in connexion with our churches, and some have sprung up exclusively.”¹⁴⁵ One cannot be certain whether Millard was speaking about the JNBMS and or the Native Baptist Communion as formerly being connected to the JBU. It could be the JNBMS because there was some link but he could also be speaking about the Native Baptist Communion group since they were the ones on trial at the Commission of Inquiry. Whichever way, some Native Baptists were once in fellowship with the English Baptists. According to the writings of Duff and Lyon and the First Annual Report, the JNBMS sprang from the English Baptists.¹⁴⁶ According to a BMS document written in 1864, “The Native Baptist churches in Jamaica

¹⁴³ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1866: 55. See also Brian Stanley, *The History of The Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1992) 75.

¹⁴⁴ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1866: 55.

¹⁴⁵ *JRC* Vol. 5 782.

¹⁴⁶ John Duff and George R. Lyon, Letter to Baptist Missionary Society, 1 Apr. 1837 and *First Annual Report* 9.

have rapidly increased of late years. Great numbers of the churches connected with the Baptist missionaries joined them.” ¹⁴⁷

The Native Baptists and English Baptists had other important similarities. An observer in justifying his call for the two Presbyterians and two Methodists and the Native Baptists and Union Baptists to co-operate or have an organic union stated, “their forms of worship, organization and hymns were most identical.” ¹⁴⁸ The Native Baptists and English Baptists had similar liturgy, sang from similar hymnal and had similar organizational structure.

The Native Baptists also had well structured regular worship services. ¹⁴⁹ The quality of their worship services and the excellent preaching by Killick, Turner, Duff and Lyon portrayed them in a positive light: “these sacred services produced a strong and general impression in favour of the Jamaica Native Baptists.” ¹⁵⁰

Summary

The Native Baptists’ beliefs and practices should not to be confused with those

¹⁴⁷ Baptist Missionary Society, Propagation of Christianity 95n. See also Phillippo, Jamaica 294 wherein Phillippo said, “The denomination called Native Baptists are under the teaching of black and coloured men, who were once leaders in other congregations but have broken and set up as ministers for themselves.”

¹⁴⁸ An Observer. Letter. “The Congregational Church and its Minister,” [London] Times [30 Sept. 1882- 5 Oct. 1882] in MST 51 43 in National Library of Jamaica.

¹⁴⁹ First Annual Report 1-10, JRC Vol. 5 842, “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6 and JRC Vol. 5 124, 126.

¹⁵⁰ First Annual Report 22.

of African religious expressions. They were steeped in Christian traditions with no evidence of teachings in conflict with the teachings of the Bible. They were orthodox, Christ-centred and European influenced in terms of use of hymns. They were not millenarians, believing that God would change the oppressive circumstances without a role for human beings, but rather believed that political involvement was the natural outcome of their Christian Faith. Though not under European superintendence, the Native Baptists had relations with the English Baptists and both groups used similar Bible and hymnbook.

Having examined the beliefs and practices of the Native Baptists, the next chapter will examine the possible religious influences on these beliefs and practices.

CHAPTER FIVE: RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES ON NATIVE BAPTISTS

This chapter will explore the possible religious influences on the Native Baptists including the influence of the beliefs brought to Jamaica from Africa and Asia, and by the Original Baptists, Sam Sharpe and the English Baptists.

African religion

The Africans in Jamaica had been uprooted mainly from Central, South, East and West Africa ¹ with the vast majority from West Africa. ² The most numerous and distinguished of the tribes were Koromantees, ³ Mandingoes, and Eboes. ⁴ Most Africans who came to Jamaica held the indigenous and traditional beliefs of their forebears. ⁵ The enslaved brought “theological notions” from Africa to Jamaica ⁶

¹ Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 7.

² Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “The ‘Folk’ Culture of the Slaves” The Slavery Reader eds. Gad Heuman and James Walvin (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) 364. Gardner said the Africans came from the West Coast principally Guinea, but some were brought from Madagascar: W. J. Gardner, A History of Jamaica (3rd ed. 1873; London: Cass, 1971) 97. In addition, Palmer said, “West Africa was the principal source in the sixteenth century but by the seventeenth century, West Central Africa (Angola and Congo) became increasingly important”: Colin A Palmer, Africa in the making of the Caribbean: The Formative Years 1996 Elsa Goveia Memorial Lecture (Kingston: UWI, 1996) 2.

³ It is also spelt as “Coromantyns”

⁴ James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843; Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 269 239 and Gardner 175.

⁵ J. H. Buchner, The Moravians in Jamaica, History of the Mission of the United Brethren’s Church to the Negroes in the Island of Jamaica, From the Year 1754-1854 (London, 1854) 30 and Raboteau 7.

⁶ John Stewart, An Account of Jamaica (1808; New York: 1971) 249.

and had “knowledge of religious principles.” ⁷ African religion is not to be equated with idolatry or animism but African religion is “the ancient non-Christian, non-Muslim, religious beliefs and practices.” ⁸ There were about one thousand different peoples in Africa and each had its own religious system. ⁹ Though there were differences in the belief systems, one common pattern was the belief in an omnipotent, Supreme Being. ¹⁰

For the religious African, religion permeated all aspects of his life – “whether in the fields, at a beer party or attending a funeral or school or participating in Parliament.” ¹¹ Prominent, in the life of the African, was “a close relationship between the natural and the supernatural, the secular and the sacred.” ¹² There was no dualism in the African cosmology. In African religion, there was also “female power.” ¹³ Women played an integral and equal role as men, so one will

⁷ James Losh, Speeches of James Losh Esq., and the Rev. William Knibb, on the Immediate Abolition of British Colonial Slavery; Delivered at a public meeting held in Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle, on Wednesday, January 30, 1833 (Newcastle, 1833) 9.

⁸ Geoffrey Parrinder, “The African Spiritual Universe,” Afro-Caribbean Religions ed. Brian Gates (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1980) 18.

⁹ John Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) 1. Mbiti used the word “tribes” but there are those who feel that it is a derogatory term since it is applied mainly to non-Europeans. Therefore, “peoples” is a more neutral term.

¹⁰ See Edward Long, The History of Jamaica (Vol. II 1774; Kingston: Randle, 2002) 378; J. Stewart, A View of the Past and Present State of the Island; With Remarks on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Slaves and on the Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies (1823; New York: Negro UP, 1969) 280; Stewart, Account 249; Phillippo, Jamaica 269 and “The Claims of Africa. No. 4,” Baptist Herald 1843: 6.

¹¹ Mbiti 1.

¹² Raboteau 15. See also Olive Lewin, Rock It Come Over: The Folk Music of Jamaica (Kingston: UWI P, 2000) 60.

¹³ Barbara Bush, Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838 (Kingston, Bloomington, Oxford: Randle, Indiana UP, Currey, 1990) 80.

discover that there were obeahmen and obeahwomen.¹⁴ Africans who believed in African religions, had no creed to recite, and had no sacred scriptures to study but only had to live the life.¹⁵ Equally important was that the religious beliefs and practices were not foremost for the individual but for the community because to be truly human was “to belong to the whole community.”¹⁶

Other Religions brought to Jamaica

Afroz speculated that a “good proportion of the millions of Africans forcefully brought to the West Indies were Muslims” and that there were many Muslims in Manchester, Jamaica in 1832¹⁷ but she provided no figures for the size of the Muslim population. Some Muslims came to Jamaica from Africa¹⁸ but they were not numerous.¹⁹ Robert Madden recorded three Mandingoes who could read and

¹⁴ William Burdett, The Life and Exploits of Three-finger'd Jack, the Terror of Jamaica (5th ed. N. p., 1802.) 17; Stewart, Account 257 and Stewart, View 277. Lucille Mathurin, The Rebel Woman in the British West Indies during Slavery (Kingston: IOJ, 1974) 34.

¹⁵ Mbiti 2-4.

¹⁶ Mbiti 2.

¹⁷ Sultana Afroz, The Unsung Slaves: Islam in Plantation Jamaica, (The Association of Caribbean Historians 25th Annual Conference 1993) 3.

¹⁸ William Moister, Memorials of Missionary Labours in Western Africa and the West Indies (London, 1850) 170; Phillippo, Jamaica 269 and Gardner 199.

¹⁹ Buchner 30. See also Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies II (1793. New York: Arno P, 1972) 71 and Alexander Barclay, A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies (London, 1826) 122.

write Arabic, and one of them wrote a Koran from memory.²⁰ And of the few who came, some, such as Mr. Benjamin Cockrane, a successful doctor in Kingston, and three others, through fear “pretended to be what they were not,” that is, not acknowledging that they were Muslims.²¹ On the other hand, some became Christians, notably Robert Peart, a Mandingo, who came to Jamaica in 1777 and died in 1845, who became a Christian under the influence of George Lewis.²²

Afroz also said “Islam was no longer practiced in Jamaica until the advent of the Indian indentured laborers” and “the efforts of the crusaders to rid the world of the Islamic faith were greatly successful in the Caribbean.”²³ The Muslim influence was indeed minimal between post-emancipation Jamaica and 1845, which meant that Muslim influence on Native Baptists would have been negligible during that period. Nevertheless, Gardner speculated that “the superstitious regard which so many of the early Christian converts had for that day [Friday], and which the native Baptists in some places still retain, may be traced to the influence of these people [Muslims].”²⁴ However, the Native

²⁰ Robert Madden, A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies, During the Transition From Slavery to Apprenticeship (Vol. 1 London, 1835) 101-02, 126. Bryan Edwards mentioned a Mandingo servant in his possession who wrote beautiful Arabic: Edwards, Vol. II 72.

²¹ Madden, Vol. 1 101-02. See also Farouk Khan, “Islam as a Social Force in the Caribbean,” Conference of The History Teachers Association of Trinidad and Tobago 12th 1987 (Port-of Spain: History Teachers' Association of Trinidad and Tobago, 1987) 3-4 and Jamaica Moravian Church, The Breaking of the Dawn, or, Moravian Work in Jamaica, 1754-1904 (London: Jamaica Moravian Church, [c. 1904]) 51.

²² Jamaica Moravian Church 50-52. Madden said a Muslim who wrote the Koran from memory converted to Christianity: Madden 101-02, 126.

²³ Afroz, Unsung Slaves 19, 23.

²⁴ Gardner 175.

Baptists did not have any superstitious regard for Friday. The Native Baptists did not display a proclivity towards any observance on Fridays. Furthermore, Gardner's use of "native Baptists" might simply mean Original Baptists or Baptists who were not under European charge rather than the groups identified in this study as Native Baptists. The Muslim population was too small and too inactive during the formative years of the JNBMS.

Gordon, in speaking to the Immigration Bill on February 1, 1864, claimed that immigration introduced "Mahomedanism (sic) into the country."²⁵ There were Muslims in Jamaica in the 1860s but there was no evidence of a link with the Native Baptist Communion. The influence of the Muslims even in the 1860s was negligible.

When the Muslims influenced the revolt in Brazil, though they were in the minority, there was evidence of the use of Muslim symbols, such as Muslim amulets, clothes peculiar to Muslims and prayers and passages from the Koran.²⁶ In the 1865 Native Baptist War, there was no evidence of such Muslim paraphernalia. In addition, no evidence emerged from the trials, their public hangings, their letters or the JRC Report that anyone was a Muslim and there was also no mention of the word Islam or the Koran. Moreover, there was no

²⁵ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution. Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 140.

²⁶ João José Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia, trans. Arthur Brakel, (Baltimore and London: Hopkins UP, 1993) 93.

mosque for Muslims in Jamaica before 1917.²⁷ There was no evidence of Muslim thinking influencing the Native Baptists.

The East Indian immigration to Jamaica began in 1845²⁸ when 261 Indians arrived and by 1863 there were 10,006.²⁹ The Indians, Hindus and Muslims, celebrated the religious festival of Muharram, which commemorates the martyrdom of the two grandsons of the prophet Mohammed.³⁰ The majority of Indians brought with them their religious faith of Hinduism.³¹ The Chinese migrated to Jamaica in 1854 via Panama with the arrival of 472 nationals.³² They brought with them their Buddhist and Confucian beliefs.³³ Robert Stewart concluded that the Asian immigrants had little influence on Jamaican religious culture.³⁴ There was no evidence of Asian religion having any impact on the Native Baptists.

²⁷ Harinder Singh Sohal, The East Indian Indentureship System in Jamaica 1845-1917, diss., (U of Waterloo, 1979) 137.

²⁸ Sohal, 78 and Verene Shepherd, Transients to Settlers: The Experience of the Indians in Jamaica 1845-1950 (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 1994) 22.

²⁹ Sohal 234.

³⁰ Sohal, 136.

³¹ Shepherd said that the majority of immigrants were Hindus but some Muslims and Christians were among the immigrants: Shepherd, Transients 150.

³² Ray Chen, comp. and ed., The Shopkeepers: Commemorating 150 Years of the Chinese in Jamaica 1854-2004 (Kingston: Periwinkle, 2005) 283.

³³ Chen, Shopkeepers 302-03.

³⁴ Robert J. Stewart, Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1992) xvii.

Jews were thought to be on Columbus' ship that arrived in Jamaica, ³⁵ so it was not surprising that when England captured Jamaica in 1655, there were Jewish inhabitants on the island. ³⁶ In 1840, Chandler, after visiting Jamaica, said that there were 5,000 Jews. ³⁷ Initially, Jews were despised because they were perceived as "descended from the crucifiers of the blessed Jesus." ³⁸ But by early nineteenth century, the Jews were integrated into society and seemed to have had a natural and spiritual affinity to the oppressed Africans because Phillippo reported in 1825 that he had in his Day School classes, Jewish children, children of the enslaved and the freed. In the Sunday School, there were 150 scholars, 40 of whom were Jewish children. ³⁹

The Jews were monotheistic and no memory was more strongly imbedded in Jewish consciousness than the story of the Passover Festival of Freedom, through which Israel celebrated its exodus from bondage to freedom. The Passover was also called "the ancient story of the birth of liberty." ⁴⁰ Far from the Jewish faith influencing the Native Baptists, it appeared that this minority group was more assimilated into the English Baptist tradition. Furthermore, the Jewish faith was

³⁵ Marlyn Delevante, and Anthony Alberga, The Island of One People. An Account of the History of the Jews in Jamaica (Kingston Miami: Randle, 2006) xiv-xv.

³⁶ Gardner 90

³⁷ "Jamaica," Missionary Herald Mar. 1841: 41.

³⁸ Edward Long, History of Jamaica Vol. II 293, Madden Vol. 1 85 and Gardner 197.

³⁹ R. A. L. Knight, ed., Liberty and Progress (Kingston: Gleaner, 1938) 84.

⁴⁰ David Pool and Tamar Pool, eds., The Haggadah of Passover (New York: National Jewish Welfare Board, 1945) 5.

more a personal faith, into which one could be born or converted to, but aggressively seeking proselytes was never a feature of Jewish religion.

There was no credible evidence that Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism or Judaism influenced the beliefs and practices of the Native Baptists.

African Spiritual Resistance

The Moravians noticed a difference between some of the Africans who were converted to Christianity in Jamaica and theirs, claiming that they failed to “grasp the spirituality of the Christian religion” and gave as an example their attitude towards “the Sacraments, especially holy baptism” which “were looked upon by the multitude not merely as a sign of inward grace, but as possessing a virtue in themselves equivalent to the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.”⁴¹ Since the African concretized elements of their beliefs rather than spiritualized them, for him or her, the symbol contained the reality. It was not only a sign of inward grace but an indication of possessing a virtue with efficacious ability.

Not only was there a difference in praying but there was also a difference in preaching. J. Stewart said itinerant preachers “instead of inculcating the Christian virtues, directed a long dissertation, to his sable congregation, on slavery, and assimilated their condition to that of the oppressed Israelites, who at

⁴¹ Jamaica Moravian Church 65.

length escaped from the bondage of their unjust task-masters.”⁴² The Africans identified themselves as the new Israel in bondage.⁴³ Those of African origin had their way of preaching which was different from what the authorities expected and wanted.

And persons of African ancestry had their own way of interpreting the Scriptures. Phillippo related a story about a Negro named Quashie who contracted a considerable debt and then subsequently resolved to be “christened” and upon request for payment of debt replied “Me is a new man now me Thomas, derefo Thomas no pay Quashie debt.”⁴⁴ He literally applied the passage 2 Cor. 5:17 which states, “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Phillippo related a similar incident in which a clergyman asked a Negro servant during catechism of what he was made. He said mud, but the clergyman corrected him and said dust. However, the Negro disagreed and answered, “No Massa, it no do, no tick togedder.”⁴⁵ He was claiming that dust couldn’t stick together to form a human being so humans must have been made from mud. The Africans challenged the interpretation given by the missionaries.

⁴² Stewart, Account 253-54.

⁴³ S. Copland, Black and White; Or, the Jamaica Question (London, 1866) 19.

⁴⁴ Phillippo, Jamaica 203.

⁴⁵ Phillippo, Jamaica 202-03.

There were also open confrontations. Stephen Cooke, Anglican clergyman, testified that while he was exhorting the congregation not to attend the Underhill Meeting, about 120 persons of African ancestry who were normally attentive to him, quietly walked out.⁴⁶ Robertson also wrote that heckling during sermons was a persistent nuisance “for all preachers of all denominations over the 40 years since Coke’s visits in the 1790s through to the eve of emancipation.”⁴⁷ Mr. Barr, Wesleyan missionary, expelled James Beard of Bogg estate, a class leader of many years, for insubordination. On 4 August 1839, Beard inquired of Mr. Laidlaw, a special magistrate who was visiting the estate, “were the Israelites made apprentices when they came out of Egypt?” And Laidlaw said no. And Beard asked the magistrate to swear on the Bible that God has made us apprentices. He did so swear and when Beard saw that he said, “God has done us an injustice.”⁴⁸ Beard believed that they were the new Israel and that God should treat them in the same manner as he treated the Israelites. The Christians of African ancestry were suspicious of the interpretation that the missionaries were proclaiming.

In 1837, Anglican clergyman Richard Panton related that his congregants of African descent took offence that he referred to them as “brethren.” The Negroes

⁴⁶ JRC Vol. 5 781 and Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss., UWI, 1992 174.

⁴⁷ James Robertson, Gone is the Ancient Glory: Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1534-2000 (Kingston, Miami: Randle, 2005) 176.

⁴⁸ Dorothy Ann Ryall, The Organization of Missionary Societies & the Recruitment of Missionaries in Britain, & the Role of Missionaries in the Diffusion of British Culture in Jamaica during the period 1834-65 diss. , (London U, 1959) 359.

queried, “whether the minister in addressing his congregation did always say, ‘my brethren,’ and never ‘my sisters.’ They were disgruntled that there was no acknowledgement of the women. In proof of which, they quoted the text, “In Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free.”⁴⁹ They recognized their equality in Christ. This revolutionary idea of equality between brothers and sisters was implied in this query.

There was also a difference in the attitude of the missionaries towards the Indian indentures when compared with the African’s. Shepherd claimed that the English Baptists were hostile towards Indian immigration on moral grounds and that influenced “the way blacks came to view Indians and encouraged a hostile attitude towards them even before the arrival of the first batch in 1845.”⁵⁰

Persons of African ancestry should have been offended by the heavy taxation for the cost of the importation of Indians to replace those same taxpayers on the estates.⁵¹ However, according to Harinder Sohal the Africans did not share the missionaries’ attitude that Indians were a threat and instead they gave them gifts of fruits and helped them to settle on the plantations, treating kindly the first arrivals in 1845. The Africans interpreted the arrival differently from the missionaries in that they regarded the Indians, not as rivals for employment, but

⁴⁹ Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, The West Indies in 1837 (London, 1838) 285-86.

⁵⁰ Verene Shepherd, “The Dynamics of Afro-Jamaican East Indian Relations in Jamaica, 1845-1945: A Preliminary Analysis,” Caribbean Quarterly 32 (1986): 15.

⁵¹ David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 9.

as potential customers for their provisions. ⁵² Sohal's account seemed accurate in that both he and Shepherd related that there was an absence of major violence between the groups. ⁵³ There was a lack of hostility and instead there was amicable co-existence. Additionally, when Indians wanted to get married and there was no one to perform either Hindu or Muslim rites, some one from a nearby estate "who could recite religious hymns" would perform the ceremony. ⁵⁴ Not only was the Indian not insistent whether it was Hindu, Muslim or Christian wedding rites, the African who knew hymns would be comfortable in performing the marriage ceremony whether the person was Muslim or Hindu. There was co-operation between the two ethnic groups despite their different religious orientations.

Long claimed that the African mythology concerning creation was: "in the beginning, black as well as white men were created; nay, if there was any difference in time, the Blacks had the priority" and because of greed "to punish their avarice, it was decreed they should ever be slaves to the white men." ⁵⁵ The Africans were the chosen ones but due to their sins, they were enslaved. D'Costa and Lalla related a recollection between two Negroes who quizzed the enslaved

⁵² Sohal 138-39.

⁵³ Sohal, 140 and Shepherd, Dynamics 16.

⁵⁴ Sohal 141.

⁵⁵ Long Vol. II 379 book III chap 1. See a similar story in Phillippo Jamaica 188 -89 and Edward Kamau Brathwaite, The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 184-85.

Cynric Williams. It was stated that the devil was black, which the African immediately rejected, claiming “he white,” just like the colour of the European missionary.⁵⁶ It was the African who was the favoured race and the European who had pigmentation similar to the devil.

Olive Lewin, folklorist, posited that the enslaved Africans also believed that they were superior to the Mulatto as demonstrated in the pre-emancipation folk song:

Sally was a whorin’ mulatta,

Oh Sally (rep).

Sally dweet (do it) a day,

Sally dweet (do it) a night.⁵⁷

Lewin was describing the practice of the Plantocracy who fathered children with enslaved mothers, then sent the dark-skinned offspring to the fields and kept the light-skinned progeny for service in the Great House. The enslaved field workers considered these girls as, “at the very least, cheap entertainment for great house society and passing guests.”⁵⁸ So, while the dark-skinned were supposed to be inferior because of their colour and by virtue of labouring in the harsh fields, they in turn looked down on their lighter-skinned relatives whom they labeled whores.

⁵⁶ Jean D’Costa and Barbara Lalla Voices In Exile: Jamaican Texts of the 18th and 19th Centuries (Tuscaloosa; London: U of Alabama P, 1989) 41.

⁵⁷ Lewin 7.

⁵⁸ Lewin 58.

Persons of African origin had their own hermeneutical approach to Bible passages as evidenced by comments that they “held their peculiar views of religious truth with considerable tenacity” and if their chapels were closed and deprived of their own pastors they would stay home rather “than be forced by the strong hand of the law into a Church, the doctrines and discipline of which they disapprove.”⁵⁹ They would resist strongly any attempt to make them conform to the doctrines and discipline of the missionaries. They wanted their own church, own pastor and own interpretation.

African spirituality saw God as the primary source of all natural events, God was closely related to nature and God used nature as an instrument of his judgment. John Stewart said of the spirituality of the Africans, “If the winged lightning which flashes across the fields should strike dead an oppressive overseer under whose tyranny they suffered, they would hail the circumstance as a just judgment of the Almighty.”⁶⁰ He also claimed that even as “earthquakes and eclipses puzzled them” they considered hurricanes an indication of the “divine wrath.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Jamaica Tribune and Daily Advertiser 20 Dec. 1865: 4. This reference spoke to “native” churches, which were usually Baptists. This meant that Native Baptists would have been numbered among them.

⁶⁰ Stewart, View 260.

⁶¹ Stewart, View 259. See also Stewart, Account 33. Phillippo said the Negroes considered the occurrence of earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes as signal of divine displeasure: Phillippo, Jamaica 269. European poets William Gilbert and William Cowper also held this view: William Gilbert, The Hurricane: A Theosophical and Western Ecologue (London, 1796) 9 and William Cowper, The Negro’s Complaint: A Poem to which is added, Pity for Poor Africans (London, 1826) 10-11 in British Library.

There was a particular approach of suspicion and resistance by the Africans who accepted the Christian Faith, whether they were Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists or Moravians. It was this approach that the Native Baptists built on.

Original Baptists' Faith and Practices

The two best-known Original Baptists were Liele and Baker but there were others, such as George Lewis,⁶² who worked successfully among the Moravians, especially with missionary John Lang in Manchester and St. Elizabeth⁶³ and George Gibbs⁶⁴ who was assisted by an unnamed “noble spirited free-black proprietress” who offered her house at Constant Spring where persons associated with George Gibbs preached the gospel for years.⁶⁵ Another significant one was Thomas Nicholas Swigle.⁶⁶

Russell said Liele believed in submitting all Church teachings to the Scriptural test.⁶⁷ He interpreted Liele's use of Scripture as “a manual for living, providing

⁶² John Clarke, Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, Including a Sketch of the Labours of the Early Religious Instructors in Jamaica (London, 1869) 12 and Buchner 47-48.

⁶³ S. U. Hastings and B. L. MacLeavy, Seedtime and Harvest (Bridgetown: Cedar, 1979) 23-25.

⁶⁴ Also spelt “Gibb” and “Gives” Clark, Dendy and Phillippo, Voice of Jubilee 32. Chairman of the JBU spelt it “Gibb”: P. Williams, Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society: Centennial Review (Kingston: Times' Printery, 1914) 3 in Private Archives Index in Jamaica Archives File 4/59/12.

⁶⁵ Clarke, Memorials 17.

⁶⁶ Some spelt it “Swiegle”: Clarke, Memorials 30 and Williams, Jamaica 3. However, Thomas signed his surname as “Swigle”: John Rippon, The Baptist Annual Register: For 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of 1793 (London, [c. 1793]) 542.

⁶⁷ Horace O Russell, “Understandings and Interpretations of Scripture in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth- Century Jamaica: The Baptists as a Case Study,” Religion, Scripture and Tradition in

for social as well as personal identity” and argued that the Covenant was a “document for the instruction of the membership” and also “an apologia (defense) for the very existence of the Church in its national setting.”⁶⁸ He further argued that the Articles of the Covenant were preoccupied with “the ways in which the Church conducts itself” and Article II in making reference to Mark 16 and Colossians 3: 16 supported that argument. He also felt that Liele’s use of Scriptures as in Article XV which quoted 1 Peter 2: 13-16 and 1Thessalonians 3: 13 was to “regulate the behaviour of the congregation so that there would be less tension between the slave and the Plantocracy.”⁶⁹

Carter Woodson, founder of Black History month and distinguished Afro-American author, summarized the situation as one in which Liele acted as a diplomat to soothe the planters while engaging in a ministry to mainly the enslaved.⁷⁰ Perhaps because Liele was a slave owner,⁷¹ with “six slaves, a mother

the Caribbean ed. Hemchard Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell (New York: St. Martin P, 2000) 96, 99.

⁶⁸ Russell, Understandings 101.

⁶⁹ Russell, Understandings 98.

⁷⁰ Carter G. Woodson, The History of the Negro Church (Washington, D. C.: Associated P, 1921) 47. See also Beverly Brown, “George Liele: Black Baptist and Pan-Africanist 1750-1826,” Savacou 11/12 (1975): 60.

⁷¹ Russell, Understandings 98. Gayle offered three rationalizations for Liele being a slave owner in that, “The Will provides for the freedom of the slaves on the death of his wife”; “it was common for missionaries then to own slaves” and “slave labour was the only help available”: Clement Gayle, George Liele: Pioneer Missionary to Jamaica Rev. ed. (1982; Nashville: Bethlehem 2002) 74-75.

and her son and four others,”⁷² the main thrust of the Covenant was one of restraint.

Phillippo analyzed Liele and other pioneer missionaries’ hermeneutical approach as interpreting Scriptures literally and claimed that was the root cause of their errors in beliefs and practices. Phillippo, therefore, ridiculed the practice of Christians who went into the woods at Christmas among the sheep, “in imitation of the shepherds, to whom the angels announced the birth of the Redeemer, and this under the delusive expectation of being favoured with a similar visitation.”⁷³ Assuming that Phillippo understood why they went into the bush, it was not necessarily a foolish activity to re-enact the scene of the angelic appearance. It showed that they were appropriating the experience of the shepherds and also identifying themselves with the lowly estate of those shepherds and wanting a special experience from the Saviour.

Another illustration given by Phillippo to show the errors of Liele and his followers was that they anointed the sick with oil. Phillippo claimed that this act was “in imitation of the anointing of the Saviour by Mary Magdalene before his crucifixion. The usual method of its application was by pouring it into the palm of the hand, and rubbing it on the head of the patient.”⁷⁴ The description does

⁷² File # 26/2006, The Last Will and Testament of George Liele 12 June 1830 in the Registrar General’s Department, Jamaica.

⁷³ Phillippo, Jamaica 271, 274.

⁷⁴ Phillippo, Jamaica 272. Liele and company had “their belief in the duty of praying over and anointing the sick”: Underhill, West Indies 198.

not fit the anointing of Jesus' feet because Jesus was not sick. In addition, Jesus' head was not anointed (John 12: 1-7). The anointing of the sick was reminiscent of a passage in the Bible in the book of James which says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call the elders of the church; and let him pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (5: 14). Other examples given to demonstrate their folly included "dreams and visions constituted fundamental articles of their creed" and their response to the type of hospitality received on a visit to a new neighbourhood wherein if treated with respect then they pronounced a blessing on the house while if treated with indifference then "he shook off the dust from his feet as a testimony against them" (Luke 9: 4-5).

i) Bible was foundational

Hymn singing was an integral part of worship in congregations led by persons of African origin with Liele, in the eighteenth century, beginning his ministry to fellow Negroes, "by reading hymns among them, encouraging them to sing, and sometimes by explaining the most striking parts of them."⁷⁵ The hymns were used as a sort of Biblical text.

Liele's beliefs had to be "according to the Scriptures."⁷⁶ In addition, The Covenant of the Anabaptist Church Began In America December 1777 and in Jamaica, December 1783 provided insights into the beliefs and practices of the

⁷⁵ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 333.

⁷⁶ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 337.

Original Baptists and each article had supporting scriptural texts. Catherall claimed that Liele brought a Church Covenant from America, which he drew up and that Baker's Covenant was an adaptation of Liele's.⁷⁷ However, Clement Gayle, Jamaican Baptist historian, said, "Although this Covenant certainly did not originate entirely with Liele, it bears the stamp of his authority."⁷⁸ Liele's Covenant had some differences when compared to Baker's Covenant.⁷⁹ This indicates that there was not a concretized Covenant but more than likely a template from the USA Anabaptists, with both Liele and Baker making adjustments.

Liele's Covenant clearly showed that for the pioneers of the Baptist denomination in Jamaica, the Bible was the final authority for faith and practice. Article I of Liele's Covenant stated, "We are of the Anabaptist persuasion because we believe it agreeable to the Scriptures . . . Matthew, Chap. III. Ver. 1, 2, 3. 2d Corinthians Chap. VI. Ver. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18."⁸⁰ Every action had to find justification in the Scriptures and, not surprisingly, after the first article there was the word "proof", followed by quotations from the Bible to prove the point made in the article. The vast majority of the 21 Articles contained the clause "according to the Word of

⁷⁷ G. A. Catherall, "The Native Baptist Church," *Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1971): 66.

⁷⁸ Gayle 67.

⁷⁹ Clarke, *Memorials* 26. This covenant and the account of Baker given by him in the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1803 were reproduced "without alteration or abridgement" in Clarke's book: Clarke, *Memorials* 18.

⁸⁰ *The Covenant of the Anabaptist Church Began in America December 1777 and in Jamaica, December 1783* (London, 1796) 3. Baker's Covenant has "Baptist" not "Anabaptist": Clarke, *Memorials* 26.

God” or “agreeable to the Scriptures.” It was also important to Liele that he was able “to worship Almighty God according to the tenets of the Bible.”⁸¹ Liele and their followers were grounded in the Bible.

ii) **Protesting Societal Norms**

Article II stated “We hold to keep the Lord’s day throughout the year, in a place appointed for Public Worship, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . Mark, Chap. XVI. Ver. 2, 5, 6.

Collossians [sic], Chap. III. Ver. 16.”⁸² Most of Article II is a replica of Colossians 3: 16. However, the case for using the Markan passage could only be to support the designation of “the Lord’s Day,” which was a statement that the day belonged to the Lord. Therefore, these earthly masters who lord it over the enslaved did not have absolute power and control but must also give deference to the Lord.

Article XVI admonished that in order “to avoid fornication we permit no one to keep each other, except they be married according to the word of God . . .

Nevertheless, to avoid Fornication, let every man have his own wife . . . 1st

Corinthians, Chap. VII. Ver. 2.”⁸³ Brown interpreted Article XVI as encouraging

⁸¹ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 334.

⁸² Covenant of the Anabaptist 3-4. Baker’s Covenant, minus the Biblical references, was the same as Liele’s: Clarke, Memorials 26.

⁸³ Covenant of the Anabaptist 10. Baker’s Covenant, minus the Biblical references, has a minor difference of capitalizing “Word” when compared to Liele’s: Clarke, Memorials 26.

marriage.⁸⁴ This was a direct affront to slave society where marriage was discouraged, repressed⁸⁵ and illegal.⁸⁶ Therefore, this article verified that the enslaved were human beings capable of getting married and raising a family.

Article III stated:

We hold to be Baptised in a river, or in a place where there is much water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . . Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be Baptized of him . . . and lo, a voice from Heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased . . . Matthew, Chap. III. Ver. 13, 16, 17. Mark, Chap. XVI. Ver. 15, 16. Matthew, Chap. XXVIII. Ver. 19.⁸⁷

This first passage from Matthew recalls Jesus' baptism and how God was pleased that he did it, while the Mark 16 passage was a commission to the disciples to go and baptize those who believed. It could also be seen as a challenge to the practices of the Established Church that did not engage in immersion, which needed a river but rather sprinkled water on the forehead of an infant or adult.

⁸⁴ Brown, George Liele 63. The law was changed in 1835 allowing marriages done by missionaries to be legal: Jamaica Moravian Church 68.

⁸⁵ John Bigelow, Jamaica in 1850 or, the effects of sixteen years of Freedom on a Slave Colony (1851; Westport: Negro UP, 1970) 26; Sturge and Harvey appendix lxxxviii and The Report on the Moral and Religious Improvement of the Slave Population [1832] 345, 350, 356, 362, 377.

⁸⁶ Underhill, West Indies 194.

⁸⁷ Covenant of the Anabaptist 4. The passage capitalized "baptized" and has two different spellings.

Immersion in the river resonated with Africans.⁸⁸ However, it did offend Richard Panton who claimed that Liele's followers believed that water washed away sins and therefore they re-baptized often. But Joshua Tinson, a veteran English Baptist pastor, and Abbott said they never witnessed even one case of re-baptizing.⁸⁹

There was another break with religious tradition and challenge to the ruling class in Article VI which said:

We hold to receive and admit young children into the Church according to the word of God . . . And he came by the Spirit into the Temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then he took him up into his arms and blessed God . . . Luke, Chap. II. Ver. 27, 28.⁹⁰

Underhill stated that it was a "curious" practice because it was not baptism but a "special service" and then he speculated that it was similar to the 1860s practice of "native Baptists . . . becoming sponsors to the children of friends who are christened by the clergy of the Church of England."⁹¹ This was another challenge to the practice of the Established Church, the official religion of the State.

⁸⁸ Jamaica Moravian Church 65.

⁸⁹ Edward Steane, Statement and Extracts of Correspondence Relating to the Baptist Mission in Jamaica Occasioned by the Misrepresentations of the Rev. Richard Panton (London, 1840) 5 –6.

⁹⁰ Covenant of the Anabaptist 6. Baker does not have this article: Clarke, Memorials 26-27.

⁹¹ Underhill, West Indies 197-98.

Underhill was unintentionally indicating a link between Liele's group and the Native Baptists.

The articles addressed also the matter of gender equality. This equality of genders was also noticed in Articles XIX and XX, "We hold if a Brother or Sister should transgress . . ." ⁹² Liele's Covenant in naming brother and sister, did not assume that brother covered all genders. Females were on equal footing with males, having dignity and worth. It is therefore not surprising that Liele had twenty-four elders, 12 of whom were women. ⁹³ That he had twelve female elders meant that Liele determined that the Bible offered a more egalitarian view of male/female relationships, which was contrary to the chauvinistic slave society.

⁹² Covenant of the Anabaptist 11.

⁹³ Covenant of the Anabaptist 2 and Underhill, West Indies 197. One of the elders was his wife, Hannah. In 1791, Liele said "my wife was baptized by me in Savannah . . . She is much the same age as myself": Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 335.

It was also significant that Liele referred to his group as “the Ethiopian Baptists of Jamaica.”⁹⁴ Russell said it was part of their Christian identity and a feature of Christians of African descent in the USA.⁹⁵ Liele appeared acutely aware of the Christian heritage from Ethiopia, Africa and was affirming it. This Afro-centric declaration in a context where things African were considered inferior, backward and foolish was an affront to the very foundations of colonial slave society.

In the courts, the sentences were “frequently severe, and sometimes partial and unjust; they consisted in pecuniary fines often exceeding, the means of the party” and “the poorest and most unfriended [sic] of the Negroes had the worse chance of justice from their hands.”⁹⁶ This led the Original Baptists to establish their own justice system based on the Bible. Article IX stated:

We hold to appoint Judges and such other Officers among us, to settle any matter according to the word of God . . . Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Acts, Chap. VI. Ver. 1, 2, 3.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542.

⁹⁵ Russell, Understandings 102.

⁹⁶ Stewart, View 262-63.

⁹⁷ Covenant of the Anabaptist 10.

They established an alternative jurisprudence based on the Bible because of the inadequacy of the colonial justice system.

These articles demonstrated that the Original Baptists challenged the structure of the slave society. They offered a counter culture to the enslaved.

iii) Pragmatic Restraint

Article XV stated that “We permit no slaves to join the Church without first having a few lines from their owners of their good behaviour” and to support that regulation they said “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the King, as Supreme; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers” and had the Biblical references as “1st Peter, Chap. II. Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. 1st Thessalonians, Chap. III. Ver. 13.” ⁹⁸ These Biblical references addressed the issue of reverence to be given to kings, rulers and potentates. As the first person of African ancestry to preach to the enslaved, Liele probably felt the need to exercise an abundance of caution bearing in mind that both the ecclesiastical and legal authorities could revoke his preaching licence. Furthermore, he had experienced imprisonment ⁹⁹ on a charge of sedition for a sermon he preached on Romans 10: 1. ¹⁰⁰ This passage

⁹⁸ Covenant of the Anabaptist 9. Rippon supported that claim that “their owners allow them”: Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 336. Baker does not have this article: Clarke, Memorials 26-27.

⁹⁹ Underhill, West Indies 199-200. Liele was charged with preaching sedition and was imprisoned: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 32.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 32.

states, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” This Biblical reference seemed quite innocuous. It was also claimed that Liele in showing this Anabaptist Covenant with its Articles was able to obtain, “the sanction of the authorities and masters of the slaves to his proceedings.”¹⁰¹ This was a prudent move because the authorities understood the Covenant in a certain way not realizing that the enslaved might have a different interpretation.

iv) Ethical Demands

Then, there were those tenets, which regulated their lifestyle such as Article XX which maintained that if a member were reprimanded and there was no change then he or she should be “put out of the Church” and the Covenant found support for that position in “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . . 2d. John, Chap. I. Ver. 9, 10. Gal. Chap. VI Ver. 1, 2. Luke, Chap. XVII. Ver. 3, 4.”¹⁰² These proof texts addressed transgressions, forgiveness and reconciliation. The Covenant quoted 2 John 1: 9, 10 and demonstrated that for Liele and the other members, the Christian faith was ethical and not merely ceremonial.

¹⁰¹ Underhill, West Indies 199.

¹⁰² Covenant of the Anabaptist 11-12. Baker’s Covenant does not have this article: Clarke, Memorials 26-27.

There was also Article VIII, which stated, “We hold to labouring one with another according to the word of God. Proof . . . Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Matthew, Chap. XVIII. Ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.”¹⁰³

The proof text, Matt 18: 15 -18, addressed binding and loosing, unity among members, as well as, a plea for agreement in prayer. In addition, binding and loosing spoke to authority that each Christian has in the church, which was largely denied to the Africans in the wider society. They had power along with authority to engage in this ministry, which was of equal value with that of European missionaries. It validated them as having worth and value coming from God though it was denied them on earth. This was a liberating humanizing experience, which was treasured and accepted joyfully. The Original Baptists ought to be their brothers’ keepers, caring for each other and engaging in Christian ministry. It was also a call to work hard for the Lord as implied by the word labour. It also confirmed that their labour would not be in vain and reiterated that hard work was honourable.

v) Social consciousness

Liele purchased land in Spanish Town to establish a burying ground,¹⁰⁴ which was a ministry for the benefit of his congregation. He also appointed Thomas

¹⁰³ Covenant of the Anabaptist 7. Brown and Gayle ignored this article in their analysis: Brown, Liele 63-64 and Gayle 67-68. However, this was a significant stipulation. Baker’s Covenant did not have this article: Clarke, Memorials 26-27.

¹⁰⁴ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542. See also Underhill, West Indies 199.

Swigle as “deacon, schoolmaster, and his principal helper” and received books from England for the edification of his congregants.¹⁰⁵ In addition, he “promoted a Free School for the instruction of the children, both free and slaves.”¹⁰⁶ This emphasis on education so early in the ministry of Liele was unprecedented in the ministry of other European missionaries. Liele’s holistic view of ministry perceived a connection between literacy and spreading the gospel. This was visionary and an achievement in 1791. In 1792, Liele remarked that the enslaved were largely “poor” and “illiterate” but “reading this covenant once a month, when all are met together from the different parts of the island, keeps them in mind of the commandments of God.”¹⁰⁷ Liele’s commitment to literacy showed social consciousness.

An examination of the teachings of the Original Baptists revealed that these Baptists were ethical, practical, and universal in outlook. They protested against slave society but with restraint, and for them the Bible was foundational. These influences were also strongly apparent among the Native Baptists who emphasized the Bible and hymns, who developed practical ministry especially in education, who accepted government financial help, who had a good relationship with the Governor in the 1840s and who challenged European hermeneutics and the oppression within the church and society.

¹⁰⁵ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 542. Swigle had a split with Liele and had his own congregation of 700 in Kingston: Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 33.

¹⁰⁶ Rippon, Baptist Annual Register 335.

¹⁰⁷ Underhill, West Indies 199.

vi) Universal Outlook

It was said that the Original Baptists displayed “no jealousy” against “European ministers” as demonstrated in 1816, when an English Baptist missionary, Lee Compere was invited to Kingston to build on the legacy of Liele, which consisted of hundreds of members, to become their pastor. ¹⁰⁸ In addition, in 1817, Liele and his people facilitated Coultart by granting him Gully Chapel to have his meetings “although many had left his [Liele’s] place of worship” and on the departure of Liele to England in 1822, Joshua Tinson, preached to Liele’s congregation at Windward Road Chapel until Liele returned. ¹⁰⁹ Baker shared his congregation with Rowe while Coultart visited Baker and preached to his congregation. ¹¹⁰ In addition, the Original Baptists invited the English Baptists to Jamaica. ¹¹¹ The Original Baptists were universal in outlook and willing to co-operate with other religious bodies in the preaching of the gospel.

Emphases of Sam Sharpe

Heuman mentioned a book that venerated Sam Sharpe and his followers as Christian martyrs, which was in circulation in 1864, the Jubilee of English Baptist

¹⁰⁸ Underhill, West Indies 204 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 146.

¹⁰⁹ Clarke, Memorials 75, 83.

¹¹⁰ Clarke, Memorials 70, 76, 164.

¹¹¹ Underhill, West Indies 204 and Clarke, Memorials 164.

witness in Jamaica. ¹¹² This reflected a widening view of Sharpe as a martyr during that commemoration. ¹¹³ Sam Sharpe could have influenced the Native Baptists' thinking in the 1860s.

For Sharpe, the Bible and hymns were of primary importance. And while in prison, his relatives sent to him the chapters and the hymns they read and sung at their domestic worship. He returned to them similar information of his soul's source of secret life. ¹¹⁴ This is what sustained him in a trying time, the Bible and the hymns. When Sharpe was questioned if he got the idea that he ought to be free from the missionaries he said, "no one minister said such a word. Not one, Sir. But me read it in my Bible." ¹¹⁵ The Bible was pivotal in his life.

Sharpe from his understanding of the Bible emphasized equality of all human beings irrespective of race, and the right of human beings to be free. He also underscored the importance of non-violent protest and fervently believed that in the end he would be vindicated.

¹¹² Gad Heuman, 'The Killing Time': The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 86.

¹¹³ "The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica," Baptist Reporter June 1864: 248.

¹¹⁴ By a Returned Missionary, "The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica," Baptist Reporter July 1864: 305.

¹¹⁵ "The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica," Baptist Reporter July 1864: 305. See also Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 56.

i) **Belief in equality/freedom**

Sharpe was prepared to be a martyr for the cause of freedom according to Bleby who said, “It was not his purpose to wade through blood to freedom, although he was himself prepared to die rather than remain a slave.”¹¹⁶ On the gallows on 23 May 1832 after the sentencing on 19 April 1832, Sharpe said, “I am going to die because I thought I had a right to be free.”¹¹⁷ Sharpe knew that for the enslaved persons, “freedom is their right and freedom they could have.”¹¹⁸ Bleby said Sharpe believed that liberty was a “natural and inalienable right.”¹¹⁹ Bleby recorded that Sam Sharpe said: “he learnt from his Bible, that the whites had no more right to hold black people in slavery, than the black people had to make the white people slaves; and, for his own part, he would rather die than live in slavery.”¹²⁰ Sharpe’s belief in the right to be free was radical because even the Anti -Slavery Society did not base their agitation for the termination of slavery on the right to be free or equality of human races but rather on the abuses and evils attendant to slavery as practiced in the West Indies. So at the 12 May 1833 Anti -Slavery Society meeting, chaired by James Stephens, ten evils of slavery were listed as “neglect of instruction, moral and religious, to slaves”, “profanation of

¹¹⁶ Henry Bleby, Scenes in the Caribbean Sea: Being Sketches from a Missionary’s Notebook (London, 1854) 51.

¹¹⁷ Clarke, Memorials 107 and Dillon 9.

¹¹⁸ Belmore, Somerset Lowry, 2nd Earl of, Governor of Jamaica, 1829-1832. Northern Island Record Office (UWIL, MR 1371-75; 1432-36) 1.

¹¹⁹ Bleby, Scenes 51.

¹²⁰ Henry Bleby, Death Struggles of Slavery (London, 1853) 116. See also Bleby, Scenes 18.

Sabbath”, “barbarity of punishment”, “licentious treatment of female slaves”, “discouragement given to marriage”, “perversion of laws”, “separation of families by sale”, “rejection . . . of slave evidence”, “difficulties put in the way of a slave obtaining his freedom” and “the uncertainty of holding liberty when secured.” ¹²¹

In the list there was no mention that all persons were born free and that all persons were equal.

Bleby recorded Sharpe’s attitude toward freedom:

The last time I conversed with Sharpe . . . He was not, however, to be convinced that he had done wrong in endeavouring to assert his claim to freedom. ‘When reminded that the Scriptures teach men to be content with the station allotted to them by Providence, and that even slaves are required patiently to submit to their lot, till the Lord in his providence is pleased to change it,’ - he was a little staggered, and said, ‘if I have done wrong in that, I trust I shall be forgiven; for I cast myself upon the Atonement.’ ¹²²

Sharpe had his own interpretation and he rejected the understanding that said he should passively wait and not claim his right to be free. He was not apologetic about the struggle for freedom even when Scriptures were quoted in support of the status quo. His belief in equality for all was grounded in the Bible.

¹²¹ Clarke, Memorials 109-10.

¹²² Bleby, Death Struggles 117.

ii) Non-violence

Shirley Gordon, R. A. L Knight and Higman said the 1831 Baptist War was violent.¹²³ Shepherd concurred with the armed struggle idea, claiming “Sharpe was not averse to making the transition from peaceful sit-down strike to armed revolt.”¹²⁴ Reckord claimed that the original strategy involved the destruction of property and armed rebellion.¹²⁵ Reckord, in reviewing the evidence, seemed to soften her earlier comments that it was an armed resistance, when she concluded, “there was no hint of a crusade against the whites in their activity. Their attempts at strike action were intended to win freedom with a minimum of disorder and bloodshed. Even the armed rebels fought only those whites who attacked them; whites who offered no opposition met with no harm.”¹²⁶

Sharpe because of his “intensely Christian principles and thoughts” disagreed with those who wanted to take up the sword claiming that the Bible said one should not fight.¹²⁷ Bleby confirmed that “the plan proposed to be acted upon by Sharpe was that of a *passive resistance*, and to fight only in the case the ‘buckras’

¹²³ Shirley C. Gordon, God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996) 97; Knight, ed., Liberty 5; Barry Higman, Montpelier Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom 1739-1912 (Kingston: Press, 1998) 263-64.

¹²⁴ Verene Shepherd, “‘To be Hanged by the neck until Dead’ The King against Samuel Sharpe, April 1832,” Jamaica Journal 29 (2005): 56.

¹²⁵ Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 27 and Mary Turner, Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaica Slave Society 1787-1834 (Urbana: U of Illinois, 1982) 154.

¹²⁶ Reckord 31.

¹²⁷ Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer July 1864: 297-352.

used force to compel them to turn out and work as slaves . . . the burning of the plantations, and the violence offered to whites, were no part of his design.” ¹²⁸

This story was confirmed to Sturge and Harvey on a visit to a gaol in Westmoreland on 9 March 1837. They met two convicts and one of them; a very old man related his story:

Before the rebellion, he and other negros [sic] agreed, that they would sit down after Christmas, and tell their masters they were free; but that they would willingly continue to work ‘for any small salary.’ They did so but afterwards, some of the ignorant negros, refusing to listen to the more ‘sensible,’ began to set fire to the buildings, and to make war against the white people. ¹²⁹

This intelligent and credible testimony was in accordance with Sharpe’s stated plan of a strike for wages and freedom. Sharpe thought that every African had the inalienable right to work for pay and to provide for himself a comfortable lifestyle. ¹³⁰

Bleby contradicted the perception of the Negroes as violent when he concluded, “In no instance was any act of personal violence done to the whites by the

¹²⁸ Bleby, Death Struggles 113 and Bleby, Scenes 20. See also Clarke, Memorials 107.

¹²⁹ Sturge and Harvey 238-39.

¹³⁰ Losh 16.

insurgents, until many of their own number had been put to death.”¹³¹ Peter Duncan, a Methodist missionary, said, “At first it was not the object of the insurgent Negroes to take life, and their moderation was acknowledged, and even eulogized by their enemies.”¹³² A newspaper report said, “As yet the loss of life on our part is very trifling.”¹³³ The 1831 Baptist War led by Sharpe was not violent in intent. It was a strike. According to Copland, writing thirty years after the event, “It was evident that the designs of the Negroes in this insurrection were neither blood, plunder nor revenge, for until after the executions by martial law had commenced, not a single instance of violence had been committed” and added that when it is considered that “50,000 Negroes were more or less concerned in the rebellion, and that no more than twenty of these were known to have committed any outrages, it was marvelous that so much moderation should have been displayed by men who had for years groaned under the yoke worse than Egyptian bondage.”¹³⁴ There were only two acts of violence against Europeans while the immense multitude of Negroes “struck for wages.”¹³⁵ The Negroes assured Francis Gardner, English Baptist missionary, of his safety as he rode into the protest saying that they had “*kissed the book not to hurt any parson.*”¹³⁶ And

¹³¹ Bleby, Scenes 52-53.

¹³² Peter Duncan, A Narrative of the Wesleyan Mission to Jamaica; with occasional Remarks on the State of the Society in the Colony (London, 1849) 272.

¹³³ “Rebellious State of the Slaves in Trelawny and St. James’s,” Supplement to the St. Jago Gazette,” From Saturday December 31, 1831 to Saturday January 7, 1832: 7 in UWI Library x AN. S3.

¹³⁴ Copland 19.

¹³⁵ Christian Record Mar. 1832: 61.

¹³⁶ Clarke, Memorials 141.

according to the dispatch from Portland, “the Negroes on three estates in that parish had refused to work, but had not proceeded to any acts of violence.” There were similar reports for St. Thomas in the East and St. Andrew. In the same report, island-wide accounts, stated that, with the exception of a wounded militiaman, “no human blood has been spilled by our peasantry.” ¹³⁷

A military officer said an enslaved person told him, “Dem say we no fe shed blood.” ¹³⁸ John Salmon, acting as a spy for Colonel Grignon for the commanding officer of the Western Regiment, claimed that participants were told, “no slaughter would be committed.” ¹³⁹ It was not going to be a blood bath. No violence was planned.

There was no denying that some of the leaders wanted armed resistance because they felt that the Europeans would not peacefully treat them as freed persons and pay them, therefore “We must be prepared to fight -Bukra has sword and gun, and will not let us go.” ¹⁴⁰ However, Sharpe’s idea prevailed and the only concession he made was that they could defend themselves although he would bear no arms. ¹⁴¹ Clarke stated otherwise, “the war party prevailed, and guns were

¹³⁷ Watchman 4 Jan. 1832: 4.

¹³⁸ Senior, Jamaica 228.

¹³⁹ Vindication of the Conduct of Colonel Grignon and of the Western Interior Regiment 1-2.

¹⁴⁰ Clarke, Memorials 102.

¹⁴¹ By a Returned Missionary, “The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter July 1864: 302-03.

obtained. Some, however, knew not how to use them . . .”¹⁴² However, the non-use of guns and lack of bloodshed by 50,000 enslaved persons taking part demonstrated that those for armed resistance did not prevail.

iii) Hope/vindication anticipated

Sharpe approached the hangman with confidence and dignity, verifying his lack of fear of death.¹⁴³ Another report said his face was bright and his form erect as if he had “achieved some glorious victory.”¹⁴⁴ This lack of fear of death was also evident in the statements of Sharpe, George Guthrie and Edward Hilton who were tried for the 1831 Baptist War. They were assured that if they told “the truth” that Knibb, Burchell or Gardner incited them then “their lives would be spared” but they chose death when they retorted, “we cannot tell a lie upon the Ministers, we had rather be hanged.”¹⁴⁵ They were responsible for their actions and death had no terror for them. Sharpe approached death boldly because he had a firm faith in the atoning blood of Jesus and hope in eternal life. God’s righteous reign was inaugurated through the death of Christ and this gave Sharpe hope in the future, including the immediate future. Martyrdom was a supreme

¹⁴² Clarke, Memorials 102.

¹⁴³ “Execution of Samuel Sharpe, the Rebellious Slave,” Watchman 6 June 1832: 6.

¹⁴⁴ By a Returned Missionary, “The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter July 1864: 305. Old Virgil, a Baptist leader of Windsor Lodge, who was executed without trial, inquired of Captain Hylton if he was to be hanged for praying to God. Hylton replied, ‘Yes.’ Then said the old Christian, ‘hang me up at once, that I may go to my Father.’: Clarke, Memorials 161.

¹⁴⁵ Christian Record July 1832: 181, 852. See also By a Returned Missionary, “The Christian Hero: Another reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter July 1864: 304.

act of sacrifice and testimony. It was the powerless demonstrating greater power over the powerful. Martyrdom was also a statement that the powerful will not have things their way because the last desperate act of taking a life becomes a badge of honour that elevated the victim and inspired the other persons who were victimized to have courage and continue the struggle to attain the original objective of the resistance.

Sharpe announced his Christian faith on the gallows, “I don’t know that I am prepared to face God, but I depend on Salvation through the redeemer, who shed his blood upon Calvary for sinners.” ¹⁴⁶ He also anticipated the just judgment, “I have transgressed against the laws of the country and Government, and with great violation, and I am come to be a sacrifice for it; but I will soon appear before a Judge that is greater than all.” ¹⁴⁷ He appealed to the master of them all. He was in this world but the laws of the land did not bind him if it contravened God’s law. On the surface it appeared as if he was acknowledging that he was a criminal but he was appealing to a higher authority as a Christian. In addition, the use of sacrifice meant that he was seeing himself as dying on behalf of others so that they might be free.

This hope in God made persons of African origin follow in Sharpe’s religious tradition. In 1832, Miss Cooper, “a free person of colour,” and owner of the land

¹⁴⁶ “Execution of Samuel Sharpe, the Rebellious Slave,” Watchman 6 June 1832: 6. See also Bleby for a similar quote: Bleby, Death Struggles 118.

¹⁴⁷ “Execution of Samuel Sharpe, the Rebellious Slave,” Watchman 6 June 1832: 6.

in St. Thomas–in-the-Vale, on which a little thatched chapel stood, was taken before the magistrate “to answer charges of encouraging unlawful meetings, and for attending them.” She was “undismayed by their threats” and resolved that her land would remain a place of worship.¹⁴⁸ There was much courage in the face of adversity because of the anticipation of victory through God.

Missionaries

It was observed: “The doctrines with which the missionaries have ever endeavoured to inculcate on their hearers are, for the most part, contained in the XXXIX Articles of the Established Church. They do not indeed subscribe to all of them, for then would they cease to be Dissenters, but they do fully and entirely concur in by far the greater number . . .”¹⁴⁹ The missionaries took their cue from doctrines of the Church of England and though the missionaries were not homogenous, they all shared broad similarities.

The English Baptists rigidly observed the code of conduct of “non-interference with political concerns.”¹⁵⁰ This was consistent with an ancient tradition of Christian interpretations of the Bible in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth

¹⁴⁸ Clarke, Memorials 137. In 1828, on Phillippo’s first visit to Jericho, he preached under a tree on the premises of Miss Cooper: Underhill, Life 72.

¹⁴⁹ Christian Record July 1832: 166.

¹⁵⁰ Underhill, West Indies 205. See also Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 55; G. Henderson, Goodness and Mercy (Kingston: Gleaner, 1931) 12; Brathwaite, Creole 258 and Jamaica Moravian Church 63.

centuries to support a quietist approach to political matters and deference to established authority. ¹⁵¹ There was a demarcation between the sacred and the secular, the spiritual world and the physical world. After 1832, the English Baptists under the leadership of Knibb changed their position, so much so that it antagonized Governor Metcalfe, who in 1839, enunciated that religious men, such as the Baptist missionaries, had no right to take part in political debate. ¹⁵² And by 1844, the English Baptists led a political organization, which at that time opposed George William Gordon, who had the support of the Wesleyans and the planter class. ¹⁵³

One of the features of missionary thinking was that the European clergy in Jamaica believed that they were the chosen race. ¹⁵⁴ Shepherd argued that in the 19th century, this theological division of the world's population into heathens and Christians was linked ideologically to the mentality, which associated Europeans with the Israelites and non-Europeans with the Canaanites. ¹⁵⁵ In Jamaica, and other territories in the West Indies, the English Baptists, the Moravians, and the

¹⁵¹ George Pottinger, Analysis and Evaluation of the Contribution of the Methodist Society to Jamaica 1938-1967 diss. , (Boston University Graduate School, 1977) 25.

¹⁵² Swithin Wilmot, "Baptist Missionaries and Jamaican Politics, 1845-1854" A selection of papers presented at the Twelfth Conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, 1980 ed. K. O. Laurence. (Port-of-Spain: Association of Caribbean Historians, 1986) 47.

¹⁵³ Wilmot, Baptist Missionaries 54.

¹⁵⁴ Frank Cundall, The Life of Enos Nuttall: Archbishop of the West Indies (London, SPCK; New York: Macmillan, 1922) 12, 213.

¹⁵⁵ Shepherd, Transients 150. See Raboteau who said, "From the beginnings of colonization, . . . White Christians saw themselves as a new Israel . . .": Raboteau 251.

Wesleyans referred to themselves as “the children of Israel.”¹⁵⁶ The British Christians perceived themselves as the new Spiritual Israel.¹⁵⁷ They were the inheritors of the blessings from God. On the other hand, most European missionaries believed that the lineage of the African race was from the despised children of Ham who were under a “partriarchical [sic] curse.”¹⁵⁸ Phillippo referred to the enslaved as the “oppressed offspring of Ham,”¹⁵⁹ the “poor child of Ham”¹⁶⁰ and the “regenerated sons and daughters of Ham.”¹⁶¹ The missionaries claimed that Africans were descendants of Ham, who were cursed in the Genesis story of chapter 9. Noah had three sons, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham had a son named Canaan. One day Noah became drunk and took off his clothes. In his drunken state, his son Ham witnessed his nakedness and as a consequence Noah pronounced a curse, “And he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.’ And he said, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant’ ” (Gen. 9: 25-26). It was not clear how the African became a descendant of Ham but this passage was used to justify slavery and the African being placed in a subservient position.

¹⁵⁶ Baptist Herald, and Friend of Africa 4 Jan. 1843: 44. See also Henry Bleby, Methodism a Goodly Heritage (Kingston, 1839) 22.

¹⁵⁷ I. Watts, Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (London, 1718) 65.

¹⁵⁸ William Fitz-er Burchell, Memoir of Thomas Burchell: Twenty-Two Years a Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1849) 329. See also Douglas Lorimer, Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Leicester: Holmes, 1978) 69.

¹⁵⁹ Phillippo, Jamaica 211. In addition, the Africans were regarded as descendants of Cain, the murderer: Sohal 139.

¹⁶⁰ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 284.

¹⁶¹ Underhill, Life 323. See also Henry Bleby, Romance Without Fiction: or Sketches from the Portfolio of an old Missionary (London, 1872) 57.

Phillippo, describing Jamaica in the 1820s, stated, “at church, if a man of colour, however respectable in circumstances or character, entered the pew of the lowest white man, he was instantly ordered out.” ¹⁶² Underhill said that even in the church the members of “lighter skin” deemed those of African origin as “an inferior caste” and acknowledged that there was “a strife of colour” within the Baptist congregations. ¹⁶³ The church was colour prejudiced.

In pre-emancipation Jamaica, the Africans’ colour was equated with that of the devil, who was invisible, because he was black and came out at nights ¹⁶⁴ while the missionaries called the 1865 protestors “black devils.” ¹⁶⁵ Many post-emancipation missionary documents were replete with references to persons of African ancestry as superstitious, ¹⁶⁶ half-civilized ¹⁶⁷ and savages. ¹⁶⁸ They were believed to be from an inferior civilization and inferior culture when compared to

¹⁶² Phillippo, Jamaica 143, 148.

¹⁶³ Underhill, West Indies 192.

¹⁶⁴ B. Pullen-Burry, Ethiopia in Exile: Jamaica Revisited (London: Unwin, 1905) 149. The thinking was that one cannot see a black image in the darkness of the night.

¹⁶⁵ “The Case of the Rev. Edwin Palmer,” Baptist Magazine Mar. 1866: 190. See also Copland 6.

¹⁶⁶ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662; The Sixtieth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society (London, 1864) 241 in Cambridge U Library; Phillippo, Jamaica 247 and Underhill, West Indies 206.

¹⁶⁷ Gardner 274 and Underhill, Life 231. Underhill recorded that Phillippo called the Negroes half civilized because they voted for Dowson to be their pastor and not him.

¹⁶⁸ “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter June 1864: 247; “A Theory of Missionary Effort,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 785; “The Case of the Rev. Edwin Palmer,” Baptist Magazine Mar. 1866: 190; Copland 28; Phillippo, Jamaica 245.

the Europeans ¹⁶⁹ and wholly “incapable of attaining to the refinement and civilization of European nations.” ¹⁷⁰ The English Baptists perceived Europeans as superior intellectually and mentally. ¹⁷¹ In 1851, Phillippo, after the lawsuit involving some African members who wanted Englishman Thomas Dowson as pastor, approvingly quoted the Greek poet Homer who said that half our virtue is torn away when a man becomes enslaved and the other half goes when he becomes an enslaved person let loose. ¹⁷² In the 1860s, it was still debated by some Christians whether persons of African origin were humans. ¹⁷³ Gordon was said to be:

Half Negro, half Scotchman, and, of course, mixed in character as in blood. On the Scotch side he was a shrewd, clever, pious man, who preached, prayed and schemed. On the Negro side he is accused of having planned the conspiracy three years ago, organized secret societies, bound by tremendous oaths-a sort of Celto-Dahomic Fenianism , suitable to dark skins and low latitudes. ¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Underhill, West Indies 297; “A Theory of Missionary Effort,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 786; Bigelow, Jamaica in 1850 21 and “Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1867: 51-52.

¹⁷⁰ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 14.

¹⁷¹ Underhill, West Indies 296.

¹⁷² Underhill, Life 230.

¹⁷³ “Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine January 1867 50.

¹⁷⁴ Interesting Letter from our London Correspondent, “Affairs in Great Britain,” New York Times 15 Dec. 1865: 2.

Racial prejudice was strong in 1865 and the belief was that a person of mixed race would have mixed character with the African side being inferior and the European side being superior morally and intellectually. Shepherd defined racism as occurring when negative social definition was translated into a political policy through the exploitation of certain races.¹⁷⁵ In the missionary church, race determined one's status, influence, and the position one could hold in the church so there was racism in the European missionary institutions.

The missionaries also had a dualistic concept of human beings. John Clarke reflecting on the 1865 Native Baptist War said, "Under the influence and teaching of ministers from England, and the Native Pastors connected with them, they would have been more enlightened . . ." and more aware of how citizens endured "heavy taxation" and "oppressive laws" and would not have emphasized the grievances the people were encountering.¹⁷⁶ Not only were the English Baptists adhering to a policy of non-involvement or more precisely encouraging suffering silently, but they also wanted their native pastors, who were trained at Calabar, into thinking and behaving likewise.

On the passing of the Act to abolish slavery in 1833, Christians in England said that the enslaved "should not go out of bondage empty-handed. The British and Foreign Bible Society resolved to give a copy of the New Testament and of the Book of Psalms, in large print and well bound, to every emancipated slave . . ."

¹⁷⁵ Shepherd, Dynamics 15.

¹⁷⁶ Clarke, Memorials 223-24.

while the planters got a gift of £20,000,000 and guaranteed labour from the enslaved for six years.¹⁷⁷ As a result of the Act of Emancipation, the physical needs of the planters were catered to while for the newly emancipated only their narrowly defined spiritual needs were addressed.

In addition, Mr. Walcott at the Commission of Enquiry asked David East, president of Calabar: “Did you not in a sermon approve of the Governor’s acts?” He said he did not and only supported “the actual suppression of the outbreak at Morant Bay” and he produced the words of his sermon to confirm this point:

It appears to have been a rebellion against lawfully constituted authority . . . Happily for our families, homes, our churches - happily for the cause of civilization, and for the cause of God in the land - through the vigour and promptitude of our Governor and his executive the rebellion has been crushed. Law and order has triumphed, and the infatuated rebels, with their diabolical leaders, are reaping the awful retribution with which such wickedness is sure to be overtaken. In such times it is for us to betake ourselves to our Bibles, and see what the Bible teaches in relation to sovereigns and their subjects, to governors and magistrates, and those whom they have appointed.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 72-73. Even the English Baptists got compensated £11, 705 for damages to the chapels in the aftermath of the 1831 Baptist War.

¹⁷⁸ JRC Vol. 5 784. Mr. Walcott’s first name was not given.

East in supporting the status quo exaggerated the situation claiming that “all magistrates” were killed. He was against the actions of the Native Baptists calling them “diabolical leaders” while praising Governor Eyre. He believed that Eyre was fighting on the side of civilization and God and found support for his position in the Bible by alluding to Romans 13: 1-3 which states: “Let every soul be subject unto higher powers . . . whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” The Bible was being interpreted to support the rulers.

As part of the development of the enslaved, they were consistently taught by the missionaries to be obedient to those in authority. John Dyer recommended to the English Baptist missionaries, the instructions given by the apostles to those who were enslaved.¹⁷⁹ In his recommendation, he used passages which all highlighted the importance of obedience, namely, Ephesians 6: 5-8, which stated, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters . . .” and Colossians 3: 22 - 25, which declared, “Servants, obey in all things your masters . . .” and 1 Peter 2: 18 -25 which read, “Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the gentle, but also to the forward . . .” In addition, the English Baptists of Jamaica claimed that they were the most loyal subjects to Her Majesty.¹⁸⁰ The missionaries, in proudly declaring their non-involvement in the “riot of Morant Bay,” declared that the districts, “where Baptist Missionaries labour, were noted for their quietness and order, and the loyalty of the population.”¹⁸¹ The Africans

¹⁷⁹ Underhill, West Indies 205.

¹⁸⁰ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 56.

¹⁸¹ “A Theory of Missionary Effort,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 787.

were inculcated with the need to be loyal to the British Crown and to behave in an orderly fashion.

In 1865, David East, reflecting on the mission, said, “Christian missionaries did not come to Jamaica to abolish slavery, or to change the political institutions of the country . . . they came that they might shed light on the benighted soul . . .”¹⁸² As loyal subjects, they did not plan to disturb the colonial political order.

This thinking was not confined to English Baptists. The Anglican leadership decided to take a side on the issue and they aligned themselves to the ruler, believing that Eyre’s action displayed “promptness, decision, and energy” and was “under God’s blessings.”¹⁸³ God’s blessings imply God’s guidance, approval and benediction. Free churchman Goldwin Smith in commenting on the Native Baptist War of 1865 in 1866, claimed “no voice of mercy or pity was heard from the established clergy of Jamaica. Nothing came from them but praises of those who had been the authors of these sanguinary executions.”¹⁸⁴ The missionaries in Jamaica were in one accord in being obedient to the governing authorities.

The missionaries also perceived evangelism as a tool of the British Empire. Phillippo said that because of the Empire with its “foreign possessions spread

¹⁸² Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 10-11.

¹⁸³ JRC Vol. 4 484.

¹⁸⁴ “Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1867: 50.

over the whole earth,” British Christians had an unparalleled means of facilitating the spread of the gospel.¹⁸⁵ He added that the dissemination of the gospel would preserve the great Empire:

If England would preserve her greatness – if she would be still great, and powerful, and noble – she must not be satisfied with possessing the light of Christianity, but she must give it forth to all the nations of the earth . . .

The religion of the Bible is England’s shield, and the God of the Bible must be England’s glory.¹⁸⁶

One of the motives for missionary work was the maintenance of dominance of the British Empire. Furthermore, in 1899, on the centenary celebration of Church Missionary Society, the preface recalled:

The expansion of England, the stages of development from the little kingdom of Alfred to the Empire within whose bounds nearly a third of the human race own their allegiance to Queen Victoria, has for us all an absorbing interest. Little less marvelous, even more absorbing, is the record of the steps by which God has led us on our way.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 310.

¹⁸⁶ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 312.

¹⁸⁷ Eugene Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, its Men and its Work (Vol. I London, 1899) v. In addition, the Empire was a source of great national pride boasting an area of 14,000,000 square miles, which made it the largest in the history of the world: Godfrey Lagden, The Native Races of the Empire (London: Collins, 1924) xiii.

Credit for the development of the Empire was given to God. Burchell Taylor, a leading Caribbean hermeneutical scholar, claimed that a feature of Empires was that the peoples felt that they were in a particular position because they were “deserving, just and right” and it was achieved because of “divine favour granted for moral superiority and religious fidelity” and was therefore not only an indication of military might but “an indication of national, racial and cultural superiority.”¹⁸⁸ That was the thinking of the missionary church.

It was the English Baptists who were the pioneers in using hymns in congregational worship in late seventeenth century England.¹⁸⁹ Bleby in describing a typical missionary worship service with its hymn singing said, “The hymn of praise is sung; and devout and hearty are the responses of the congregation, while one of the missionaries reads the abridgment of the admirable liturgical service of the Church of England.”¹⁹⁰ Hymn singing was a central part of the worship and it was done in the context of the liturgy of the Church of England.

If the collection of hymns by English Baptist missionary, George E. Henderson for his church was indicative of the English mission then hymns of praise and

¹⁸⁸ Burchell Taylor, “Stepping out of the Shadow of Empire” 2 SWOPE Lecture March 2004 in the University of Puget, USA.

¹⁸⁹ John Andrews, “Hymns and Church Music,” A Lion Handbook: The History of Christianity ed., Tim Dowley (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990) 458 and Hugh Martin, “The Baptist Contribution to Early English Hymnody,” Baptist Quarterly XIX (1962): 195.

¹⁹⁰ Bleby, Scenes 29.

adoration were the dominant type of hymns sung by the English Baptists. Of the 18 selected hymns by composers, such as Charles Wesley, Mrs. Knowles, James Montgomery, eleven had in their first line the idea of praise, such as “Let songs of praise arise,” “Hallelujah, praise the Lord!” “Glad praises, glad praises to God let us sing,” “Rejoice! The Lord is King” etc. ¹⁹¹

There were hymns with other themes. Henry Bleby in the chapter entitled “Prayer Answered” quoted William Cowper’s hymn,

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

Bleby in giving the rationale for quoting this hymn said, “So wrote Cowper, in that beautiful hymn, in which the inscrutable wisdom of Jehovah, working out the loving designs of His Providence, is described in strains that have carried with them abundant consolation and hope to many a desponding spirit.” In subsequent pages, Bleby outlined this “design” by claiming that the missionary enterprise started with Paul, the apostle then Martin Luther to John Wesley then to wealthy slaveholder, Mr. Gilbert. Gilbert took the gospel to the enslaved in Antigua and was named “Negro parson” for “teaching religion to the Negroes.” ¹⁹² Bleby displayed in his hymn selection an interpretation that provided a

¹⁹¹ Hymns for the Jubilee, Brown’s Town Baptist Church, (1830-1880.) ([Brown’s Town?] 1880) 5-11 in Private Archives Index in Jamaica Archives File 4/59/11.

¹⁹² Bleby, Romance 1-9.

justification for slavery claiming that through slavery, the Africans were exposed to Christianity in the West Indies. However, Bleby's use of Cowper's hymn was a re-interpretation because Cowper was anti-slavery based on his poetic expressions. The first stanza from Cowper's poem "Negro's Complaint" said:

Forced from home and all its pleasures
 Afric's coast I left forlorn,
 To increase a stranger's treasures
 O'er the raging billows borne.
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold;
 But, though slave they have enrolled me,
 Minds are never to be sold. ¹⁹³

In addition, there was no record that Cowper believed that slavery could be justified because it led to the broadening of the gospel to include the enslaved. Phillippo on the occasion of the August 1, 1834 said, that one of the hymns sung was "one which, as missionaries, had we ever given out before, would have subjected us to the charge of treason." And it was sung in a loud chorus, the vast assembly simultaneously rising up on the repetition of the two first lines:-

¹⁹³ William Cowper, The Negro's Complaint: A Poem to which is added, Pity for Poor Africans (London, 1826) 10-11 in Poetry in British Library.

Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
 The gladly solemn sound!
 Let all the nations know
 To earth's remotest bound,
 The Year of jubilee is come;
 Return, ye ransom'd sinners, home. ¹⁹⁴

By this admission, the missionaries previously avoided hymns that could be misconstrued as offensive and attacking the status quo or giving the enslaved the wrong idea. Hymns selected re-enforced obedience to masters, industry in the fields and avoidance of personal sins. It was not clear what was so incriminating in the hymn that Phillippo and others were reluctant to use it until the whole hymn by Charles Wesley was examined in another publication. Apparently the offending line in “Blow ye the trumpet, blow” was:

Ye slaves of sin and hell
 Your liberty receive.¹⁹⁵

Wesley was not addressing the issue of physical slavery but the missionaries out of an abundance of caution would not sing a hymn that had the word “slaves” and “liberty” in the same stanza even though the reference was to spiritual

¹⁹⁴ Underhill, Life 123. See also Hymns for the Jubilee, Brown's Town Baptist Church 8.

¹⁹⁵ Hymns for the Jubilee, Brown's Town Baptist Church 8.

emancipation. The missionaries were mentally enslaved and feared upsetting the rulers and the status quo.

Before the strike by the enslaved in December 1831, Knibb in addressing his congregation on the matter of a protest for wages and freedom said “I entreat you not to believe it, but to go to work as formerly; if you have any love for Jesus Christ, to religion, to our friends in England, do not be led away. God commands you to be obedient, and, if you do not do as he commands you, he will not do you any good.”¹⁹⁶ Knibb also testified before a parliamentary committee in July 1832 that he has never preached from the text “the truth shall make you free.”¹⁹⁷

However, after the harsh reprisals against the English Baptists, Knibb was a changed man. At a January 1833 meeting at Newcastle, Knibb moved away from the official position of non-interference saying “In the word of God it is written, the oppressed shall go free” and nearing the end of the speech he drew upon the Exodus motif when he proclaimed “let my people go free, that they may worship the Lord their God” [Exod. 5: 1] and he called upon the words of the Old Testament prophet Micah and said “we are commanded to do justly, to love mercy and set the oppressed free.”¹⁹⁸ Knibb grounded his opposition to slavery in the Bible.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas F. Abbott, A Narrative of Certain Events Connected With the Late Disturbances in Jamaica, and the Charges Preferred Against the Baptist Missionaries in that Island (London, 1832) 2.

¹⁹⁷ Hinton, Memoir 176-77.

¹⁹⁸ Losh 9, 13, 20-24

Knibb convinced the Committee at the Spa Fields chapel held on 21 June 1832 that “the questions of colonial slavery and of missions are inextricably connected.” He elaborated:

We should still have maintained the silence that had been imposed upon us as to civil and political affairs, however enormous, and cruel, and revolting the evils we were compelled to witness, had they not at last deprived us of the privilege of telling the poor, ill-used, and oppressed slave that he would, if a believer in the gospel, spend an eternity of happiness in heaven. But this they have done and we can be silent no longer.¹⁹⁹

He was no longer willing to separate heaven from earth. Knibb wanted God’s will to be done on earth as in heaven.

Subsequent to the 1834 Act of Emancipation, there was a literal interpretation of Psalm 68:31, “Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand”.²⁰⁰ In 1839, at Eagle Street, Knibb in interpreting that Psalm proclaimed that to spread the gospel to Africa was a way of compensating for all the wrongs that had been heaped on Africa.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Hinton, Memoir 140-47. Slavery was a great impediment to the propagation of the gospel: Missionary Herald Aug. 1832: 59 and Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 67.

²⁰⁰ Freedom in Jamaica; Or, the First of August, 1838 (London, 1838) 12.

²⁰¹ Russell, Understandings 106-7 and Foundations 46. The Baptists were not the only ones who felt a sense of mission to Africa. In 1846, the Presbyterians sent persons to Calabar, Nigeria: Alexander Robb, The Gospel to the Africans: A Narrative of the life and labours of the Rev.

Furthermore, there was the feeling that slavery was Providence's way of taking Africans out of barbarism.²⁰² Psalm 68: 31 was a pivotal text, which showed that God cared for the descendants of Ethiopia and was used as another justification for a missionary mandate to Africa.²⁰³ Africa plays a central role in God's plan of redemption. Knibb's zeal for Africa was also demonstrated in his naming his weekly newspaper *Baptist Herald and Friend of Africa*.

There was an Anglican clergyman who had a different attitude than the traditional missionaries. Henry Clarke of Grange Hill, Westmoreland, had a congregation, which consisted principally of "black people."²⁰⁴ Clarke lamented the fact that not one immigrant was invited to appear before the committee investigating the abuse of Indians. He further questioned the credibility of the committee which was comprised of "the criminals" who "formed the judge and jury to try their own case." He also disagreed with the report, which blamed the Indians' indolence for their condition.²⁰⁵ Clarke was willing to confront evil. Knibb and Clarke were two aberrations, and were not consistent with the traditional missionary hermeneutics. Russell claimed that the missionary

William Jameson in Jamaica and Old Calabar (London, 1862) 227-38. Other Presbyterians who went to Africa included Anderson, Goldie and Robb: Clarke, Memorials 229.

²⁰² Falmouth Post 8 Jan. 1840: 5.

²⁰³ Moister title page.

²⁰⁴ JRC Vol. 5 1022. In 1865, Clarke had completed 13 years as a pastor: JRC Vol. 5 1022. Walvin did an extensive biography on Henry Clarke: James Walvin, The Life and Times of Henry Clarke of Jamaica, 1828-1907 (Essex: Cass, 1994).

²⁰⁵ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 135.

hermeneutic influenced the enslaved (see page 74 above) but it was unlikely that Knibb and Clarke impacted the Native Baptists because of the distance. Knibb and Clarke were active in Western Jamaica whereas the Native Baptists were strongest in Eastern Jamaica and had no station in Western Jamaica.

Africans in the English Baptist Mission

Thomas Knibb, in the context of being disappointed with the brand of Christianity practised and preached by the enslaved, reported that one of the persons at the place where Coultart preached, prayed thus, “Lord div me sumting more no take from me, and me will set up tree plantane sinkers for a mark!” and Knibb interpreted the prayer disdainfully to be “as an *Ebenezer*, I suppose” ²⁰⁶ This person of African origin was claiming that if God blessed him with material goods he promised to plant three plantain suckers as a memorial to God’s goodness and provisions. Knibb was correct in perceiving images of Ebenezer as recording in 1 Sam. 7:12, “then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the place Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” God had delivered the children of Israel from their enemies, the Philistines, by destroying them and so the children of Israel built a memorial in honour of God’s mighty deed. The African was similarly grateful for God’s help and showed it in a tangible form. This showed that the African saw God and prayer in concrete terms and not speculative ones. In addition, there was no division

²⁰⁶ Clark, Dendy and Phillippo 190.

between the secular (plantain suckers) and the spiritual (prayers). Furthermore, the derision shown by Knibb toward the prayer demonstrated that the Africans prayed differently from what was expected of them by the missionaries.

A difference was also noticed in the prayers of the Africans within Benjamin Millard's large English Baptist Church in St. Ann's Bay. They treated written prayers with disdain claiming, "Scriptures did not say from the beginning, 'use Prayer Book' " and that "Forms of prayer are not 'feeling' prayer." For them, "prayer must come from the heart."²⁰⁷ Not only the content of the prayers were different but also the way the praying was executed.

It appeared that the native ministers within the English Baptist churches were at variance with missionary thinking. While Samuel Oughton, English Baptist missionary, in a letter to the *Jamaica Guardian* dated 25 February 1865, disagreed with the contents of Underhill's letter²⁰⁸ and while many missionaries did not attend the meetings and the few who attended, such as Phillippo, did not participate at the Spanish Town meeting on 16 May 1865,²⁰⁹ the native ministers attended in large numbers. For example, Rev. J. H. Crole said at the Underhill meeting in Kingston on 3 May 1865, "The Bible says we are not to obey an immoral Government, therefore we are not bound to obey the Government of this

²⁰⁷ Underhill, *West Indies* 320-22. In 1865, the St Ann's Bay Church had 1,800 members "Return of Chapels and Stations: Jamaica Baptist Union, for the Year ending 1865": *Blue Book, For the Island of Jamaica, For the Year 1865* T11 in UWI Library.

²⁰⁸ Hamilton Hume, *The Life of Edward John Eyre* (London, 1867) 144-47.

²⁰⁹ Underhill, *Life* 327.

country, for it is immoral, and no man should make you do it” and added “you are to obey God rather than man.” ²¹⁰ The quotation about “you are to obey God rather than man” is from Acts 5: 29 and relates a story about the apostles who defied the orders of the Jewish High Priest and his Sanhedrin Council that they should not preach about Jesus. The apostles felt that they had an obligation to defy the ecclesiastical powers and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Crole found solace in that verse and passage as he was defiant in his opposition to oppression and advocated civil disobedience to a government that had lost its moral authority to govern.

At the same meeting Edwin Palmer said, “the merchants in Kingston would employ none but white or colored men in their stores which was a disgrace and a shame.” He also added that the Flogging Bill was “ ‘intended only for the black man’ ” ²¹¹ and also said, “The Government only employ white and coloured men in public offices, and the black man is neglected.” ²¹² The Native pastors within the English Baptist controlled churches were strident in criticizing racism in the society.

James Service was one of the twenty native pastors within the English Baptist mission who were accused of complicity with a plot to rebel. ²¹³ The ruling class

²¹⁰ JRC Vol. 4 232.

²¹¹ JRC Vol. 4 230. Samuel Clarke, Native Baptist leader, made the same observation.

²¹² JRC Vol. 4 232.

²¹³ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 61.

claimed that Edwin Palmer, Rev. J. H. Crole, H. B. Harris, all native pastors within the English Baptist mission were conspirators in the 1865 Native Baptist War.²¹⁴ The authorities did not perceive much difference between the activities of the Native Baptists and those native ministers within the English Baptist tradition.

Mrs. Palmer, wife of Edwin Palmer, quoted approvingly extracts from native ministers. Her exercise was editorial, so her selections of extracts reflected her priorities, prejudices, thinking and orientation. She quoted some brothers who were thankful for financial help consequent on the distress following the 1865 Native Baptist War. Her expressions signified that the brothers' faith showed a maturity, which handled sufferings and rationalized the purpose of God in suffering. Though they were "troubled on every side" they would not wilt. They confidently declared, "The Lord is still good still, and is faithful to His promise, that He will never leave nor forsake them who put their trust in him. I trust moreover that all things both pleasant and painful shall work together for good, 'as those who love God' . . . [God was] 'a very present help in time of trouble.' "²¹⁵ They were quoting passages from the Bible - Romans 8:28 (those who love God), Joshua 1: 5 (will never leave), 2 Corinthians 4:8, 7:5 (troubled on every side) and Psalm 46: 1 (help in time of trouble). They trusted the presence, promises and power of God as they passed through difficult times. They did not curse God

²¹⁴ "Editorial Topics: The Rebellion," Falmouth Post 31 Oct. 1865: 1.

²¹⁵ "Jamaica," Baptist Magazine Feb. 1866: 123.

because of their troubles but increased their faith in the deliverer. They did not engage in a blame game or self-pity but expectantly believed that God would soon liberate them from their oppression. In addition, they did not believe in revenge, even for the “abundance of abuse” heaped upon them. They left vengeance to God believing that he would make it “much worse for them [the oppressors] than us.” They believed that the abuse would recoil and hit the authors more than the objects of the abuse. The faith of the native ministers as outlined was reflective of the faith of Mrs. Palmer. She was a partner in ministry.

It was possible that some of the interpretations by persons of African origin within the English Baptist Church were the foundations on which the Native Baptists built.

Summary

The Native Baptists’ strong belief in an omnipotent Being, the importance of community, the Africans being the chosen race, the holistic concept of the human being and tolerance of other religious faiths could have been influenced by the African religions brought to Jamaica. However, whereas within the African religion there was no creed or anything written, the Native Baptists were a religion of the book, namely the Bible and the hymnbook.

It also appeared that George Liele and the Original Baptists influenced the Native Baptists. This influence would have occurred through Liele’s converts, such as,

Killick, who was a leader within the JNBMS. One also noticed that the Native Baptists, like the Original Baptists, had a high regard for the Bible, protested societal norms and had a faith that made ethical demands.

Since George William Gordon played a pivotal role in the Native Baptist Communion and since Gordon was baptized by Phillippo and commissioned to establish independent causes and co-operated with the English Baptists, it would appear that those Native Baptists were also influenced by the English Baptists. And since the JNBMS was largely a breakaway from English Baptists, the English Baptists must have influenced the JNBMS. Both Native Baptist groups probably took their fondness for the Bible and hymns from the English Baptists.

There was evidence that Sam Sharpe was seen as a martyr in 1864 and his exploits were rehearsed in churches. It is, therefore, highly probable that Bogle and Gordon would have been aware of Sharpe and probably were influenced by his thoughts and actions.

The Native Baptists were the successors to the Africans who had their own interpretation of Scriptures. They also learnt from the Africans within the English Baptist mission. They formed an organization in reaction to European Christianity. They re-interpreted European symbols, teachings, liturgy and history. They also reacted to the racist tendencies, dualism and unquestioned obedience to the authorities demonstrated by the European missions. In addition, they were African conscious, not in the sense of having African religious

beliefs and practices but rather with their emphasis on community, their own forms of worship, use of native language and commitment to proclaim the gospel to their fellow countrymen in Jamaica and Africa. They had influences from different religious expressions to form something uniquely Jamaican with the name of “Native Baptist” and their own particular hermeneutical approach.

CHAPTER SIX: THEMES AND HERMENEUTIC OF THE NATIVE BAPTISTS

This chapter, analyses the Native Baptists' preaching, letters, debates, prayers, hymns and song selections and their faith-practice, and seeks to identify and outline the main themes that seemed to have recurred and were prominent in their thought and action. These themes resulted from or were influenced by the hermeneutical approach or method they employed in relation to the Scriptures and Scripture-related sources. By this, it is anticipated that it will become clear how and what the Native Baptists leaders and their followers came to believe about God and themselves, as well as how they were further led to revolutionary thinking, expression and action in their quest for full freedom and justice.

The Native Baptists had their own hermeneutical approach whereby they read, understood and applied the Bible and other sacred literature, particularly hymns, from a standpoint that was different from those of the preachers and teachers within the missionary churches. Raboteau said that the Negro Spirituals were veiled commentary and criticism of society by the enslaved.¹ And the hymn selections of the Native Baptists were used in a similar way.

¹ Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 249-51. James Cone, pioneer of Black theology, surveyed many scholars' theories about Negro Spirituals and concluded that one of the main themes of the Negro Spirituals was that God was Liberator. Cone also said that as liberator, God sanctioned resistance, "singin wid a sword in ma hand": James H. Cone, The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation (New York: Orbis, 1972) 39. Negro Spirituals were a means of enduring and overcoming suffering.

An examination of the hermeneutical approach of the Native Baptists reveals that they unearthed two themes that they found to have been of great importance and relevance to their situation. These themes, equality and justice, made a great difference to their self-understanding and their response to the realities of their situation.

Equality

Equality was not a generally accepted concept among Europeans as they related to non-Europeans. And persons of African ancestry were not considered or treated as the equal of the Europeans or even those of mixed race. They were seen as inferior beings. They were also thought to be of inferior character, intellect and culture. Because of their perceived inferiority, it gave opportunity to the ruling class to treat them with impunity and without any moral embarrassment. According to the ruling establishment, the inferior status of those of African origin does not make them deserving of any better treatment. They were not seen as equals in the church or before the law or based on similar human needs. However, the Native Baptists had a different perspective. The theme of equality, as reflected in the biblical understanding of the Native Baptists, challenges the fundamental bases on which they and others like them were perceived by the privileged class of the society. The observed restraint of the Native Baptists in terms of their reaction and response to the treatment meted out to them would not be uninfluenced by their concept of the equality of persons. The concept of equality was deeply ingrained in their spiritual

consciousness. They would, therefore, not readily respond with acts of brutality that would dehumanize perpetrators of evil. Their sense of the common humanity shared with the oppressors was obviously a source of moral restraint in this regard. Paradoxically, the inequality of the status of the Native Baptists as human beings, made the dominant class fear that if given any respite from oppression, those of African descent would act with inhumane brutality in reprisal.

Equality was a liberating factor. It made those who were disadvantaged refuse to accept their status as inferior. It restrained them from violating the humanity of others, even their oppressors. This concept of equality was demonstrated by Sam Sharpe who said that based on the Bible, the Europeans had no more right to hold persons of African origin in slavery, than the Africans had to enslave the Europeans (see page 251 above). It was an option that would have freed the privileged class from their inhumane behaviour if they would embrace it. What were the features of equality as it was perceived and embraced by the Native Baptists? They were equality in the sight of God, equality in law and equality of human needs.

Equality in the Eyes of God

For the Native Baptists all human beings were created in the image of God. This led them to believe that all were created with equal capacity to be communicated with by God, to respond to God and to accept responsibility from God to do his

work. The acknowledgement that they were made in the image of God affirmed the dignity of their humanity. Duff and Lyon criticized the BMS saying: “we conceive the opposition shown to us by your missionaries is from prejudice . . . derived from slavery.”² The Native Baptists felt that they were not being treated as equals by the English Baptist missionaries (see pages 134-37 above). They resisted the missionary thinking and the rulers who claimed that people of African origin were inferior. They believed that this equality was denied in the institution of slavery. And twenty-seven years after emancipation, an editorial in the *Falmouth Post*, reflecting Native Baptist thinking, grounded freedom in God. It said, “the holding of hundreds of thousands of human beings in bondage, was contrary to the divine will of Him, who ‘made man after his own image.’ ”³ This editorial grounded belief in the equality of human beings on the Creation Story found in the Bible which stated, “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’ ” (Gen. 1: 26). This position from a newspaper that normally supported the ruling class reflected the new reality whereby slavery was, in 1865, universally condemned. Therefore, the Bible was being interpreted to support the claim that all have equal right to freedom but this enlightened position was imitating a position previously articulated by the Native Baptists.

JNBMS pastor, William Legge of Rest Station, Clarendon also affirmed belief in the equality of all human beings, when he used a hymn that made reference to

² John Duff and George Lyon to John Dyer, Secretary BMS, 1/4/1837 in BMS Archives, Angus Library, Regent’s Park.

³ “Editorial Topics: The Anniversary of Freedom,” *Falmouth Post* 1 Aug. 1865: 1.

God's blessing pouring, not only on them but "on all mankind" ⁴ and Lyon understood the same when he quoted a hymn which stated that all, without distinction, needed to glorify God whether they be Indian tribes, sons of Africa or Europeans and wherever they were located, "From East to West, from North to South." He also anticipated the day " 'when there shall be but one fold, under one shepherd.' " ⁵ All races were equal in the sight of God. Silva who had stations in St. Mary's expressed, in the hymn chosen, a similar sentiment:

Till ev'ry color- ev'ry clime,
 Shall in his worship meet
 And bring their prayers, their praise, their all,
 An offering at his feet. ⁶

This hymn reflected equality at the feet of God irrespective of colour or location. Blackwell also expressed a comparable outlook through his hymn selection, which spoke about "all the chosen race" singing redeeming grace. ⁷ The European Christians thought they were the chosen race (see page 260 above) but the Native Baptists disputed that thinking through the hymns they quoted. These hymns heralded all as chosen by God to receive his favour and, therefore, reaffirmed the

⁴ First Annual Report 12.

⁵ First Annual Report 11. See also Legge of Rest Station, who affirmed belief in the equality of all human beings, when he used a hymn that made reference to God's blessing pouring "on all mankind": First Annual Report 12.

⁶ First Annual Report 19.

⁷ First Annual Report 25.

equality of all human beings. This affirmed also that all Christian believers were chosen and therefore all were equal in God's eyes.

Gordon demonstrated his belief in equality in the eyes of God when he declared in the House of Assembly “ ‘the voice of the people is the voice of God.’ ”⁸

Gordon's use of this well - known phrase from Latin idiom, *vox populi, vox Dei*, showed that he was elevating the cries and concerns of the ordinary people as a statement from God. The underlying suggestion was that the people have worth and dignity and their issues were of equal merit with those of the dominant class. The people were God's children and could speak on behalf of God.

Gordon did not believe that one class of persons was better than another. On the day of the arrival of Prince Alfred of England, many churches cancelled their usual prayer meetings but Gordon's Tabernacle was not closed.⁹ This action was based on the belief that at the feet of God all were equal and he and his members believed that their ministry was just as important as that of a visit of a royalty.

In addition to this, Bogle, Gordon, Warren, and other Native Baptists became members of the Anti-Slavery Society, which had its headquarters in London.¹⁰

⁸ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 (Spanish Town, 1865) 37.

⁹ Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, late of Jamaica (London, 1867) 72.

¹⁰ JRC Vol. 5 1067-68 and From Our Special correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Apr. 1866: 9

The identification with the Anti-Slavery movement was affirming their position of universal equality and that none should be enslaved. This commitment to equality led them to have messages from the Anti-Slavery Society read in Bogle's chapel ¹¹ and copies of the anti-slavery *Watchman* newspaper sold there. ¹² Moreover, English newspapers, which were favourable to the cause of equality, were "regularly reproduced here and are eagerly looked for. In some cases they were read and commented on in native chapels." ¹³ Gordon, Bogle and others were part of the worldwide movement against slavery, which was still being practised in Puerto Rico, Cuba, USA and Brazil.

Gordon's belief in equality was also based on there being one God for Christians and Jews. In encouraging the House of Assembly, comprising a significant number of Jews, ¹⁴ to censure Edward Eyre, Gordon said, "Whatever the creed, we do acknowledge one Father. I ask every class in this house, the Jew as well as the Gentile . . ." ¹⁵

¹¹ M. S. 15 5-6 in National Library of Jamaica and Clinton Hutton, "Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65," diss., UWI, 1992, 173.

¹² *JRC* Vol. 4 36. Also Hutton, *Colour* 173.

¹³ From Our Special Correspondent, "The Outbreak in Jamaica," [*London*] *Times* 30 Jan. 1866: 9.

¹⁴ In 1853, 9 of the 47 members of the Assembly were Jewish and by 1866 it was 13: Swithin Wilmot, "Political developments in Jamaica in the Post-Emancipation Period 1838-1854," diss., Oxford U, 1977, 272. See also Carol Holzberg, *Minorities and Power in a Black Society: The Jewish Community of Jamaica* (Lanham, Maryland: North-South Publishing, 1987) 28.

¹⁵ *Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution* Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 24.

In addition to thinking that in the eyes of God all were equal, the Native Baptists held the view that all Christians were equal and all Christian denominations were of equal validity. Therefore, it was not surprising that Gordon was chairman of missionary meetings of other denominations.¹⁶ Fletcher noticed this feature about Gordon and said, “Mr. Gordon’s Christian sentiments were very broad and catholic. In a religious sense he was cosmopolitan.”¹⁷ This universal outlook was discernible based on Bogle’s ordination certificate of 5 March 1865, which stated that he was ordained “to the office of deacon in Christ’s church.”¹⁸ The ministry of the Native Baptists was not confined to Native Baptists or Baptists but to the worldwide church based on the fact that all needed salvation equally.

This attitude was also detected in prayers. John Davis said, “We pray that grace, mercy, and peace may be abundantly enjoyed by us, and by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and that every Christian society may flourish in knowledge, love, and holiness.”¹⁹ Davis and his congregants had an ecumenical vision that all Christians, who truly love Jesus, would prosper in displaying

¹⁶ Fletcher 41. See also “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865:9; Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 320-21 and A. G. Hogg, “Rev. A. G. Hogg’s Letter,” Jamaican Historical Society 11 (2000): 139.

¹⁷ Fletcher 53. See also Hutton who described Gordon’s “non-sectarian, non-denominational, non-partisan/open-minded view of Christianity”: Hutton, Colour 267. Hutton apparently used the term “non-sectarian” to mean non divisive. However, the use of the word “Sectarian” by the ruling class was usually derogatory, as Phillippo said, “The very term ‘sectarian’ served as a convenient synonyme [sic] for ignorance and persecution”: James M. Phillippo, Jamaica: Its Past and Present State (1843; Westport: Negro Universities P, 1970) 130. Sectarian was usually a term applied by Anglicans to non-Anglicans: George Bridges, The Annals of Jamaica Vol. II (1827; London: Cass, 1968) 297, 300-01.

¹⁸ JRC Vol. 5 871, 1150 and JRC Vol. 4 30.

¹⁹ First Annual Report 12.

virtues. They also believed that they should extend “a spirit of charity to similar institutions” which “beareth all things and hopeth all things.”²⁰ This quotation was a reference to 1 Cor. 13: 7 which speaks of God’s love, that it “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” The Native Baptists extended a hand of partnership to all who displayed God’s love.

More specifically, the Native Baptists at Stony Gut attended church services held by English Baptists. After the 1865 uprising, Teall, freely connected with both Native Baptist groups as he visited Killick’s Chapel and had a meeting “at the corner of Paul Bogle’s burnt chapel” which was attended by the widows of Paul Bogle and Moses Bogle, a “poor woman Livingston” and a man named Clarke.²¹ Teall also preached “in a dilapidated building once occupied by a native preacher.”²² This building at Church Corner, St Thomas was “the large dilapidated chapel of Mr. Killick.”²³ The Native Baptists felt a common identity with the English Baptists because they were serving one God. All races were equal in the sight of God.

Another crucial concept in Native Baptist spirituality was “family”. Therefore, at a service, Teall quoted a man named Clarke as saying, “Fambly! This is a happy

²⁰ First Annual Report 3.

²¹ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay: A Hearty Welcome,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662.

²² “Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1867: 816.

²³ “A Visit to Morant Bay: By the Rev. J. M. Phillippo and the Rev. T. Lea,” Baptist Magazine July 1866: 453.

day! We were without hope but God is good.”²⁴ This account reflected the closeness, brotherhood, equality and oneness Native Baptists embraced. They were a people of hope in spite of sufferings, because they expected a brighter tomorrow as they bonded together as a family - both Native Baptists and English Baptists.

Equality before the Law

The Native Baptists believed that they should be seen as equal before the law. They believed that everybody has an equal right to a fair treatment before the law. Having been subjected to discrimination by the law courts, they were exerting their right to be heard in the courthouses as all others. Gordon felt that freedom was a right, which was under threat and he proclaimed his entitlement to be treated equally by law.²⁵

Samuel Clarke, Native Baptist leader, also agitated for equal treatment under the law and aired his grievances at the Underhill Meetings. Underhill Meetings, as they were called, were a consequent of a complaint about “the continually increasing distress of the coloured people” written by Edward Underhill of the

²⁴ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay: A Hearty Welcome,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662.

²⁵ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd day of February, 1864 Vol. IX (Spanish Town, 1865) 143.

BMS to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Right Hon. Edward Cardwell.²⁶ Eyre invited custodes, judges, clergymen and others to give opinions to this Underhill Circular.²⁷ This led to the holding of meetings to discuss Underhill's complaint. Meetings were held on 3 May 1865 in Kingston²⁸ and one in Spanish Town on 16 May 1865²⁹ and in Morant Bay on 12 August 1865.³⁰ At these meetings grievances were aired³¹ and the statements of the Underhill Letter were "endorsed"³² Clarke, at the Underhill Meeting in Kingston, asked, "Isn't it time for the Negro to throw off his yoke and seek liberty?" He felt the Negroes were treated "no better than a beast" and charged also that the flogging bill was "only intended for the black man not for the white or colored man" and "the magistrates will act unjustly and send up a poor Negro for stealing a piece of cane to be flogged." He also bemoaned that "taxes were only made for the black man and not for the white, there was one law for the black man and one for the white man, and they never receive any benefits from the Government."³³ He felt that all persons should be treated fairly under the law.

²⁶ Hamilton Hume, The Life of Edward John Eyre (London, 1867) 132.

²⁷ Hume 144-47. Underhill, Life 326

²⁸ JRC Vol. 4 230.

²⁹ Underhill, Life 327.

³⁰ JRC Vol. 4. 529-30.

³¹ JRC Vol. 4 230, 232. Samuel Oughton, English Baptist missionary, disagreed with the contents of Underhill's letter, so too did William Rowe, the Anglican Bishop of Kingston: Hume 144-47.

³² Underhill, Life 327

³³ JRC Vol. 4 230.

Equality in fundamental needs

The Native Baptists also felt that all, irrespective of race, had the same human desire for salvation. Silva in his report on Pleasant Hill and Present Hill, St. Mary's said that "while compassion is felt for their friends and neighbours here, an equally powerful influence will be directed to the salvation of the poor, perishing, untutored Africa, to whom, according to the flesh, most of them allied." ³⁴ He felt a mandate to extend the Kingdom of God to all. Lyon, and his fellow Native Baptists, felt a mission to reach all peoples:

Then shall th' untutored Indian tribes,
A dark bewilder'd race, And Africa's unhappy souls
Adore, and feel his grace. ³⁵

The Native Baptists believed that all persons had an equal need for salvation.

Also, Legge and Charles Dabney respectively moved and seconded a resolution, "That the experience of the past year affords fresh and pleasing incentives to fervent persevering prayer, that the God of all grace would crown all the operations of this and kindred institutions with the most success." ³⁶ These prayers indicated that they perceived themselves as legitimate ministers of the

³⁴ First Annual Report 19.

³⁵ First Annual Report 11.

³⁶ First Annual Report 2.

gospel and they expected that God would honour their work and thereby publicly acknowledge their worth as pastors. Lyon challenged his Society to “pray more earnestly, that the great Lord of the harvest would send forth more labourers into his vineyard, for the harvest is great, but the labourers are few” ³⁷ which is a reflection of Matt. 9: 37-38 which states, “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” The Native Baptists believed that God could use more of them to be ministers of the gospel so that those who needed salvation would obtain it.

Gordon bemoaned the spiritual apathy in Kingston whilst the Great Revival was spread throughout the country. He therefore, along with Duncan Fletcher, hosted an open- air meeting and thousands gained salvation. ³⁸ Gordon wanted all who needed salvation to hear the gospel.

Justice

Equality demands justice and justice presupposes equality. This understanding of justice was grounded in the biblical perspective with which the Native Baptists operated.

³⁷ First Annual Report 10.

³⁸ Fletcher 68-69.

Justice, or the lack thereof, was a matter of significance in the society of the 1860s. At a hearing of the Jamaica Royal Commission, Rev. Mr. D. Campbell, who became the rector in Morant Bay as of November 1865, said, “the grievance of which they chiefly complained was I think the state of the administration of justice.” ³⁹ Barrister B. T. Williams, who was more concerned with Gordon than the African majority, admitted: “the dominant race in Jamaica has not, we fear, ruled with justice.” ⁴⁰ The peasants felt they could not get justice in the local Courts on the issue of wages and on the rent they had to pay for the back lands, which they claimed belonged to them. ⁴¹ Other issues, which offended people’s sense of justice, included the Custos removing Gordon as a churchwarden of the parish on the grounds that Gordon was not a member of the Established Church. And to add insult to injury, the Vestry voted £250 for the purpose of defending the action brought by Gordon against the Custos. ⁴² The residents of St. Thomas were being called upon to provide expenses for the Custos, in an action brought against him, for attempting to dispossess them of the services of the churchwarden that they had elected. In addition, on instructions of the rector and the Custos of the parish, the Governor took from Gordon the office of magistrate. ⁴³ Furthermore, Samuel Clarke was unseated from the Vestry by the

³⁹ JRC Vol. 5 842.

⁴⁰ B. T. Williams, The Case of George William Gordon, With Preliminary Observations on the Jamaica Riot of October 11th, 1865 (London, 1866) 6.

⁴¹ JRC Vol. 5 842-43.

⁴² Williams, Case of George 9.

⁴³ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 55.

Custos because “he had gone through the Insolvent Court.” ⁴⁴ Phillippo described this same Insolvent Debtor’s Act as “very arbitrary in its requirements.” ⁴⁵ An additional grievance was the dismissal by the Governor, on the advice of the Custos, from St. Thomas-in-the-East of Mr. Jackson, Stipendiary Magistrate, who gave the apprentices a fair hearing. ⁴⁶ The people were yearning for justice and justice was an important issue to the Native Baptists.

God as God of Justice

The Native Baptists were conscious about the need for justice. There was an indication from 1862 that justice was important to Gordon and Bogle. A Bible found in Bogle’s chapel read, “ ‘Presented by George W. Gordon to Mr. Paul Bogle, with [best] wishes.’ The date is 2 November 1862, and there is a reference to Isaiah xxx. Verse 18.” ⁴⁷ One usually writes one’s favourite and most meaningful scriptural passage when making an inscription as part of a gift. This text usually reflected the mindset of both the giver and the receiver. Isa. 30:18 states, “And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.” This passage, therefore,

⁴⁴ JRC Vol. 5 1149.

⁴⁵ Phillippo, Jamaica 106.

⁴⁶ Williams, Case of George 7 and JRC Vol. 4 227.

⁴⁷ From Our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866: 9.

indicated that the God of justice was a significant preoccupation for Bogle and Gordon.

The Native Baptists maintained: God is “just,” “true,” ⁴⁸ “righteous” ⁴⁹ and summons all from south, north, east and west, to “hear his justice and the sinner’s doom,” and to receive dreadful judgment. ⁵⁰ This Judge knows all things, and “to him all mortal things are known.” ⁵¹ Bogle and his fellow Christians knew that they had to appear before the Judge. It was, therefore, very significant that Bogle had marked the Psalm, which states:

When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test. ⁵²

This Psalm 50 verse 2 confirmed that all must appear before God and receive his or her judgment. This idea runs through other marked hymns (57, 89, 136 and 140).

Another of the marked Psalms in his hymnbook that was found on him after his execution was Ps. 121, which assured victory over evil. ⁵³ The idea of judgment

⁴⁸ I. Watts, Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (London, 1718) 64. Psalm 115 ver. 1 2nd Version.

⁴⁹ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 81. Psalm 143 ver. 1.

⁵⁰ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 29. Psalm 50 ver. 1, 2, 4.

⁵¹ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 6. Psalm 11 ver. 3.

⁵² Watts, Psalms, Hymns 153. Hymn 103 ver. 1.

was essential. Native Baptists believed that the just God, who judges the world, would dispense fair judgment by rewarding the righteous and taking revenge on the ungodly.

The Psalms, especially those marked, gave expressions to the people's hope in their time of oppression even as they awaited ultimate vindication from the oppressors. Like the oppressors, they too will have their reward. So that even if the oppressed did not get release in this life as they struggled for justice they will get it from God.

Bogle also felt he was the instrument of the justice of God.⁵⁴ He believed God had chosen him so that good would triumph over evil. Bogle saw it as his mission to rescue the people from injustice. On Saturday, 7 October 1865, Bogle and his approximately twenty supporters rescued from the Police, Charles Geoghegan, a man committed to prison by Justices Walton and Bowen for disturbing the Court of Petty Sessions held at Morant Bay.⁵⁵ As Geoghegan was exiting the courthouse, a policeman shoved him out of the building. Geoghegan complained and this resulted in a commotion.⁵⁶ On Monday, in the Court of Petty Sessions, a man named Lewis Dick was tried for a trespass on Middleton Plantation,

⁵³ Gleaner 3 Nov. 1865: [1].

⁵⁴ JRC Vol. 4 535.

⁵⁵ "The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 14 Oct. 1865: 2 and "The Rebellion in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 20 Oct. 1865: 2. See also George B Clarke's testimony which confirmed the incident in the courthouse: JRC Vol. 5 125.

⁵⁶ JRC Vol. 5 125 and JRC Vol. 4 509.

adjoining Stony Gut. The people at Middleton had been for many years under the impression that the property belonged to no one, and that they had a right to it. However, W. M. Anderson, Esq. claimed that Middleton belonged to him and the Magistrates convicted Lewis Dick on his own guilty plea. Paul Bogle immediately came forward and told the man not to pay any fine, but to appeal, which he did.⁵⁷ The justice issue had to do with who had entitlement to Crown lands.

The issue of rightful ownership of land was a vexed one. Samuel Clarke defiantly told the Honourable W. P. Georges, Custos and member of St. David's Vestry, that he should "give up a piece of land to a Negro" and he supported that position at the Underhill meeting held in Kingston on 3 May 1865 emphasizing that the Custos' land was not his but "it was God's land."⁵⁸ The earth was the Lord's and it was not fair for one man to have a large estate and a Negro was in need of a plot. What also irked Clarke was that Georges "planted canes upon God's land over the graves of these poor black people."⁵⁹ This act was perceived as an affront to God and insult to the Negroes. The Native Baptists believed that the land belonged to God and each person had a right to the land. Furthermore, they had a right to cultivate Crown lands and live off the produce. They agitated for a just distribution of land.

⁵⁷ "The Rebellion in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 20 Oct. 1865: 2 and "Royal Proclamation," Colonial Standard 29 Oct. 1865: 2. George Clarke said the defendant was Lewis Miller, who was deaf: JRC Vol. 5 125. While the Commission was in session in 1866, there was a disturbance at Hartlands, about five miles from Spanish Town concern whether the Negroes had a right to the lands on which they had located themselves: Underhill, Life 348.

⁵⁸ JRC Vol. 5 1149.

⁵⁹ JRC Vol. 4 230.

Justice for all

Justice demanded that those whose rights had been violated would be vindicated and the false prophets would be destroyed. Blackwell in giving the report on the station at Bethlehem, Vere, said, “A spirit of prayer has been poured out upon us, which will we trust produce the most happy consequences. The drops are falling, and already “ ‘there is a sound of abundance of rain.’ ” They believed that there was a relationship between prayer and prosperity of Jerusalem.⁶⁰ The quotation relating to the “abundance of rain” was from 1 Kings 18:41 in which the prophet Elijah told King Ahab that prosperity was on its way because the false prophets of Baal had been defeated and killed. Bogle and his followers felt that God had delivered them. Therefore, after the protest on Wednesday 11 October 1865:

They had left for the Baptist Chapel to have a prayer meeting, and to thank God for their successes . . . one of their leaders addressed them, pointing to the favour which the Almighty had shown in delivering their enemies into their hands, and exhorting them to further acts of fanaticism as ordered to them by God for their deliverance.⁶¹

⁶⁰ First Annual Report 24.

⁶¹ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” Colonial Standard 16 Oct. 1865: 2. See also “The Baptists in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 781.

Though the editorial comment classified their actions as “fanaticism”, which was a prejudicial statement, it was the Native Baptists combining their Christian Faith with every day living.

Gordon consistently advocated resistance to oppressive governance. At the session of 8 February 1864, Gordon said, “If Eyre was [sic] permitted to continue in the colony, he would do still greater wrongs than he already committed, and he (Mr. G.) would heartily join the honorable member for Port Royal (Mr. Alberga), in any movement that would relieve the island of his Rule; but, as he had said before, discretion and time were necessary.” Gordon made that statement because he felt that David Ewart was unfairly dismissed by Eyre.⁶² Eyre had dismissed Ewart after the Privy Council examined his case and found no fault with Ewart.⁶³ Eyre was also disrespecting and undermining the authority of the Privy Council.

When at the 21 January 1864 session of the House of Assembly, Gordon wanted to describe and highlight the “oppression”, “transgression” and “illegality” of Eyre, he used Scriptural imageries and said Governor Eyre’s *modus operandi* reminded him of the time of Herod and Eyre was “a second Nero.”⁶⁴ Gordon

⁶² Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution. Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 195-96.

⁶³ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 207.

⁶⁴ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 26, 62. By the 16 February 1864 Session, the entire House of Assembly was flabbergasted by Eyre’s actions: Parliamentary Debates

compared Eyre with the oppressive King Herod who in trying to kill Jesus, “sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under . . .” (Matt. 2: 16). Nero was the most hated Roman Emperor who persecuted the early Christians most viciously and murdered his mother and wife. Gordon raising parallels between Eyre, Herod and Nero showed the depth of depravity that Eyre was perceived to have fallen. This was also a comment of significance that Christians were in a struggle with an evil ruler who, in the name of justice, must be resisted.

Gordon also claimed that Eyre illegally appointed Mr. Parry as Colonial Engineer and Architect while Mr. Fonseca, who was legally and constitutionally appointed, was removed to prison.⁶⁵ And Gordon on a censure motion against Eyre on 13 January 1864 also expressed the view that Eyre was courting “a second Maroon War.”⁶⁶ He further advocated that if the people were not heard on the matter of the wicked system of paying taxes for the Established Church from which they did not benefit, then “they will rise up and defend themselves.”⁶⁷ Gordon

of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 207.

⁶⁵ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 62.

⁶⁶ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 26.

⁶⁷ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 Vol. IX (Spanish Town, 1865) 93.

supported the use of force under special circumstances. In a speech to the House of Assembly, he said:

Unless he is speedily removed, the country will be thrown into a state of confusion, by reason of his illegal conduct. When a Governor becomes a dictator, when he becomes despotic, it is time for the people to dethrone him, and to say: 'We will not allow you any longer to rule us.' I consider the proceedings of Mr. Eyre especially dangerous to the peace of the country, and a stop should at once be put to his most dogmatic, partial and illegal doings . . . it is time for the people to exclaim –'Oh, the evil.' ⁶⁸

Gordon was advocating the use of force as a self-defence mechanism. This act of civil disobedience to remove the Governor by force was to protect and preserve the peace of the country. In the same speech Gordon gave the impression that the use of force or "open rebellion" was illegal when he said, "If an illegality is permitted in the Governor, *an illegality may be permitted on the part of the people.*" ⁶⁹ Gordon could also be claiming that the use of force against an incompetent, despotic and oppressive governor was the lesser of two evils. Gordon was convinced that the use of force was desirable in dealing with the law-breaking Eyre. Gordon said, "*If we are to be governed by such a Governor much longer, the people will have to fly to arms and become self-governing.*" ⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Hume 126.

⁶⁹ Hume 127.

⁷⁰ Hume 129.

Gordon saw the use of force as justified in order to establish a just government and for self-governing purposes. Those who have been sullied and threatened have a responsibility to challenge unjust systems so that all can experience justice.

According to reporter George Fouché, Samuel Clarke at the Kingston Underhill Meeting on 3 May 1865, similarly challenged the system and said, “the taxation was a burden; that the Negroes was [sic] trampled under foot and bitterly oppressed by a wicked government and they should not submit to such things.” He also said the Queen’s Advice or proclamation was a “Damned red lie” because those persons had not seen the petition from the people of St. Ann, therefore “if the people had not their grievances redressed there must be a fight.”⁷¹ The Queen’s Advice was purported to be the Queen’s response to the distress of the peasantry in St. Ann. This advice did not deny the existence of dire hardships but it blamed that condition on the lack of industry and lack of prudence by the peasants.⁷² In addition, to the broadside on the Queen’s Advice, Samuel Clarke on 28 September 1865 insisted on taking his seat in the Vestry at St. David’s and when the Custos told him that he could not because he had passed through the Insolvent Court he responded, “If I am not allowed to take my seat we will fight for it.”⁷³ Clarke, like Gordon, advocated civil disobedience.

⁷¹ JRC Vol. 5 1149.

⁷² Underhill, Life 329.

⁷³ JRC Vol. 5 1149.

In fact, Gordon did not rule out an insurrection. Gordon declared, “when her Majesty’s ministers appoint as our Ruler a gentleman who is not capable . . . then it is time to protest.” ⁷⁴ At the 21 January 1864 Session a Mr. Lewis mockingly stated that the natural follow-up to Gordon’s speech was insurrection. Gordon said “that will be the result. When all our laws are put at defiance, the populace will break out from discontent, and the Lieutenant-Governor will be unable to allay their fears.” ⁷⁵ Protest was necessary and legitimate when there was abuse and incompetence.

Justice for all was a demand that each person receives what is rightly due to him or her. Justice for all was the fulfillment of the claim for legitimate redress for all.

Justice as Vindication

The Native Baptists also affirmed that justice had both a present practical relevance as well as future reference, that is, vindication. Gordon in bemoaning the injustice meted out to Stipendiary Magistrate Jackson and the oppression of the peasants declared, “the wicked shall be destroyed. This is decreed.” ⁷⁶ There was a great confidence that at God’s command the wicked would be annihilated.

⁷⁴ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 Vol. IX (Spanish Town, 1865) 37.

⁷⁵ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 62.

⁷⁶ JRC Vol. 4 229.

In addition, in a letter dated 18 September 1865, Gordon lambasted the lack of accountability in the Executive Committee of government and claimed that “the Lord will soon pluck his hand out of his bosom and so confound the whole band of oppressors. I believe this to be one of their last flickers.” ⁷⁷ Gordon expected justice in his lifetime. He looked for the time when the Lord would soon scatter the Governor and his custodes like a chaff before the wind. ⁷⁸ He expected judgment to start in the here and now. He saw God as all-powerful and disposed to dealing decisively with the lightweights who pompously pretend to wield so much political power. His expectation of swift justice made him envision the imminent demise of the rulers.

Gordon also knew God had passed judgment on the legislators who did not want to confront the unjust governor and he illustrated to the House that the writing was on the wall, by quoting “mene, mene tekel upharsin.” ⁷⁹ This was a quote from the apocalyptic book of Daniel 5: 4, “This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Gordon was conveying to the legislators

⁷⁷ JRC Vol. 4 228.

⁷⁸ JRC Vol. 4 228.

⁷⁹ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd Day of February, 1864 Vol. IX (Spanish Town, 1865) 96.

that God had already passed judgment on their behaviour and they have already been defeated.

The Native Baptists expected justice in the after -life also. They believed that in the end they would be vindicated and receive a just recompense even if it was denied in this life. They lived in hope. Their vision of the end was glorious. In spite of fears and foes the Native Baptists had hope. Bogle's marked hymns also spoke to that hope:

O Lord, how many are my foes
 In this weak state of flesh
 My peace they daily discompose
 But my defence and hope is God.⁸⁰

This hope focused on the future but not at the expense of the present difficult reality. God was on the side of the oppressed and could be depended upon for liberation, justice, vindication and protection. This was not deferred justice but hope for liberation even in the next life.

⁸⁰ Psalm 3: 1 see also Hymn 4: 5.

This hope would lead to ultimate vindication:

Hosanna to our conquering King!

The prince of darkness flies:

His troops rush headlong down to hell,

Like lightening from the skies.

Thy victories and thy deathless fame

Through the wide world shall run,

And everlasting ages sing

The triumphs thou hast won.⁸¹

The Native Baptists were expecting justice in the end. The forces of darkness and evil will be vanquished and the righteous will enjoy victory.

Bogle's marked hymns also reflected that he did not fear death even in the face of impending danger. This fearlessness in light of death was based on Jesus' s victory over death, through his dying, resurrection and eternal reign.⁸² The Native Baptists had confidence in God knowing that all would be well in the end because of their unflinching faith. This fearlessness towards death was also a feature of Sam Sharpe and his leaders (see pages 257-59 above).

⁸¹ Hymn 89: 3-4.

⁸² Watts, Psalms, Hymns 105. Hymn 44 ver. 6 (Part 1). Verse 5 of this hymn said, Jesus had "led the monster death in chains."

The hope they had, as displayed in the marked Psalm 3: 3, nullified the fear of death, - “Not death should make my heart afraid.” ⁸³ This was also evident when Bogle, in recruiting followers such as William Anderson’s father of Font Hill, advised that there was the possibility of death. ⁸⁴ The Native Baptists were not afraid to stand up for justice even though their actions could possibly lead to death. Their apprehension about death was lessened because they anticipated vindication.

George William Gordon also displayed a lack of fright of death during his court-martial proceedings when he declared, “If I die I shall die triumphant.” ⁸⁵ This bold pronouncement on 21 October 1865 in Morant Bay, in front of his powerful accusers who had already sent hundreds to their deaths demonstrated a hope in God. When Gordon was faced with his looming death he claimed Paul’s words as his own and said, “I can now say with Paul, the aged, ‘the hour of my departure is at hand, and I am ready to be offered up. I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me.’ ” ⁸⁶ The Biblical reference is 2 Tim. 4: 6-8. In the end, God will console his persecuted servants by rewarding them with eternal rest in heaven. Gordon approached death victoriously with the hope of getting a just reward.

⁸³ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 3

⁸⁴ JRC Vol. 5 159.

⁸⁵ “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866: 6.

⁸⁶ David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 13.

Gordon also thought it was an honour to suffer for doing God's work. He said:

It is, however, the will of my heavenly Father that I should thus suffer in obeying his command to relieve the poor and needy, and to protect, as far as I was able, the oppressed. And glory be to his name; and I thank Him that suffer in such a cause. Glory be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and I can say it is a great honour thus to suffer, for the servant is not greater than his Lord. ⁸⁷

He could endure suffering and persecution because he expected a resurrection, similar to that which Jesus experienced. Bogle, James Bowie and George B. Clarke, Bogle's son-in-law all knew of the suffering Gordon was experiencing, and in a letter dated 25 July 1862 to Gordon, they said, "All hearts burnt to hear the way you were treated for our cause. But in suffering there are conciliation [sic] for their [sic] is a rest is provide for those who toil and bear persecution for truth sake in heaven." ⁸⁸ Suffering will not last forever and there is a place of rest, called heaven, for all those who were weary from suffering.

⁸⁷ King, Sketch 12. See Baptist Magazine Dec. 1866: 792 and Edward Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865 (London, 1895) 106.

⁸⁸ JRC Vol. 5 1150.

Justice as Holistic

Justice covers all areas of life in individual and collective expressions and relationships. Justice was not only a feature of one's personality trait but ought also to be a trait of social relationships, practice and arrangement. Bogle's select hymn was a testimony to this understanding of justice:

Awake, my soul, awake, my love,
To serve the Saviour here below,
In works which perfect saints above,
And holy angels, cannot do.

Awake, my charity to feed
The hungry soul, and clothe the poor:
In heaven are found no sons of need,
There all these duties are no more. ⁸⁹

Bogle and his followers exercised a ministry that satisfied the material needs of the people, even as they awaited heaven where such needs would be no more. It was just for them to care for persons in need. This hymn selection is reminiscent of the judgment scene in Matt. 25: 31-46 in which Jesus said if you feed the

⁸⁹ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 106. Hymn 46 ver. 1-2.

hungry and clothe the naked then you would have done it as unto him and would therefore be rewarded on Judgment Day.

There were other examples of caring for the less fortunate and vulnerable. After the destructive hurricane in the Bahamas in 1866/7,⁹⁰ the Native Baptists collected eight dollars at the close of the service for the victims. They were motivated by “their own personal experience, they themselves having known what it was to be poor and homeless.”⁹¹ They drew from their calamity of the oppressive reprisals that made them poor and homeless to express solidarity.

Also, an unnamed Native Baptist said that his church at Shortwood, which was poor, nevertheless gave. A feature of that church and others was that “no change of circumstances ever lessens their liberality.”⁹² They were concerned for the total welfare of persons. There was Biblical precedent for such behaviour as recorded in 2 Cor. 8: 1-2, “Moreover, brethren, we do to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” They made sacrifices in support of the needy.

⁹⁰ “The Hurricane in the Bahamas,” Baptist Magazine Apr. 1867: 260.

⁹¹ “Establishment of the Baptist Mission at Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Dec. 1867: 816. The article mentioned “eight dollars”. One would have expected the currency to be “eight pounds”. Perhaps the currency used in the Bahamas was dollars.

⁹² “A Native Pastor’s View of the State of the Jamaica Mission,” Baptist Magazine Feb. 1867: 97.

Gordon closed his store on Port Royal Street while on a three-day prayer and fasting for the sins of Jamaica, and prayed:

Oh Lord, are not thine eyes upon the Truth
 Thou has stricken them, but they have not grieved
 Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction;
 They have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to
 return. ⁹³

Gordon was exasperated by the hardness of the heart of the people and he realized that God had already spoken to them, but to no avail.

Gordon wanted Jamaica to be a righteous nation and so at the 5 November 1863 sitting, he said, “righteousness exalts a nation but sin degrades it.” ⁹⁴ This citation from Prov. 14: 34 meant that for Gordon right living must be a hallmark of the nation and justice cannot be separated from politics. This affirmation of, and interest in, country indicated God ought to be the foundation on which the nation was built.

At the opening of a new place of worship, the Native Baptists recognized that God ought to be the foundation on which to build. In the JNBMS Annual Report,

⁹³ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865: 9.

⁹⁴ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd day of February, 1864 (Spanish Town, 1865) 94.

there were four Scriptural texts from which sermons were developed and all were utilized during the opening of a new place of worship in Spanish Town. Killick preached from Hag. 2: 7-8 while Duff took his text from Zech. 2: 10. At the third worship service for the day, Lyon took his text from Ps. 122: 7-8. On the following day, Monday 19 July 1840, Turner delivered his sermon based on Ps. 89: 15 and Duggan said, Turner “delivered a very impressive discourse, founded on the 89th Psalm, 15th verse, when all appeared to unite in the pious prayer of the Psalmist, ‘Send now O Lord, we beseech thee, send us prosperity.’ ”⁹⁵ The prayer request was based on a belief in a just God who desired that they prosper and that the churches grow. There was a connection between opening a physical building and spiritual growth. However, the contents of the sermon were not recorded in the Annual Report but since Scriptural texts are succinct indicators of the whole sermon it has been possible to get an idea about what was preached. From an examination of all four texts it was possible to unearth common themes. Ps. 122: 7-8 stated, “Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be with thee” while the first verse of this Psalm stated, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” David professed happiness for the house of God. The significance for the Native Baptists was that they were happy because they were opening their own chapel and no longer had to be in a struggle with Phillippo about a place of worship. The just God had made it possible for them to worship God in peace and unity.

⁹⁵ First Annual Report 21-22.

The passage from Hag. 2: 7-8 stated, “And I shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” The book of Haggai was about the children of Israel being encouraged to build the temple unto God and God promising his presence to permeate the building, which would be glorious. The inhabitants of the house of God need not fear because God would terrify the nations, the enemies of God. He was a God whose wrath was poured out against the wicked. And he who has provided a place of worship for the Native Baptists, will protect them against evil persons.

The Biblical text from Zech. 2: 10 stated, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. Chapter 2 highlighted the measuring of the dimensions of Jerusalem and a statement that Jerusalem will be a town without walls and that God will protect the people and their possessions through his presence. The verse under consideration also addressed the issue of God’s presence, which was therefore, an occasion for much rejoicing. The Native Baptists need not fear because the just God will provide his assuring presence. A just God looks after the needs of his people.

Ps. 89: 15 stated, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord in the light of thy countenance.” This is a psalm of praise to God for his loving care.

The Report also stated that at the chapel opening at the Half-way Tree, St. Andrew station on 27th of June, Duff proclaimed a favourite dictum, which called

upon God to “send now prosperity.”⁹⁶ The Native Baptists were eager for prosperity as reflected in church growth and unity.⁹⁷ And they felt that once God was with them then they would experience growth, peace and prosperity. And a just God will deliver on his promises.

The Report also recorded a deputation to Governor Charles Metcalfe. The Native Baptists assured him that their “warm and united prayers shall never cease to ascend to Almighty God, that his life may be long preserved.”⁹⁸ They prayed about mundane things such as a wish for long life for a friend. God was not far removed from their concerns and everyday matters. Justice affects all aspects of life especially of those in need.

Justice as commitment to the rule of Law

The Native Baptists wanted a better court system and so Bogle, as a Native Baptist leader, established an alternative justice system, at the petty sessions level, with justices of the peace, rules and regulations.⁹⁹ This justice system was an option to that which was unjust but still within a commitment to the rule of law.

⁹⁶ First Annual Report 14.

⁹⁷ First Annual Report 12, 14-16, 18-19, 21-25.

⁹⁸ First Annual Report iii.

⁹⁹ JRC Vol. 5 1161 and Hutton, Colour 191. See also Heuman, Killing Time 184.

However, Hutton implied that Bogle was not committed to the rule of law when said that the protestors derived validation for the use of violence in Bogle's marked Psalms (see page 77 above). But an examination of the marked Psalm 11 in the Watts edition, and Ps. 11 in the Bible, gave a different impression. Watts's hymn said:

If government be all destroy'd
 (That firm foundation of our peace)
 And violence make justice void,
 Where shall the righteous seek redress. ¹⁰⁰

This verse demonstrated a high regard for authority and for the maintenance of peace. In fact, the verse claims that God establishes governments in order that Christians can live in peace and obtain compensation when they were victims of injustice. This marked hymn was echoing the sentiments to be found in Rom. 13: 3, which states that governments are in place to maintain the peace and to dispense justice by punishing evil persons. Moreover, Ps. 11: 5 in the Bible states, "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." In addition, the idea for the use of violence was not in the marked Psalm 143 3rd Version. ¹⁰¹ Therefore, there is no justification for the use of violence either in the marked Psalm or Psalm 11 of the Bible. Hence, there would

¹⁰⁰ Watts, Psalms, Hymns 6. Psalm 11 ver. 2

¹⁰¹ I. Watts, Psalms, Hymns 81.

be no violent destruction of a government. Bogle and his followers had no intention and no motivation to be violent.

Gordon also displayed a commitment to law. In a letter dated 28 September 1865 that was laid before the Commission by Governor Eyre, Gordon wrote, “We shall have to go before Parliament with a strong petition, and attack the whole colonial system.”¹⁰² After describing the atrocities of the Eyre administration, on a motion for censure of the Lieutenant–Governor, Gordon called on the people to “protest” these infractions of justice and prudence.¹⁰³ Gordon recognized that the colonial oppressive system was systemic and he attacked this edifice of the race and colour pyramid, which he regarded as inimical to the interests of the majority of the populace. He was also willing to try parliamentary means to accomplish justice.

Gordon used lawful means in challenging the oppressive conditions. Gordon exemplified this in a letter dated 8 July 1862 to Duncan Fletcher outlining his desire for constitutional change. Gordon asked him, in light of the corruption in Jamaica, to get an influential friend or a Member of Parliament to make representations to the Colonial Office.¹⁰⁴ While Gordon admired the British

¹⁰² JRC Vol. 4 229.

¹⁰³ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, Under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 24.

¹⁰⁴ Duncan Fletcher, Personal Recollections of the Honourable George W. Gordon, late of Jamaica (London, 1867). See also Don Robotham, “The Notorious Riot”: The Socio-Economic and Political Bases of Paul’s Bogle’s Revolt (Working paper 8. Jamaica: UWI, ISER, 1981) 86.

constitution and had an exalted estimate of the dignity, rights and privileges of British citizenship, he, however, felt that the local corrupt administration had prevented the majority from benefiting from the fruits of British legislation.¹⁰⁵ On 3 March 1864, Gordon said in the House of Assembly, “I stand up here tonight, as one of the sons of free Jamaica, to claim all the rights and privileges granted to us by the Magna Charter and the Bill of Rights.”¹⁰⁶ Gordon based his claim of freedom on the credentials of legal documents produced within British political history. There were other examples of Gordon attempting the legal route to seek redress against oppression. James Gordon (no relation) testified at the trial of Gordon that Gordon had the intention of sending a letter to the Queen about the peasantry’s distress or going on a deputation to the Queen.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, an unknown missionary in a letter dated 20 November 1865 said he had read many accounts in the newspapers but he saw no evidence that Gordon was instigating violence and concluded that Gordon contemplated obtaining “redress and alteration by peaceable and legal means.”¹⁰⁸ That was an accurate assessment because Gordon, in one of his last letters to his beloved wife, said, “All I ever did was to recommend the people who complained to seek redress in a legitimate way . . .”¹⁰⁹ Gordon tried legal means to obtain justice.

¹⁰⁵ David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 8.

¹⁰⁶ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th Day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd day of February, 1864 Vol. IX (Spanish Town, 1865) 143. The correct spelling is “Magna Carta”.

¹⁰⁷ “The Jamaica Insurrection: The Trial of Gordon,” [London] Times 25 Jan. 1866:6.

¹⁰⁸ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 56.

¹⁰⁹ King, Sketch 12

It was also observed that the Native Baptists attempted to change conditions through the legal, electoral route. After Gordon's election in March 1863 as a member of the House of Assembly for St. Thomas in-the-East, he told Phillippo that credit for his election should be given to the Native Baptists and remarked "See what the Baptists have done here, the poor native Baptists, by peaceable means; they have raised at last a representative for the Baptists' people and churches of all classes in this land."¹¹⁰ The Native Baptists tried for change through peaceful, political representation.

Also at an Underhill meeting in Kingston, chaired by Gordon and with Joseph Kelly of the *Watchman* as Secretary, a resolution was passed which called upon "all descendants of Africa" in every parish to form themselves into Societies and hold public meetings to air their grievances.¹¹¹ This shows that the Native Baptists were attempting to use legal organizational groupings as a means to obtain justice.

Justice as Moral Integrity

Justice demands ethical and fair behaviour. Bogle through his marked hymns

¹¹⁰ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 320.

¹¹¹ Edward Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865 (London, 1895) 18.

recognized the importance that “on earth let my example be.” ¹¹² He also practiced financial accountability as demonstrated in the Memo of 12 July 1865, which outlined in detail the income and expenditure on Election Expenses. ¹¹³ Ethical demands and proper lifestyle living were hallmarks of the Native Baptists. Bogle and others harmonized belief with behaviour.

In addition, Gordon also criticized unjust doctors ¹¹⁴ and the clergy of the Established Church who he charged were “ ‘the most immoral men’ in the whole island ” ¹¹⁵ and re-inforced that allegation at a 4 November 1863 sitting of the House of Assembly, when he claimed that “There are men among them who are living most disorderly, most improperly, and most indolent lives, and who are desecrating their high professions.” ¹¹⁶ At the same November sitting, Gordon introduced a Bill to repeal the 19th Victoria, chapter 6 (Clergy Act) because he wanted to abolish the concept of an Established Church, which he claimed was a system of bondage because the people had to pay £40,000 annually to sustain such an institution while the clergy were “not ministering to the necessities of the people, who pay large sums of money to enable them to pursue their sinful

¹¹² Watts, Psalms, Hymns 105. Hymn 44 ver. 6 (Part II).

¹¹³ JRC Vol. 4 233.

¹¹⁴ JRC Vol. 4 227.

¹¹⁵ Hume 122.

¹¹⁶ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution: Comprising the Session Commencing on the 27th day of October, 1863, and Terminating on the 22nd day of February, 1864, (Spanish Town, 1865) 94.

indulgences.”¹¹⁷ At the 19 January 1863 sitting, he denounced the rector of St. Mary and also rebuked the Suffragan Bishop for ignoring the wrongs.¹¹⁸ He also remonstrated confidentially against a brother who was becoming a member of the Presbyterian Church in Kingston. He validated this unpleasant task by use of the scriptural passage; “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”¹¹⁹ Gordon’s Christian principles led him to challenge religious persons to ethical living.

Gordon’s strictures were not confined to the clergy and doctors only. Immediately preceding the insurrection, Gordon asserted that governors ought to display integrity or be despised. He said, “if a ruler does not sway the sword with justice, he becomes distasteful, and instead of having the respect of the people, he becomes despised and hated.”¹²⁰ Gordon grounded that speech in Romans 13, which exhorted Christians to respect those in authority and to concede power to the authorities whom “beareth not the sword in vain” (13: 4). He perceived the “sword” as a symbol for the proper administration of justice. However, while Gordon believed in respecting rulers, he interpreted Romans 13 with a caveat for

¹¹⁷ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 93-96.

¹¹⁸ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 48.

¹¹⁹ King, Sketch 10.

¹²⁰ Hume 124-25. See Lehmann’s discussion of submission which is a confrontation between “the weakness of power and the power of weakness” Paul Lehmann, The Transfiguration of Politics (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1975) 47.

he believed that rulers could forfeit their right to rule and their right to respect. For Gordon it was a Biblical duty to proactively defend personal integrity. At the 13 January 1864 session, Gordon supported the censure resolution against Governor Edward Eyre for unprofessional performance.¹²¹ However, though he wanted Eyre removed and though after speaking at the 8 February 1864 Session, he again called for his removal, he would not do it unjustly. He said that Eyre had been guilty of many wrongs but he could not “act unjustly to anyone.” So he did not support the resolution claiming that Eyre had committed a breach of privilege by preventing Mr. Ewart from producing the correspondence between Eyre and the Colonial Secretary concerning his dismissal. Only Gordon argued that the restrictions on the servants of the Crown were not the act of Eyre but rather the system instituted by the Colonial Secretary when Darling was governor.¹²² Gordon also opposed the treatment of Ewart, who apart from being unfairly dismissed by Eyre as Agent-General of Immigration without due process, was unfairly placed in gaol by the House of Assembly for not submitting copies of all his correspondence with Eyre.¹²³ He was even-handed in his condemnation of wrongs of the Governor and his fellow Assemblymen. For Gordon, religion was not ceremonial, but ethical. Therefore, morality was the outworking of a personal faith commitment to God and he had to act justly.

¹²¹ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 23.

¹²² Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing from the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 196-98.

¹²³ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From The Fourth Session of The First General Assembly, Under The New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 187. Hume defended Eyre's actions as “justified” Hume 117. However, Hume does not supply the data for the basis of that conclusion.

Gordon felt that he should use his political office to “promote truth, righteousness, and piety” and he held that the role of the Governor was for fair administration so that “justice and righteousness, and consequently peace may result from his Government.” ¹²⁴ Justice demands that politicians be committed to moral integrity.

Hermeneutic of Liberation

The hermeneutical approach of the Native Baptists resembled the Reader – Response approach which is not restricted to the historical context of the text and what the author meant then or what the text meant then to an emphasis on what the text means to them in their interpretative community and their understanding of self and their experiences. For the Native Baptists, there was no distance between themselves and the world of the Bible and they felt that their situation and the situation of the Bible was one and the same. Wolfgang Iser called it “the convergence of the text and the reader” in which the reader often feels involved in events at the time of reading. ¹²⁵ For them, the selected Bible stories related directly to their experiences. They took their issues and realities to the Bible and expected answers from the Bible. The expectation was to garner insights from that interaction between readers and the Bible. This was determined by what comes out of the dynamics between the readers and the text.

¹²⁴ Parliamentary Debates of Jamaica, Commencing From the Fourth Session of the First General Assembly, under the New Constitution Vol. X. (Kingston, 1864) 61, 93.

¹²⁵ Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach.” Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore and London: Hopkins UP, 1980. 54.

Using this methodology, the Native Baptists were attracted to texts that addressed the themes of equality and justice. This approach interprets passages that address themes of liberation.

The Native Baptists, as an interpretative community, rejected the interpretation of the Bible and other Bible-related texts, which sought to legitimize their oppressive situation and encouraged them to accept their inhumane condition in life as God given. They were suspicious of the interpretations received from the missionaries. This hermeneutical emphasis on equality and justice, in a word, liberation, will be called a hermeneutic of liberation. This designation is to claim that the Reader-Response methodology as exemplified in the hermeneutic of liberation focused on the liberation of the people who were enslaved by inequality and injustices.

The identification of a hermeneutic of liberation is not entirely novel. Erskine identified a similar hermeneutic used by Sam Sharpe and his followers in the 1831 Baptist War. He called it a “hermeneutic of freedom.”¹²⁶ Erskine did not detail what he meant by a hermeneutic of freedom, but this writer will not use that term to apply to the Native Baptists because, unfortunately, too often freedom is restricted to being perceived as the opposite of slavery only and not to freedom from other injustices. And since the Native Baptists operated in the

¹²⁶ Noel Erskine, “The Roots of Rebellion and Rasta Theology in Jamaica,” Black Theology: An International Journal 5 (2007): 115. There are other types of hermeneutic. Lehmann speaks of Incarnation Hermeneutics which seeks to discern the will of God for the times in which we live: Paul Lehmann, The Transfiguration of Politics (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1975) 232. Black Hermeneutics . . .

post-emancipation era it is better to use another word to describe their hermeneutic, that is, a hermeneutic of liberation. In addition, Burchell Taylor identified a Reader -Response approach grounded in Liberation Theology, which he identified as “Liberation Hermeneutics.” For him, liberation hermeneutics takes place “within community and by community grounded in a shared faith influenced by the experience of the situation in which they find themselves and engaging in Scriptures in shared discussions and reflections.” He differentiates it from the more traditional approach of reading the Bible for personal devotions to develop personal piety through instruction, inspiration, consolation, direction and encouragement.¹²⁷ Taylor was speaking generally about the hermeneutics associated with liberation theology and called it liberation hermeneutics. Hence he defined the laws of interpretation associated with liberation hermeneutics. This writer’s use of the hermeneutic of liberation is more specific and was related to the way the Native Baptists explained and interpreted Bible and Bible - related sources to focus on the issue of liberation as expressed through equality and justice.

The Native Baptists were not conscious of that they were using a Reader-Response approach as demonstrated in a hermeneutic of liberation. But in retrospect it is reasonable to claim that the Native Baptists were engaged in a Reader -Response approach as exemplified in a hermeneutic of liberation. As Taylor added, there are critics of this emphasis claiming that liberation

¹²⁷ Burchell Taylor, “Liberation Hermeneutics,” 5 typescript, Bethel Baptist, Kingston, 2007.

hermeneutics was “guilty of proof-texting, taking texts out of context and using it to shore up arguments.”¹²⁸ However, what the Native Baptists were doing was transposing their context to the relevant contexts in the Bible. Therefore, out of the suffering the Native Baptists experienced, they would seek to identify passages in the Bible that resonated with their experiences, hoping that God would help in their quest for equality and justice. This approach is being identified as a hermeneutic of liberation.

The Native Baptists displayed noteworthy hermeneutical freedom. This was neither arbitrary nor careless but rather independent of the dominant hermeneutics, which among other things supported the oppressive conditions under which they lived. Such a hermeneutical freedom was often maligned as misinformed and leading to loose behaviour, superstitious beliefs and practices. However, the Native Baptists claimed their right to have their own interpretation of Scriptures and Scripture-related sources and their own understanding of God and protested those who tried to take it away or prohibit them from exercising their own hermeneutical approach. This hermeneutical method was both subversive as well as liberative.

Using the hermeneutic of liberation approach, it resulted in the Native Baptists opposing the injustices of colonial rule. Their hermeneutics was reflected and articulated in their preaching, debates, hymns, singing, prayers, meditations and events based on their recollection of history and their experience and

¹²⁸ Taylor, Liberation Hermeneutics 11.

understanding of God. They displayed resistance, rejecting the idea that they were inferior and claimed equality; they rejected the idea that Africans should be excluded from Christian ministry and affirmed that they wanted to preach the gospel locally and overseas. They rejected the idea that Christianity was merely ceremonial and proclaimed that it was also, and more so, ethical; they did not share the missionary thinking of dividing things into sacred and secular and divorcing social action from preaching and affirmed a holistic understanding of God and countenanced resisting unjust earthly rulers. They were also ecumenical in dealing with other church groups and rejected the narrow exclusivity of the missionaries. They also hoped that they would be completely vindicated. However, this resistance was restrained by a desire to reconcile with the oppressors hence, their willingness to seek a peaceful resolution first based on justice for all and equality of all.

Summary

The Native Baptists were Christians whose spirituality embraced equality and justice for all humans. Though they believed in the Christian hope of a new and better world order they also believed that a foretaste of that hope was possible in this life through the demonstration of equality and justice. They believed that God was on their side, the side of the oppressed and that judgment was passed on the failing order of the oppressors.

This hermeneutic of liberation that was used enabled them to read the Scriptures and Scripture-related sources through the perspective of their own situation and experience of being dominated. It enabled them to envision realities and possibilities that were alternatives to those imposed upon them by the oppressors and sanctioned by the oppressors' interpretation of Scriptures and Scripture-related sources. The Native Baptists' hermeneutical approach was deliberate and so afforded insights into their theological concepts and strategies for protest actions. This meant that they read the Scriptures through the lens of liberation.

This hermeneutic of liberation and its influence on the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PRAXIS AND THE 1865 NATIVE BAPTIST WAR

The hermeneutics of the leaders of the Native Baptists and their followers illustrated how their reflection on their experiences in light of the Bible, as well as Bible-related sources, led to certain significant issues, which have been highlighted under two headings - equality and justice. The themes of equality and justice that were identified in the previous chapter from an examination of their hermeneutical approach formed the basis of inspiration for their major action and defining moment in the 1865 Native Baptist War. This decisive action also reflected the reality they represented.

It is the claim of this dissertation that the themes of equality and justice were played out significantly in the 1865 Native Baptist War. This, however, has been largely overlooked to a considerable degree in the various assessments of the war, - its causes and aims - from the nineteenth century until the present. It is surprising, given the role of religion in the life of the Native Baptists, that such a neglect could have occurred. From the documents, whether written by Bogle and his followers or other contemporary writers, the indication was that the Bible and other sacred literature influenced their deliberations and actions in the expression of their faith and understanding of their situation.

Some contemporary detractors insinuated that the Native Baptists' involvement in the war might have been influenced largely by their inferior, even ignorant approach to the Bible, and some modern scholars claimed that there was no

discernable impact of a Biblical hermeneutic influencing their response to the events of 1865. These have been the dominant views concerning the conduct of Native Baptists in the 1865 Native Baptist War. Nevertheless, when the testimonies of the Native Baptists and their leaders were examined, their actions and responses, as far as the upheavals were concerned, could be said to have been influenced greatly by their understanding of the Scriptures and Scripture-related sources. This meant that their hermeneutical approach and reflection were inseparable from the practical outworking of their faith. This hermeneutic of liberation led them to resistance and at the same time to hope for reconciliation grounded in equality and justice.

Therefore, this writer justified claims that the Native Baptists' consuming passion was liberation. They viewed issues and events through the lens of liberation. As the Native Baptists engaged in praxis or action, the goal was transformation of the situation through liberation. This hermeneutic of liberation, with a foundation of equality and justice, influenced the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War.

Nature of the Native Baptist War

The leadership core involved in the 1865 Native Baptist War were leaders within the Native Baptist Communion, namely Paul Bogle, Moses Bogle, James M'Laren

and James Bowie. ¹ George William Gordon was a leader within the Native Baptist Communion but he claimed he was unaware of the protest of 1865 and did not sanction it. ² He was nevertheless an “intellectual force” behind the protest. ³ In addition, he was a business, political and spiritual partner of Paul Bogle, the leader of the protest. Furthermore, there is little doubt, that based on Gordon’s agitation in the House of Assembly; at the Underhill Meetings and on other occasions, the protestors may have felt that Gordon was supportive of the protest action of 1865. Moreover, the present-day Jamaican people associate both Bogle and Gordon as primary leaders and heroes of the 1865 resistance. Therefore, in this study Gordon is associated with the 1865 Native Baptist War and along with the other leaders, helped to determine the tone and goal of the resistance.

Different Methodology

One recognizes that there is no perfect methodological approach in attempting to ascertain what took place, what were the motivating factors and what were the designs. Shirley Gordon highlighted an omission in the Jamaica Royal Commission Report, which “either did not recognize or chose to ignore the

¹ JRC Vol. 5 157, 246, 1150.

² Gad Heuman, ‘The Killing Time’: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (London: Macmillan, 1994) 148-49 and David King, A Sketch of the Late Mr. G. W. Gordon, Jamaica (Edinburgh, 1866) 13.

³ Clinton Hutton, “Colour for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-Slavery Society 1834-65,” diss., University of the West Indies, 1992, 307.

religious impetus in the district protests of October 1865.”⁴ A reliance, therefore, on the JRC to reconstruct what motivated the events will lead to an oversight of the religious input. In addition, the Commissioners showed bias toward Eyre and his declaration of martial law when they said, “We have endeavoured therefore to place ourselves as far as possible in the position of the Governor and his Advisers at the time their determination was arrived at.”⁵ Another major challenge is to decipher what testimonies about the nature of the Native Baptist War were true. Some testimonies were not true (see page 96 above) and some were not corroborated.⁶

There were many views of the Native Baptist War in the 1860s, from the lurid to the insignificant. Thomas Harvey and William Brewin outlined the challenge in trying to determine the intentions of Bogle and his followers. They said, “It is impossible to ascertain the exact truth respecting the designs of Paul Bogle, and those who consulted and acted with him, since none of them survived . . .”

Therefore, all that can be done is to derive “reasonable inferences from known facts.”⁷ These reasonable references about their intentions will be derived, not from their detractors, but mainly from the only known letter written by Bogle and his followers, and Bogle’s speech recorded in the Jamaica Royal Commission

⁴ Shirley Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: Press, 1998) 119.

⁵ JRC Vol. 4 537.

⁶ JRC Vol. 5 156, 1037.

⁷ Thomas Harvey and William Brewin Jamaica in 1866 (London, 1867) 22.

Report that addressed the issue of intention of the protests. Consistent with the approach of this thesis it will place greater weight on what the Native Baptists wrote and said to determine what their intentions were. It seems to this writer that it would be better to rely on the testimonies of the Native Baptists who have, up to this point, proven to be reliable witnesses and trustworthy persons.

In addition, great significance will be attached to an unknown writer whose works, The Insurrection⁸ and The Troubles in Jamaica have been unexamined; to Thomas Harvey and William Brewin, Quakers who visited Jamaica and who wrote Jamaica in 1866; to Wesleyan Henry Bleby's Reign of Terror and Underhill's classic, Tragedy at Morant Bay. Underhill had contacts in Jamaica and supported his statements from official documents. Underhill's perspective must be greatly valued because, as Secretary of the BMS, he would have been in contact with the missionaries concerning what was happening and since the BMS was known for its support of the status quo, any favourable view of the protestors would more than likely be credible. The added value of Underhill, Harvey and Brewin was that they were familiar with Jamaica, having visited the island. Harvey made his second visit to Jamaica in 1866. Furthermore, Harvey and Brewin visited some sites associated with the Native Baptist War.⁹ Bleby (1809-

⁸ H. R., The Insurrection in Jamaica [London, 1865] 3 in UWI Library. This pamphlet was estimated to have been published in 1865 because its concluding paragraph said, "peremptory orders should be sent out instantly to stop the wholesale murders going on under the cover of martial law": H. R., Insurrection 8. And since martial law ended in November 1865 then the pamphlet was written before then. A newspaper account while agreeing with the events as recorded by H. R. provided more details: "Royal Proclamation," Colonial Standard 29 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁹ Harvey and Brewin 11-15.

1882) lived in Jamaica for at least thirty-three years and wrote many books about Jamaica. All five authors provide sober analysis, reasoned judgment and mature reflection on the Native Baptist War and most were written after the Jamaica Royal Commission Report. Four of the authors wrote outside of the time period when passions ran high in Jamaica. And the other author H. R.¹⁰ wrote two pamphlets, which were the first known published attempts at recording the events of 1865, one of which was before the JRC held its meetings. These writings demonstrate that from the nineteenth century there was an alternative view held by a significant minority concerning the 1865 Native Baptist War.

These alternative positions were not an attempt at hagiography of Bogle and his followers, since H. R., deplored the actions of Paul Bogle and his followers as taking “the law into their own hands” and stated that they “ought to be visited with condign punishment.”¹¹ Bleby also alleged that Bogle and his followers were an “excited and misguided people” who very unwisely resisted the “illegal apprehension without a warrant” and said that they “acted unadvisedly” and took “an unwise course to obtain redress of their grievances” by marching into Morant Bay and eventually resisted “violence with violence.”¹² Bleby also said although

¹⁰ Rev. Mr. H. Renton, leading Presbyterian missionary, whose first name and surname were the same initials as H. R., was a friend of Gordon and while convalescing was a houseguest of Gordon and his wife. He met the Gordons in 1855 and was aware of 1865 Native Baptist War: King, Sketch 7. In 1861, Renton’s station was at Mount Olivet: Fletcher 66. The writings of H. R. fit the tone and sentiments of Rev. Mr. H. Renton. This writer assumes that they are one and the same person.

¹¹ H. R., The Insurrection in Jamaica [London, 1865] 1.

¹² Henry Bleby, The Reign of Terror: A Narrative of Facts Concerning Ex-Governor Eyre, George William Gordon, and The Jamaica Atrocities (London, 1868) 34-35.

they were provoked, he “strongly reprobated” them for their “lawless deeds” and “savage violence.” ¹³ Bleby’s published work, three years after the upheaval, was to counter the widespread “ignorance concerning the disturbances” and “to exhibit the truth in defence of a deeply wronged and slandered people . . . who are meek, longsuffering, and forgiving race, and not the monsters of cruelty and vengeance they have been represented . . .” ¹⁴ Pride of place was given to his book because he lived in Jamaica during the 1831 Baptist War and the 1865 Native Baptist War.

Others who gave a different perspective included William Murray, a native Methodist missionary based in Bath (see page 83 above). In addition, even those who claimed that Bogle and his followers had murderous intent were aware that there was an alternative view. W. P. Georges, Custos of St. David, said “It has been stated that Paul Bogle and his accomplices were, on the 11th October, on their way to Morant Bay court house for the purpose of delivering up to the authorities the men which had been previously rescued by Bogle and others.” ¹⁵ Also, in 1866, Bedford Pim, leading member of the racist Anthropological Society, was upset that Gordon was described as a martyr and rebuked the “shallowness

¹³ Bleby, Reign of Terror 44.

¹⁴ Bleby, Reign of Terror A2.

¹⁵ JRC Vol. 4 93.

and impiety of those who have dared to compare the wretched Gordon with St. Stephen, nay even with our Saviour himself . . .”¹⁶

There has also been a re-think about Bogle in modern scholarship and also additional views about the ways in which protest can be perceived. Holt moved away from the view of perceiving Bogle’s intentions as violent and speculated that one possibility was that Bogle went to Morant Bay either to submit to arrest or to file a protest (see pages 79-80 above).

In addition, Paul Lehmann, theologian, brought the term “militant nonviolence” into the discussion about revolutionary groups. Lehmann, who examined the relationship of Christianity to the revolutionary ferment of the USA in the 1960s, mentioned a shift in policy in “the Black Revolution” from “passive resistance to non-violent protest to militant nonviolence.”¹⁷ This categorization heightens the possibility that the actions of Bogle and his followers could be also seen as “militant nonviolence.” Additionally, Sheller rejected the dualistic categorization of protests as “either violent rebellion or hidden resistance,” and advocated for “a third realm”, called “non-violent resistance” of which the main architects were the churches.¹⁸ Sheller has also opened the possibility for perceiving Bogle and his followers as engaging in “non-violent resistance.”

¹⁶ Bedford Pim, The Negro in Jamaica (London, 1866) vi.

¹⁷ Paul Lehmann, The Transfiguration of Politics (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1975) 260-61.

¹⁸ Mimi Sheller, “Quasheba, Mother, Queen: Black Women’s Public Leadership and Political Protest in Post-Emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1865,” Slavery and Abolition 19 (1998): 99.

This alternative view is worth examining again in light of the discovery of a biblical hermeneutic of liberation that informed the response of the Native Baptists. There will be a re-examination of whether the killings were pre-meditated, and whether the protest was motivated by racial considerations and a desire to overthrow the central government.

This alternative view has been over-ruled, suppressed and largely overlooked. Bleby claimed that Eyre “suppressed the petition of complaining Negroes” and made “no mention of it in his official dispatches to the Colonial Office.”¹⁹ Bleby also said that for many months the whole population was paralyzed so that “many persons feared to write to their friends and multitude” and “were afraid to speak upon passing events to each other . . . lest being overheard they should be dragged to prison . . .”²⁰ Gordon said Murray would have written more freely if he were in England. There was fear on the island.²¹ Fear facilitated the suppression of minority views.

Dominant View

According to the JRC, “the origin and outbreak of the Disturbances” was not caused because “the rate of wages was low” but due to “the unwillingness to

¹⁹ Bleby, Reign of Terror 39-40.

²⁰ Bleby, Reign of Terror A2.

²¹ Gordon, Cause 115.

labour for more than a limited time” and further added that those who were leaders in the protest didn’t “belong to the labouring class” but were peasants who were in “better circumstances than the ordinary labourer” and desired to obtain “free from the payment of rent” for certain “ ‘back lands.’ ” ²² Therefore, it was argued, the grievances of the protestors were groundless.

Furthermore, the colonial appointed Commissioners, H. K Storks, Russell Gurney and J. B Maule, said that the letter written by Bogle and nineteen others was “a manifesto preparatory to and attempting to justify a recourse to violence.” For the Commissioners, “the leaders of the rioters” had a “preconcerted plan, and that murder was distinctly contemplated.” ²³ They said, the protestors who “were armed with various kinds of weapons,” cried, “We want blood” especially “ ‘we want the Buckra men to kill.’ ” There was also a threat to rape the women, “we don’t want the women now; we will have them afterwards.” ²⁴ The murderous intentions were clear when the “the first thing done was to attack the Police Station, and to obtain possession of the arms” and making an unsuccessful attempt to obtain gunpowder. ²⁵ There was murderous intention even after the initial protest on 11 October when on the 15 October, Bogle told 100 men at the

²² JRC Vol. 4 516.

²³ JRC Vol. 4 512.

²⁴ JRC Vol. 4 514. Gardner said they cried “War”: W. J. Gardner, A History of Jamaica: From its Discovery by Columbus to the Year 1872 (3rd ed. 1873. London: Cass, 1971) 477.

²⁵ JRC Vol. 4 509, 511. See also Gardner 477. However, Francis M’Kay, who had responsibility for Mr. Kirkland’s store in Morant Bay, said he saw the protestors taking away arms from the police station, but his testimony did not state whether the police station was raided before or after the melee at the courthouse: JRC Vol. 5 220.

Mount Lebanon chapel to get “their arms loaded” on hearing that soldiers were coming.²⁶ In addition, the ultimate goal was to plunder and take control of the country, and the drilling was military training to achieve that purpose.²⁷ The findings by the Royal Commission have largely informed the predominant view about what was planned and executed on 11 October 1865. Gardner’s History of Jamaica echoes the views of the Jamaica Royal Commission and quotes the JRC extensively.²⁸ The leading British people of letters, such as Charles Dickens, Alfred Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle supported Eyre while those perceived as radicals such as Charles Darwin, Goldwyn Smith and John Stuart Mill were sympathetic towards the cause of the protestors and Gordon.²⁹ There were also many contemporary writers who subscribed to the view that Bogle and his followers were violent and had murderous intentions including a host of clergymen, who supported Eyre. In a letter dated 6 January 1866, Jonathan Edmondson, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions, on behalf of seven ministers including English Baptist Samuel Oughton, Anglican Enos Nuttall and Presbyterian William Gardner, commended Eyre for his “prompt, energetic and decisive measures” that he enacted and blamed “the teachings of ignorant and wicked men” who fanned the flames of “sedition”. They regretted the loss of life and were aware that some innocent persons were killed but

²⁶ JRC Vol. 4 515.

²⁷ JRC Vol. 4 513-14.

²⁸ Gardner 474-79.

²⁹ Bernard Semmel, “The issue of ‘Race’ in the British reaction to the Morant Bay Uprising of 1865,” Caribbean Studies 2 (1962): 4.

claimed that Eyre's "general policy" was "absolutely necessary." ³⁰ In addition, the Bishop of Kingston, G. B. Brooks, three Archdeacons, seventeen rectors, forty-one curates wrote to Eyre saying, "We fully share in the conviction general in this Island, that your promptness, decision, and energy have, under God's blessing saved Jamaica from probable ruin." ³¹

Additionally, many newspapers of the day gave currency to the view that Bogle and his followers were marauding murderous people. ³² Bogle and his fellow preachers were perceived as "a class of men, we admit, who are very much to be despised, who are a source of evil." ³³ Bogle and his followers were perceived as evil and brutal. Therefore, with the official colonial inquiry, influential British thinkers, most missionaries and the newspapers supportive of Eyre and perceiving Bogle and his protestors as murderers, it was not surprising that this perspective of the events became the dominant position. Understandably, it is this position that has dominated modern scholarship about the 1865 Native Baptist War. Heuman, for example, "relies heavily on the evidence presented to the Jamaica Royal Commission." ³⁴ Scholars such as Heuman, Hall, Hutton, Semmel stated that the protestors were violent and had violent intentions (see pages 77-79 above). This classic view has stood the test of time with Heuman's

³⁰ JRC Vol. 4 472-73.

³¹ JRC Vol. 4 484.

³² Bleby, Reign of Terror 44

³³ Morning Journal 16 Jan. 1867: [2].

³⁴ Heuman, Killing Time xix.

book as the authoritative text providing “more detail on the outbreak and the spread of the rebellion”³⁵ No great work, excepting Holt’s Problem of Freedom has since attempted to examine this post-emancipation protest as anything but motivated by murderous intent.

Furthermore, in modern Jamaica, there have been unfair comments about Bogle and his followers. As recently as 2003, Henry accused Bogle and his people as behaving as cannibals (see page 78-79 above). This is not a widespread view among scholars. However, the standard works claim that the uprising was pre-meditated.

Pre-meditated? Race War? Revolution?

Part and parcel of this universal view that has dominated how the Native Baptist War has been perceived is the view that the killings were pre-meditated. The charge of pre-meditation was based on the statements mainly given as evidence at the JRC, military type drills, oath-taking, meetings, the visit to the Police Station before the march in order to obtain armaments and the contents of a letter signed by Bogle and nineteen others.

Heuman said Bogle and his followers had violent intentions (see page 78 above) He also added that Bogle’s supporters had “some arms” when they entered

³⁵ Heuman, Killing Time xix.

Morant Bay.³⁶ These statements tend to strengthen the view that the killings were pre-meditated. The Commissioners believed that some unnamed persons wanted “ ‘to kill all the white men and all the black men that would not join them.’ ”³⁷ One newspaper report alleged, “ The plan of the rebels is to murder all the whites and coloured men first, then the children; and to keep the women as servants and for their own pleasure.”³⁸ According to this view, murder and rape were on the agenda of the Native Baptists.

However, Harvey and Brewin called the statement about “a general conspiracy” to murder “the white and coloured inhabitants” as “the most alarming rumours” and they even claimed that “the proof before the Royal Commissioners entirely failed.”³⁹ The *Baptist Magazine*, an English Baptist periodical, seemed to corroborate this statement, saying it was not premeditated, “Except on the first day, there was no fighting or killing on the part of the Negroes: and this was altogether unpremeditated, evidently resulting from the passion and excitement of the moment, when they were fired upon, as they thought illegally, from the courthouse of Morant Bay.”⁴⁰ Bleby said, “they did not injure, or attempt to injure, any individual, until they were fired upon, and a considerable number of

³⁶ Heuman, *Killing Time* 89.

³⁷ *JRC* Vol. 4 509. See also Gardner 477.

³⁸ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” *Colonial Standard* 16 Oct. 1865: 2. See also Gardner 478

³⁹ Harvey and Brewin 23.

⁴⁰ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1865: 784.

them killed or wounded.”⁴¹ Bleby also said it was not pre-mediated, “The conclusion to which we are brought by a fair consideration of all that has come to light is, that the assembling of the mob, upon the 11th October, was an unpremeditated and ill-judged act, consequent upon the injudicious and culpable proceedings of the local authorities.”⁴² These statements challenge the often-held view that the killings were pre-meditated. In addition, the plan to rape the European women was a fabrication.⁴³

The ruling class tried to depict Bogle and his followers as brutal by naming the influential persons who were killed and also describing the killings as barbaric. The *Colonial Standard*, a pro-planter newspaper, reported that Rev. Mr. Foote, Wesleyan Clergyman, was killed⁴⁴ which was later retracted.⁴⁵ Another report stated that the son of the rector, Stephen Cooke, Clerk of the Peace and Dr. Gerrard, surgeon to the district were killed. However, on the same page it stated, “before going to Press we learned that Dr. Gerrard and Mr. Cook [sic] the Clerk of [the] Peace, have not been killed.”⁴⁶ Another report in the *Colonial Standard* said:

⁴¹ Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 37.

⁴² Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 37.

⁴³ “Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* Jan. 1867: 51.

⁴⁴ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” *Colonial Standard* 16 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁴⁵ “The Rebellion in St. Thomas in the East,” *Colonial Standard* 18 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁴⁶ “Riot and Loss of Life in St. Thomas in the East,” *Falmouth Post* 17 Oct. 1865: 2.

They dug out the eyes of almost every one they murdered, they cut the tongue out of the Rev. Mr. Victor Hershell, cut his throat, and partially skinned him; they also murdered a black gentleman Mr. Price in cold blood, and in the most barbarous and brutal manner, and then ripped open his bowels (this was done by the women;) after which they cut his throat. ⁴⁷

These allegations were not substantiated. It was also discerned from then that there were attempts to fabricate stories, “there is no evidence to sustain the charge, except such wild rumours as generally gain currency in moments of extreme terror. We take leave, therefore, for the present to suspend our belief as respects the alleged atrocities.” ⁴⁸ According to H. R., there were similar fabrications by the authorities in the aftermath of the Indian mutiny. There were stories of mutilations and tortures, which later turned out to be “absolutely without foundation.” He added that even Governor Eyre in his dispatches was “careful to note that the alleged barbarities rest on rumours.” ⁴⁹ In addition, *Siecle*, a foreign newspaper, noted the “looseness of the reports as to the alleged barbarities.” ⁵⁰ Moreover, professor of history at Oxford, Goldwin Smith,

⁴⁷ Colonial Standard 20 Oct. 1865: 2. See also for report on other atrocities: “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” Colonial Standard 14 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁴⁸ H. R., Insurrection 3. See another fabricated letter about apprentices inciting an insurrection: Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, The West Indies in 1837 (London, 1838) 241.

⁴⁹ H. R., Insurrection 3. See also Bleby, Reign of Terror 41.

⁵⁰ H. R., Insurrection 3. See also Eyre who said, “The women, as usual on such occasions, were even more brutal and barbarous than the men”: Bleby, Reign of Terror 43.

chairman of the public meeting at the New Road Baptist Chapel, Oxford on 17 December 1866, said:

The vast atrocities which in the first wild paroxysm of alarm were imputed to the Negro, and which formed the pretext for the most dreadful severities, such as drinking the brains of a slain white mixed with rum, were afterwards disproved, and so were the alleged outrages upon women. On the other hand, the worst atrocities imputed to the whites unfortunately cannot be disproved, for they are attested by the damning evidence of their own reports.⁵¹

These allegations of barbaric killings were false. In fact, Bleby said it was the British army who engaged in “revolting barbarities” upon the dead.⁵²

The killing of Mr. Hire, owner of an estate, after the initial protest has been used as an argument to suggest that there was a plan to engage in a massacre. But Bleby had a different interpretation claiming that it was “ill-disposed persons”

⁵¹ “Mr. Goldwin Smith on Baptist Missions in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1867: 51. Harvey and Brewin said the mutilations of the dead were proven false before the Jamaica Royal Commission: Harvey and Brewin 24. Underhill said the JRC found that the outrages on the dead “has no existence”: Edward Underhill, The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865 (London, 1895) 52. H. R. said, “no evidence to sustain charges of outrages”: H. R., Insurrection 3. See another denial of those charges: Bleby, Reign of Terror 43.

⁵² Bleby, Reign of Terror 43. Goldwyn Smith said the same thing.

and “disorderly people” who took advantage of the occasion to retaliate for past grievances.⁵³ It was not part of Bogle’s plan.

The Commissioners seemed to dismiss the faith of the Native Baptists and its role in motivating their actions. The Commissioners juxtaposed “murders” with worship, “It was proved that after the murders Bogle returned to Stony Gut, and that there was a service in his chapel in which he returned thanks to God.”⁵⁴ The intention, apparently, was to demonstrate that the Native Baptists were informed by a misguided understanding of God and indeed had a murderous intent. It was, therefore, not surprising that some unnamed persons lambasted the Native Baptists as “psalm singing apostles of butchery in the name of Divinity”⁵⁵ and that “After half an hour spent in psalm singing by those blood-stained wretches, one of their leaders addressed them, pointing to the favour which the Almighty had shown in delivering their enemies into their hands.”⁵⁶ They were classified as nothing more than Christian mercenaries. But the evidence was that the Native Baptists’ beliefs were genuine and orthodox (chapter four) and that their guiding principles were based on equality, justice and a hermeneutic of liberation (chapter six).

⁵³ Bleby, Reign of Terror 44.

⁵⁴ JRC Vol. 4 512.

⁵⁵ A Thirty Years’ Resident. Jamaica; Who is to blame? Reprinted from two articles in the “Eclectic Review,” “The Problem,” and “Jeopardy of Jamaica.” With introduction and notes by the editor of the “Eclectic Review” (London, n. d.) vi.

⁵⁶ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine 1865: 781.

The Commissioners said it was very important to ascertain whether “the killings were premeditated murders” or “an accidental riot . . . when passion was excited in the heat of the contest, by the killing of opponents,” or “a planned resistance to the constituted authorities.”⁵⁷ However, in the seven conclusions made by the Commissioners not one said the killings were pre-mediated.⁵⁸ This is surprising, and somewhat confusing, as earlier in the summation they claimed that there was “a preconcerted plan.”⁵⁹ Of the three things that were very important to investigate only one did they confirm in their conclusion that is “the disturbances in St. Thomas-in-the-East had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to lawful authority.”⁶⁰ This conclusion cannot be elevated to mean that the killings were pre-mediated because it is possible to have a planned resistance to authorities without there being a plan to kill persons.

An editorial comment from August 1865 by a pro-planter newspaper said “we are confident that the labouring classes of the population of the island, would not, as a body, resort to force for the accomplishment of any subject in which they were interested.”⁶¹ The people were known for their “traits of forbearance” even in the “very tempest - the whirlwind of passion.”⁶² Mr. Heslop, Attorney General, and

⁵⁷ JRC Vol. 4 510.

⁵⁸ JRC Vol. 4 538.

⁵⁹ JRC Vol. 4 512.

⁶⁰ JRC Vol. 4 538.

⁶¹ “Editorial Topics: Rumours of Popular Outbreaks,” Falmouth Post 11 Aug. 1865: 1.

⁶² H. R., Insurrection 3.

Mr. Anderson, Clerk of the Peace for Portland, both swore that the Africans were not violent persons though they would defend themselves if attacked.⁶³ This characterization of the African was consistent with the attitude of the eighteenth century Africans for whom “Murder is with most of them esteemed the highest impiety.”⁶⁴ The people were known for their restraint and did not have a history of engaging in pre-meditated murders.

There is a credible body of literature that suggests that the killings were not premeditated. Nevertheless, the argument in support of the idea that the killings were pre-meditated was not only based on the testimonies of a few persons but was also based on the meetings that Bogle convened, the drills and the oaths administered. Although Gardner followed the position of the Jamaica Royal Commission, he recognized the dissonance between claiming that the killings were pre-meditated and the reality that it was a very short time between the 7 October and 11 October for there to be meetings and drills which would be preparatory to the march into Morant Bay and plans to engage in pre-meditated murders. Gardner, who relied exclusively on the Jamaica Royal Commission Report, admitted, “whether the events of the 7th precipitated the plans of the leaders will perhaps be never known . . .” and speculated that “there is some evidence to the effect that Christmas time had been spoken of as a period of

⁶³ The Case of George William Gordon, With Preliminary Observations on The Jamaica Riot of October 11th, 1865 (London, 1866) 6.

⁶⁴ Edward Long The History of Jamaica, or General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of that Island: With Reflections on its Situations, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws and Government (New Edition With an Introduction by George Metcalf Volume II London: Frank Cass, 1970 First Edition 1774) 416.

action.”⁶⁵ The best that Gardner could do was a conjecture. His theory appears to be that Bogle and his followers were planning an attack in December but the October 7 events brought forward those plans.

The meetings held by Bogle and his followers were perceived as ominous.

However, Underhill said the meetings were held after the rebuff in August by Eyre.⁶⁶ It was to be expected that Bogle and his followers would meet to discuss the problems and the possible solutions after not getting an audience with Eyre.

Semmel said the “illegal drills,” had sinister motives.⁶⁷ Heuman claimed that “the well-ordered march to Morant Bay . . . reinforced the view that this was a carefully planned operation.”⁶⁸ The theory was that Bogle was drilling an army to engage in violent acts. However, there were examples of drilling in Jamaica that had no sinister motive. Heuman in reference to drilling in Trelawny, Elizabeth, St. Dorothy, Westmoreland, said “much of the drilling . . . seemed harmless in retrospect.”⁶⁹ Sheller also mentioned that there were drillings in Kingston that were associated with religious practices.⁷⁰ In addition, the official investigation

⁶⁵ Gardner 477.

⁶⁶ Underhill, *Tragedy* 62.

⁶⁷ Bernard Semmel, *The Governor Eyre Controversy* (London: MacGibbon, 1962) 45-46.

⁶⁸ Heuman, *Killing Time* 89, 184. Heuman did not provide any reference to show that drilling was engaged in by Bogle and his allies in order to engage in violence. In addition, no witness before the JRC made any such claim. Therefore, Heuman’s comment is an interpretation.

⁶⁹ Heuman, *Killing Time* 108.

⁷⁰ Sheller, *After Democracy* 201-02.

claimed that in two or three unnamed parishes, “As regards the drillings it was found upon investigation at the time that they were wholly unconnected with illegal objects.” ⁷¹

Underhill interpreted the drillings at meetings by Bogle and his followers as “harmless amusement and well known to the authorities” and that the outbreak was a spontaneous protest march with short time for preparation. ⁷² Although Heuman claimed that the drilling in St. Thomas in the East was different from what was happening in other parts of the island, based on the comment of Underhill that Bogle’s drillings were harmless, it is possible that the drillings by Bogle and his allies were similar to those in other parts of the island that were not detrimental. Therefore, this writer agrees with the position of Underhill.

Heuman claimed the oaths were accompanied with violent threats (see page 78 above). Paul Bogle administered the oath to George Thomas using a Bible. ⁷³ He also gave George Lake a Bible into his hand for him to take an oath and Lake was told to tell “the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God.” ⁷⁴ Bogle was linking truth telling, the Bible and oath taking (see page 214 above). The quotation recalled words associated with the oaths within the colonial justice

⁷¹ JRC Vol. 4 536.

⁷² Underhill, Tragedy 135.

⁷³ JRC Vol. 5 1038.

⁷⁴ JRC Vol. 5 1036 and From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” The Times 30 April 1866: 9.

system. Bogle was using that which was noble in the colonial justice system to encourage his supporters to be faithful to the cause of justice.

A newspaper reporter speculated that there were two oaths taken by Bogle and his followers, "One of them pledging to secrecy; the other binding to some plan of action, but though many of the Negroes admitted before execution that they had taken these oaths, none would disclose their terms."⁷⁵ Since none of Bogle's supporters disclosed the content of the oaths, it means that claims about the intention and meaning of the oaths are conjecture and interpretation.

Oaths were binding especially for a noble cause. Bogle and his protestors believed fervently in them and would rather die than dishonour the cause. Based on the oaths administered by Bogle, there was nothing menacing about the oaths. The Commissioners concluded that two or three weeks before the protest oaths were taken at meetings held in houses in the neighbourhood of Morant Bay but the "terms of the oath were not shown" and decided that "All that was proved before us respecting it was that an oath was administered, a pledge of secrecy required, and the names of the persons sworn registered."⁷⁶ Taking an oath outside the government's justice system was an act of defiance. However, neither the newspaper report nor the JRC provided any evidence of evil intent in the taking of the oath on a Bible. It appears that the taking of oaths was another

⁷⁵ "From Our Special Correspondent, "The Outbreak in Jamaica," [London] Times 30 Jan. 1866: 9. See also another reference to the Negroes keeping the oath: "The Insurrection in Jamaica," [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865: 9.

⁷⁶ JRC Vol. 4 510.

demonstration about the importance of the Bible in the affairs of the Native Baptists, and as Heuman also said oath taking in 1865 was “a fusion of religion and politics” (see page 67 above).

Another argument used to suggest that they had murderous intention was the charge that they went first to the Police Station to get arms and ammunition (see page 77 above). The Commissioners and Gardner also made that allegation.⁷⁷ However, H. R. gives a different account, claiming that it was only after the Volunteers fired on the people that they raided the “police-barracks” and took arms and ammunition.⁷⁸ George Lake who said Bogle forced him to be a member of his party by threatening to shoot him testified that “I went with him, and when I went, by the time he was going in past [sic] the station, coming down, I was obliged to make him a fool.”⁷⁹ Significantly, Lake who was traveling beside Bogle claimed that Bogle went pass the Police Station.

There is conflicting evidence about whether the killings were pre-meditated and whether certain actions were evidence of intent to kill. This writer sides with Underhill, H. R., Bleby, Harvey and Brewin who claimed that the killings were not pre-meditated.

⁷⁷ JRC Vol. 4 509, 511 and Gardner 477.

⁷⁸ H. R., Insurrection 2-4.

⁷⁹ JRC Vol. 5 1037.

RACE WAR?

There were many references in the JRC's summation about "join your colour," "cleave to the black." and "Colour for Colour" ⁸⁰ Semmel, Burton and Heuman commented on the role of race in the conflict (see page 82 above). However, Douglas Hall and Shirley Gordon did not perceive the Native Baptist War as a race war (see pages 82-83 above). A letter was allegedly found in Bogle's House, and written by E. K. Bailey, a Sergeant in the No. 2 St. Thomas in the East Volunteers. It said "It is time to help ourselves skin for skin . . . Every black man must turn out at once, for the oppression is too great. The white people are now cleaning their guns for us . . . ⁸¹ Bailey's document showed racial pride and a call for solidarity among the oppressed of African origin. They were expecting dire upheavals and they believed that there was strength in numbers and unity.

In addition, the policemen who went to arrest Bogle and who were resisted were of African origin. ⁸² Furthermore, "intelligent and respectable blacks" of the St. Peter's congregation paid glowing tributes to Eyre ⁸³ and "thoughtful and intelligent black men" regarded the outbreak with "consternation and distress." ⁸⁴ There were different attitudes by persons of African origin and some, including

⁸⁰ JRC Vol. 4 509, 511, 514. See also Gardner 478.

⁸¹ Falmouth Post 27 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁸² JRC Vol. 4 509. Constables were of African descent: Harvey and Brewin 24.

⁸³ JRC Vol. 4 485.

⁸⁴ Harvey and Brewin 26.

the Maroons, fought against Bogle and his supporters.⁸⁵ This writer agrees with Hall and Gordon that the 1865 Native Baptist War was not motivated primarily by racial considerations. It might appear as a race war because those who were oppressed were predominantly of African origin and they were the ones who had to engage in resistance. However, it was largely the response of an oppressed people.

After the Native Baptist War of 1865, the Native Baptists congregated at Stony Gut, the location where a Native Baptist chapel stood before it was destroyed by the authorities, and held a worship service at which the English Baptist missionary was the guest preacher.⁸⁶ They had no problem listening to a Caucasian. In fact, the Native Baptists were known for their co-operation and cordiality toward other races.

The 1865 Native Baptist War was not a race war.

REVOLUTION?

There was also the allegation that the ultimate goal of the Native Baptist War was to plunder and take control of the country. The JRC said the protestors claimed that the country had “long been theirs” and they were not planning to lose it.

⁸⁵ “The Insurrection in Jamaica,” [London] Times 16 Dec. 1865: 9. See also Heuman, Killing Time 128.

⁸⁶ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662.

There was also said to be a policy not to burn the houses and trash house on plantations because they were planning to capture the houses and they needed the trash house to produce sugar.⁸⁷ However, Underhill quoted Eyre as saying that there was “no organised or combined action.”⁸⁸ Rev. A. G. Hogg, whose negative attitude toward the protestors is shown by his claim that they engaged in mutilations nevertheless said that “there is no combined or systematized plan against the whites.”⁸⁹ An anonymous experienced missionary said in a letter dated 21 November 1865 that, “Every day that passes tends to increase the feeling that there has been no rebellion . . .”⁹⁰ H. R. added, “there was nothing having the smallest appearance of an armed opposition to authority” and referred to the events as the “so-called rebellion.”⁹¹ The *Times* correspondent supported that conclusion, saying that there was no evidence of an island-wide mass organization among the children of Africa, which was designed to encourage them to rebel.⁹² Harvey and Brewin further added that “active resistance” never ceased only “because it never actually commenced”⁹³ and that the allegation about the “forcible seizure of the lands” was fictitious.⁹⁴ Bleby said it was absurd

⁸⁷ *JRC* Vol. 4 513-14. See also Gardner 479.

⁸⁸ Underhill, *Tragedy* 56, 63. H. R., *Insurrection* 4.

⁸⁹ A. G. Hogg, “Rev. A. G. Hogg’s Letter,” *Jamaica Historical Society Bulletin* 11 (2000): 138.

⁹⁰ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* Jan. 1866: 58. See also: From our Special Correspondent, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” [*London*] *Times* 17 Mar. 1866: 9 and “The Baptists in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1865: 784.

⁹¹ H. R., *Insurrection* 4.

⁹² King, *Sketch* 7.

⁹³ Harvey and Brewin 26.

⁹⁴ Harvey and Brewin 23.

to refer to “the movement as an attempt at rebellion, or anything more than a sudden riot” ⁹⁵ and emphatically said it was an “imaginary plot which the Governor’s own cowardice had conjured up.” ⁹⁶ This writer agrees with H. R., Underhill, the *Times* correspondent, the anonymous missionary and Hogg. The protest was parochial and there was no attempt to overthrow the central government. There was no conclusive evidence of a desire to start a revolution and take control of the country.

African Religious Expression?

Some scholars perceived the 1865 Native Baptist War as influenced by African religious expressions such as Obeah, Myalism and Kumina (see pages 53-64 above). The authorities executed Arthur Wellington, who had a reputation among the people of Somerset as an Obeah man, on 21 October 1865. He was shot on the hill on the side of Monklands in order that others could witness his death. A constable severed his head from his body and the head was subsequently placed on a pole. Colonel Hobbs said the execution was to dissuade the people of the folly of their belief in obeah.⁹⁷ However, there was no evidence that any African religious expression influenced the leadership or membership of the Native Baptists who led the protests. In addition, as chapter three

⁹⁵ Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 37. See also Bleby 45.

⁹⁶ Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 31. He also said, “no traces of any plot or organization could be discovered”: Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 37.

⁹⁷ *JRC* Vol. 4 520-21.

demonstrated the Native Baptists were a Bible-centred and hymn singing organization within an institutional structure. They also met in their chapels before and after the protests.⁹⁸

Marches For Justice

Under the chairmanship of Gordon, a number of resolutions were passed at the 12 August 1865 Underhill Meeting in St. Thomas and a deputation of six led by Paul Bogle was mandated to seek an audience with Governor Eyre. Underhill described the situation as:

The good faith of the people is made clearly manifest by the fact, that they sent a deputation to Spanish Town to lay before His Excellency the resolutions of the meeting. They trudged the weary forty miles on foot to see him, that they might personally lay their grievances at his feet; but the Governor not only declined to listen, but refused to admit them to his presence . . . He whom, as the Queen's representative, they rightly expected to be their friend, acted as their foe.⁹⁹

Bogle and his followers wanted to have an audience with the Governor about their grievances. This was a reasonable expectation based on the fact that in the 1840s, a deputation of Native Baptists had audience with Governor Metcalfe.

⁹⁸ JRC Vol. 4 535.

⁹⁹ Underhill, Tragedy 56-57. See also JRC Vol. 4. 529-30.

And in mid 1865, Eyre received a deputation of two Assemblymen from St. David concerning deteriorating conditions in the parish.¹⁰⁰ The Native Baptists believed, perhaps foolishly, that the Queen's representative was legally bound to protect their interests and rights. They marched peacefully to Spanish Town and there was no incident.

It was very noticeable that there was a conspicuous absence from the Jamaica Royal Commission Report of any statement from the Governor or anyone that Bogle and the concerned residents of St. Thomas made a trek to the Governor in Spanish Town to deliver resolutions. There was also no record of the exact date that Bogle visited the Governor. There was no acknowledgement that Bogle and the followers made efforts to resist oppressive authorities through the presentation of resolutions.

The desire for protection from the British Crown and for redress to the injustices were also shown by Bogle and nineteen others who wrote a letter to Governor Edward Eyre, the day before the 1865 Native Baptist War, affirming that they were loyal subjects of the Queen, "We, therefore call upon your Excellency for protection, seeing we are Her Majesty's loyal subjects."¹⁰¹ They considered themselves as law-abiding subjects who should be protected by the authorities against the injustices in the society. They had a high regard for what they believed to be lawful constituted authority. They desired a resolution of the

¹⁰⁰ "Editorial Topics: The Governor, and the Press," Falmouth Post 18 July, 1865: 1.

¹⁰¹ JRC Vol. 4 512.

impasse based on dialogue. There was no intention of a surprise attack. Even the Commissioners acknowledged that the letter was laid before them to “show the peaceful intentions of the writers.”¹⁰² They, however, were not convinced.¹⁰³ Harvey and Brewin disagreed with the Commissioners and said of the letter, “It may be read either as a last and *bona fide* appeal against oppression, or as a declaration of war. The Royal Commissioners put the latter construction upon it; we think the other the just inference.”¹⁰⁴ Underhill, who claimed that the protestors went to the Police Station first, and who condemned the killings by the rioters said “that there was no intention on the part of the people to rebel or resist the authorities is clear from the fact that, on Monday, the 9th some twenty persons, including three Bogles, forwarded a petition to Eyre.”¹⁰⁵ Bleby’s interpretation of the letter was that it showed that the intention was to engage in passive resistance.¹⁰⁶

Writing to Eyre, who earlier refused Bogle and his followers an audience, demonstrated that they were willing to go the extra mile in search of a diplomatic solution. They were for community problem-solving and desired dispute resolution. This writer agrees with the Commissioners that the letter was laid before them to show the peaceful intentions of the writers. This writer disagrees

¹⁰² JRC Vol. 4 512.

¹⁰³ JRC Vol. 4 512.

¹⁰⁴ Harvey and Brewin 24.

¹⁰⁵ Underhill, Tragedy 60, 61, 63.

¹⁰⁶ Bleby, Reign of Terror 37-38.

with the Commissioners and agrees with Underhill, Bleby, Harvey and Brewin about the intentions of the letter written by Bogle and his followers.

This letter from the perspective of the Native Baptists showed that they saw themselves as victims of injustices, police brutality, and judicial excesses and that they felt compelled to engage in civil disobedience. They saw themselves as long-suffering, having endured 27 years of oppression. They were also expressing disappointment that emancipation had not lived up to their expectations. They saw the events of October 7 differently. They were victimized and they desired justice.

Another protest for justice was displayed on Saturday 7 October 1865. A band of one hundred protestors with their sticks marched to Morant Bay concerning a case involving Lewis Miller.¹⁰⁷ They went in support of Miller because they also saw this case as a test about their rights to land. This protest did not result in the death of anyone.

After this march, there was a disturbance and warrants were issued for the arrest of Bogle and his followers. The policemen went to Bogle and his followers to serve the warrants. Bogle told the policemen that they would be marching down to Morant Bay on October 11.¹⁰⁸ If their intentions were to cause destruction and

¹⁰⁷ JRC Vol. 4 508-09 and JRC Vol. 5 780. See also Harvey and Brewin 23. H. R., said 150: H. R., Insurrection 1. Hutton said Bogle led a march of 250: Hutton, Colour 26.

¹⁰⁸ JRC Vol. 4 452.

death then it made little sense to forewarn the authorities. This foretelling could be an indication of noble intentions.

Several witnesses testified that when the protestors marched into Morant Bay it was accompanied by music, dancing, singing and merry making.¹⁰⁹ An unnamed Justice of the Peace from St. Mary said he heard bugles, drums and “jesting, laughing and making fun.”¹¹⁰ The nature of the celebration was not consistent with persons bent on causing murderous mayhem. It would have been foolhardy to make so much noise if one was intent on a guerilla-type attack. The dancing, music, singing, laughing were inconsistent with a plan for a surprise attack and was more consistent with a march for justice or anticipation of victory.

Underhill claimed that the protestors marched to Morant Bay to attend the Vestry “to state anew their grievances.”¹¹¹ According to him, their design was to agitate for better governance and better working and living conditions. H. R. also offered an interpretation of the events of that Wednesday and said, “What was their object is now impossible to say . . . they might have intended only to surrender to the warrants issued against them . . .” He added that Wednesday was the day warrants were returnable and the number of persons that

¹⁰⁹ Evidence of Cecilia Gordon: JRC Vol. 4 368; Testimony of John Bubruison: JRC Vol. 4 355; Evidence of George Fuller Osborne: JRC Vol. 4 431; Evidence of Rev. Stephen Cooke: JRC Vol. 4 452.

¹¹⁰ JRC Vol. 4 429

¹¹¹ Underhill, Tragedy 60. Hardly likely because parish Vestry meetings were held quarterly: Bleby, Reign of Terror 35

accompanied Bogle were needed to bail all those who were issued warrants.¹¹² H. R., though claiming that Bogle usurped the law,¹¹³ did not perceive any menacing motive. Similarly, Bleby said, “It has never been explained what specific purpose they had in view, in marching into the town as they did; but it was probably nothing more than was meant by the late Reform gatherings in London, which were designed for no purpose of violence, but as demonstrations . . . to assert what they conceived to be their claims to right and justice.”¹¹⁴ Underhill, Bleby and H. R., gave different reasons for Bogle’s march into Morant Bay but none said that there was a malevolent motive and all perceived that it had to do with the search for justice.

The Commissioners also exercised their minds on what was the motive of the protestors and after hearing the testimonies of 730 witnesses said:

Mr. Gordon might know well the distinction between a ‘rebellion’ and a ‘demonstration of it.’ He might be able to trust himself to go so far as he could with safety, and no further. But that would not be so easy to his ignorant and fanatical followers. They would find it difficult to restrain themselves from rebellion when making a demonstration of it.¹¹⁵

¹¹² H. R., Insurrection 2-3.

¹¹³ H. R., Insurrection 3.

¹¹⁴ Bleby, Reign of Terror 36.

¹¹⁵ JRC Vol. 4 535.

The Commissioners were discrediting Bogle and his followers of having a great difficulty of executing a demonstration only. Since the Commissioners did not refer to the protest as a “rebellion’ but as a “planned resistance to lawful authority,” ¹¹⁶ it can be inferred that the Commissioners were admitting that it was a demonstration in intention but because they were ignorant, unlike Gordon, they were not able to restrain their emotions and the demonstration moved from its original purpose and became a resistance to authority.

In addition, Bleby said that it was a march for justice, “They brought no fire-arms with them; for those which they afterwards used they took from the police station, after they found the volunteers drawn up in hostile array to receive them.” ¹¹⁷

Matthew Cresser, who was employed by Robert Kirkland, claimed that the day after the Native Baptist War he was forcibly taken to Stony Gut by one hundred men and he heard an address by Bogle, which described the intention of Bogle in marching to Morant Bay on October 11, 1865. Cresser who claimed that the protestors bought gunpowder and had the “determination to kill Mr. Bowen” quoted Bogle as saying:

¹¹⁶ JRC Vol. 4 538.

¹¹⁷ Bleby, Reign of Terror 36. Bleby repeated that they marched unarmed in Morant Bay, 37.

Well, my friends, the other day, Monday, they sent policemen here for me, but I would not go. On Wednesday I went down to Morant Bay to get bail, and some people go with me, and as I go in the parade they fired on the people, and the people returned it again . . . No one of you to go to any work, and if any man go out to work he is to get dollar a day . . . ¹¹⁸

Cresser was no apologist for Bogle so this quotation has great credibility. This statement concurred with what H. R. wrote in 1865 about Bogle's intention. ¹¹⁹ Holt also suggested that this viewpoint was a legitimate possibility. ¹²⁰ In the words of Bogle, there was no intention to engage in brutality. Bogle claimed that he was going to engage in his civic responsibility to get bail. In addition, he was pre-occupied with concern about low wages and poor working conditions for the labourers.

After the march, Bogle returned to Stony Gut and "there was a service in the chapel in which he returned thanks to God that he " 'went to this work, and that God had succeeded him in his work.' " ¹²¹ Bogle believed that he was "appointed instrument in the Lord's hand." ¹²² The prayer after the event and the feeling of

¹¹⁸ JRC Vol. 4 417-18. Cresser repeated an also identical statement when he testified before the commission JRC Vol. 5 144. See also Holt 297.

¹¹⁹ H. R., Insurrection 2-3.

¹²⁰ Holt 297.

¹²¹ JRC Vol. 4 512, 535.

¹²² JRC Vol. 4 535.

being an instrument of God were signs that Bogle and his followers were concerned about justice.

The claim that Bogle and his group engaged in a march for justice is based on:

- ✓ The tone and contents of the letter they wrote to Eyre,
- ✓ The forty mile trek with resolutions to seek audience with Eyre,
- ✓ The march on October 7 being uneventful,
- ✓ They were not carrying guns and arms on October 11,
- ✓ They did not fire any gun,
- ✓ The deaths were caused by agricultural tools,
- ✓ The contents of Bogle's speech after the event
- ✓ They giving thanks in the chapel after the October 11 march.

COMPELLED TO RESIST PROVOCATION

On Saturday, 7 October 1865, Bogle and his approximately twenty supporters rescued from the Police, a man called Charles Geoghegan, who had been committed to prison by Justices Walton and Bowen for disturbing the Court of Petty Sessions held at Morant Bay. ¹²³ A policeman shoved Geoghegan out of the courthouse as Geoghegan was exiting the building and a commotion resulted when he complained. ¹²⁴ Bogle and those who rescued Geoghegan were served

¹²³ "The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 14 Oct. 1865: 2 and "The Rebellion in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 20 Oct. 1865: 2. See also George B Clarke's testimony which confirmed the incident in the courthouse: JRC Vol. 5 125.

¹²⁴ JRC Vol. 5 125.

with warrants and they wrote a letter to the Governor which expressed disgust at the “outrageous assault” committed by the policemen against innocent persons and that they “were compelled to resist.”¹²⁵ When the policemen took the warrants to the residences of Bogle and the others in Stony Gut, they were resisted.¹²⁶ Bleby said, “Bogle and his associates resisted the officers, and made them prisoners; dismissing them, however, after time, without harm . . .”¹²⁷ This was an act of defiance. Harvey and Brewin in analyzing the issuing of warrants said, “we see the magistrates issuing not summons but warrants for the bodily arrest of twenty-five or twenty-eight men for the rescue of Geoghegan, making the worst of the offence.”¹²⁸ Underhill added “If the resistance to the execution of the unjust decisions of the magistrates was at all preconcerted, which seems doubtful, there can be no doubt it was occasioned by the despair of the people of being treated with justice.”¹²⁹ Underhill was claiming there were mitigating circumstances to resisting arrest. Bleby claimed that the attempt to arrest Geoghegan outside the courthouse was “illegal” because they had “no authority without a warrant to arrest men out of the court.”¹³⁰ He became even more strident about the issuing of warrants against Bogle and others on the charge of

¹²⁵ JRC Vol. 4 512.

¹²⁶ H. R., Insurrection 2 and JRC Vol. 4 509.

¹²⁷ Bleby, Reign of Terror 34- 35. A newspaper reported that the police were beaten: “Royal Proclamation,” Colonial Standard 29 Oct. 1865: 2. However, George Fuller Osborne, one of six policemen who went to serve warrants on Bogle and his followers, did not testify that he was beaten but said only that he was asked to take an oath: JRC Vol. 4 445.

¹²⁸ Harvey and Brewin 25.

¹²⁹ Edward Underhill, Life of James Mursell Phillippo: Missionary in Jamaica (London, 1881) 331.

¹³⁰ Bleby, Reign of Terror 33.

interfering with the police in the execution of their duty, saying that it amounted “to a declaration of war against the black people” who had resisted “the illegal apprehension of a man without a warrant” and also called it a “provocation.” ¹³¹ Bogle and his followers therefore called for protection from the Governor and warned that if they were exposed to further abuse they would be “compelled to put our shoulders to the wheel.” ¹³² This statement was implying that they would resist any additional abuse. Native Baptists felt duty bound to resist oppression and felt obligated to continue to resist injustices. Their social protest sanctioned and allowed for resistance to authority.

Bogle and his followers also felt compelled to resist because they “have been imposed upon for a period of 27 years” during which time they have given “due obeisance to the laws of our Queen and country.” For them resisting oppression was not a sign of disloyalty to the Queen or disregard for the laws. Apparently, the protestors felt that having endured 27 years of oppression, they were being reasonable in resisting and seeking protection from central government against the indignities they were suffering. These conditions over the twenty-seven years were provoking a response from Bogle and his followers.

Some of the oppressive conditions endured for twenty-seven years were outlined in Underhill’s letter to Edward Cardwell, Secretary of Colonies. Underhill’s 1865 letter spoke to “starving people” and “unjust taxation of the coloured population”

¹³¹ Bleby, Reign of Terror 34.

¹³² JRC Vol. 4 512.

and “refusal of just tribunals” and the “denial of political rights to the emancipated Negroes.” ¹³³ Eight years later, Underhill stated, “The evidence is conclusive that the Petty Sessions Courts were presided over by partial judges, that the costs were extravagant and the sentences were severe even to injustice upon the labouring class and lenient upon the higher.” ¹³⁴ For example, in 1865, at the Bath courthouse, there were 186 cases in which the planters were never the defendants, while the labourers were defendants 180 times and the social position of the other defendants was classified as “Other persons.” In addition, 185 labourers were either fined or imprisoned. ¹³⁵ This was an extraordinary rate of conviction, almost 100%. This meant that once the labourer went to court, he was almost guaranteed a conviction, a problem a planter would never encounter at Bath, based on the 1865 data. The Bath courthouse was associated with injustices.

This bias that was noticed in Bath was also evident in Morant Bay. Walton and Bowen, who were planters, were the two justices who adjudicated on the case on 7 October 1865 at Morant Bay courthouse. ¹³⁶ This was a conflict of interest because the planter class wanted the peasants to pay rent for the land while the peasants argued that they were entitled to certain lands.

¹³³ Underhill, *Tragedy* xv-xvi.

¹³⁴ Underhill, *Tragedy* 58.

¹³⁵ *JRC* Vol. 5 1100.

¹³⁶ Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 33.

The Queen's Advice claiming that the peasants needed to work harder was seen as "a mockery of their distress."¹³⁷ Rev. Mr. Clarke, curate of Westmoreland, refused to read Cardwell's response to the Underhill Letter claiming, that he "did not consider that His Excellency Governor Eyre and his advisers are free from the guilt of inciting to rebellion."¹³⁸ The Queen's Advice and response to Underhill Letter were seen as provoking the people.

In addition, resolutions passed at the Morant Bay Underhill Meeting complained about "the unconstitutional and unprecedented act of the government" in providing £250 to defend the Custos against their duly elected representatives. They also complained that the "arbitrary, illegal, and inconsistent conduct of the Custos was destructive to the peace and prosperity of the affairs of the parish."¹³⁹

The question of who fired first has implications on whether the protestors were compelled to resist or they were the aggressors. Tucker said the protestors responded to the firing by the Volunteers (see page 79 above). While the JRC summation said, "There was some conflict of evidence on the point, whether stones were thrown before the firing commenced",¹⁴⁰ some evidence before the JRC seems to suggest that the Volunteers fired first. George Fuller Osborne, a

¹³⁷ Underhill, Life 329.

¹³⁸ Underhill, Tragedy 168.

¹³⁹ JRC Vol. 4 250, 530.

¹⁴⁰ JRC Vol. 4 509. Underhill also claimed that there was a contradictory evidence: Underhill, Tragedy 62

Maroon and one of the Policemen who went to serve the warrant on Bogle said, “I heard the guns firing, and I saw the Volunteers and people together. I saw about five people put fire to the school-house.” ¹⁴¹ The sequence appears to be the Volunteers fired first and then the school set on fire. Celia Gordon, a resident of Morant Bay, heard guns firing in the parade and saw people running from the direction of the parade. ¹⁴² George Lake, who helped the Maroons to capture Bogle, testified that the Volunteers fired in a party, “boom, boom, boom – and I saw a few of the Bogle’s men run back after the others got shot . . .” ¹⁴³ Gordon and Lake making no mention of the protestors throwing stones seems indicative that the Volunteers fired first. In addition, Bleby questioned the validity of the claim that stones were thrown when “not one person has been brought forward that was hurt or hit by those missiles; and it is probably a fabrication got up to justify or excuse the sanguinary deed which brought on the fatal collision.” ¹⁴⁴ There were others who claimed that Bogle and his followers were fired upon. H. R. said, “The volunteers fired into the crowd, doing great execution. It was only then, after they had been fired into and numbers of them killed, that they made a rush on the volunteers . . .” ¹⁴⁵ Jonathan East, English Baptist historian, said that the sequence of events was that the Riot Act was read, the Volunteers fired upon

¹⁴¹ JRC Vol. 4 445.

¹⁴² JRC Vol. 4 368.

¹⁴³ JRC Vol. 5 1037.

¹⁴⁴ Bleby, Reign of Terror 45.

¹⁴⁵ H. R., Insurrection 2. Underhill said the protestors hurled stones first: Underhill, Life 331. Also Harvey and Brewin 24.

the protestors, who then responded.¹⁴⁶ In addition, Bleby claimed that the Volunteers “sent a deadly volley into the midst of the advancing crowd. This was repeated; and between thirty and forty, killed or grievously wounded.”¹⁴⁷ The Volunteers not only fired first but they also fired second too. As Bleby states it, the Volunteers launched a “savage and murderous attack.”¹⁴⁸ Bleby made a valid point that the more sensible thing to do was to fire blank cartridges before proceeding to the “fatal extremity of the rifle ball.”¹⁴⁹ By this action, the Volunteers were inciting a forceful reaction. Indeed, Bleby also felt that the people had a duty to retaliate, “and the people upon whom they ordered the volunteers to fire would have been more or less than men, had they not retaliated in the way they did.”¹⁵⁰ They had to defend their honour and affirm their self-hood.

The *Colonial Standard* in describing what happened said the protestors tried with “brick bats and sticks to force entry into the Court House.”¹⁵¹ There was no mention of guns in this first report. In addition, a pro-planter newspaper

¹⁴⁶ Jonathan East, “The West Indies” The Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1892 ed. John Brown Myers (London, 1892) 200. See also Leonard Tucker, Glorious Liberty: The Story of a Hundred Years’ Work of the Jamaica Baptist Mission (London, 1914) 79. Bleby felt that the Riot Act was hastily read and that some in the crowd did not know what it meant: Bleby, Reign of Terror 40.

¹⁴⁷ Bleby, Reign of Terror 40. See Bleby repeat the allegation that the Volunteers “fired successive volleys”: Bleby 46.

¹⁴⁸ Bleby, Reign of Terror 41. See also that Custos performed the first act of violence: Bleby 45.

¹⁴⁹ Bleby, Reign of Terror 41.

¹⁵⁰ Bleby, Reign of Terror 46.

¹⁵¹ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” Colonial Standard 14 Oct. 1865: 2.

claimed “there has not been a shot fired at the troops, since they went out to suppress the rebellion” ¹⁵² One unnamed writer asked “what a strange and unheard of kind of insurrection is this -in which, when, when once the riot is over, not a single blow is struck nor shot fired on the part of the insurgents?” ¹⁵³ There was no report of use of firearms by the protestors or that any Volunteer was shot and killed.

The protestors killed approximately eighteen persons. ¹⁵⁴ The JRC Report found that there “was not a practice of wholesale killing” or targeting of Europeans. ¹⁵⁵ The *Colonial Standard* reported that Dr. Gerard’s life was spared because “they would not kill the Doctors, because they were needed.” ¹⁵⁶ In addition, they “did not intend to injure any women or children.” ¹⁵⁷ There was a resolve not to harm women, children and doctors.

A letter was supposedly found in Bogle’s House, and written by E. K. Bailey, whom the newspaper report described as an “arch-traitor,” “base hypocrite” and “perjured scoundrel.” The report also had it as being signed by “Paul Bogle, B.

¹⁵² “The Winding up of the Affairs of the Rebellion,” *Falmouth Post* 7 Nov. 1865: 2. For a similar claim see also H. R., *Insurrection* 1, 4, “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* Jan. 1866: 59 and Underhill, *Tragedy* 48.

¹⁵³ “The Baptists in Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* 1865: 784.

¹⁵⁴ Heuman, *Killing Time* 14.

¹⁵⁵ *JRC* Vol. 4 510.

¹⁵⁶ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” *Colonial Standard* 16 Oct. 1865: 2. See also *JRC* Vol. 5 220.

¹⁵⁷ “The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East,” *Colonial Standard* 14 Oct. 1865: 2. Eyre said, “No ladies or children had yet been injured”: Bleby, *Reign of Terror* 43.

Clarke, J. G. McLaren and P. Cameron” who said: “We all must put our shoulders to the wheel and pull together . . . for the oppression is too great. The white people are now cleaning their guns for us . . .”¹⁵⁸ This was a strange document, which, though written by E. K. Bailey, was not signed by him. And William Ogilvie who knew Bailey’s handwriting said the signatures were “all in the handwriting of Bailey.” In addition, there was another witness, William Gabey, who claimed he recognized the handwriting as belonging to E. K. Bailey.¹⁵⁹ Why would someone sign on behalf of this group when three of them were known to be literate? Bogle, McLaren, Clarke and Cameron did not sign this letter, and therefore one cannot be sure if this letter reflected their thinking. The letter was dated 17 October¹⁶⁰ and the outbreak was on the 11 October¹⁶¹ so there was time for all four to sign this document. Not to mention, Bailey was not a credible witness, based on the newspaper report. In spite of the issue of the authenticity of this letter, there was an expectation of the authorities attacking them.¹⁶² Therefore, even a disputed writing reflected a call to resist those who were perceived as planning to harm them. They felt they had an obligation to resist oppression.

¹⁵⁸ Falmouth Post 27 Oct. 1865: 2.

¹⁵⁹ JRC Vol. 5 219.

¹⁶⁰ JRC Vol. 5 929 and JRC Vol. 5 219.

¹⁶¹ JRC Vol. 4 509.

¹⁶² JRC Vol. 5 219 and JRC Vol. 5 1036.

English-born Edna Manley, a sculptor who visited Stony Gut on 19 November 1964 as part of the preparation to build a statue of Paul Bogle to mark the centenary of the Native Baptist War of 1865, met an old lady whose father was Bogle's great friend and she told her that after Bogle and his followers took the guns from the courthouse, they did not fire them because they could not use them. When it was enquired why they took the guns the old lady replied " 'maybe they took them to keep the soldiers from using them.' " ¹⁶³ This pragmatic action could also explain why they took guns from the Police Station and did not use them.

The Native Baptists had no guns and no ammunition of their own. ¹⁶⁴ One report said that "If they had arms" then it was "probably no more than sticks" and in any case these were "never used." ¹⁶⁵ Some other reports claimed that Bogle and his followers were "armed with sticks" ¹⁶⁶ while others said they had cutlasses ¹⁶⁷ while still other witnesses said they were armed with sticks and cutlasses. ¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Rachel Manley, ed. Edna Manley: The Diaries (Kingston: Heinemann Publishers (Caribbean), 1989) 67.

¹⁶⁴ JRC Vol. 4 445.

¹⁶⁵ "The Baptists in Jamaica," Baptist Magazine 1865: 784.

¹⁶⁶ "Riot and Loss of Life in St. Thomas in the East," Falmouth Post 17 Oct. 1865: 2. See also other reports that they had sticks: "Royal Proclamation," Colonial Standard 29 Oct. 1865: 2; "The Insurrection in Jamaica" Missionary Herald 805 in Baptist Magazine 1865 and G. Henderson, Goodness and Mercy (Kingston: Gleaner, 1931) 107.

¹⁶⁷ Special Correspondent, "Latest Intelligence from the Scene of the Insurrection-Highly Important Confessions," Colonial Standard 19 Oct. 1865: 2 and "The Riots in Saint Thomas in the East," Colonial Standard 14 Oct. 1865: 2. Bleby speculated "they had not even armed themselves with the cutlass": Bleby, Reign of Terror 36. This was not corroborated.

¹⁶⁸ JRC Vol. 5 414, 1037.

Baptist pastor George Henderson, whose father was a missionary in 1865, though calling the 1865 event “tragic” and the movement “political” claimed that Bogle and his followers were equipped with their agricultural tools (see page 79 above). Heuman also pointed out that sticks found in St. Elizabeth were not as threatening as once believed. He said of the revivalists that there was a “ceremonial use of ornamental sticks” in their rituals.¹⁶⁹ In addition, in Trinidad, the apprentices’ cutlasses formed “part of their equipment” and they traveled with their cutlasses on estates and other places. It was observed that the apprentices do not go anywhere without them.¹⁷⁰ It is possible that the sticks and cutlasses carried by the protestors were not as threatening as once believed and that Henderson is correct in claiming that they were equipped with their agricultural tools. Therefore, it is possible that they carried them to resist provocation.

The Native Baptists carrying their sticks and cutlasses was reminiscent of the days of Nehemiah. When Nehemiah and the people were rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem, they had to protect themselves from enemies and so they had their tools in one hand and their weapons in the other (Neh. 4: 6-19). This was not a sign that they were violent but a pragmatic action based on the need to resist those who wanted to destroy them. The Native Baptists were informed by their hermeneutic of liberation, which desired full freedom from oppression and which allowed for resistance to oppression.

¹⁶⁹ Heuman, *Killing Time* 109.

¹⁷⁰ Studholme Hodgson, *Truths from the West Indies. Including a Sketch of Madeira in 1833* (London, 1838) 280.

Forgiving Violent Reprisals

Bleby commended the protestors for their restraint when they had the town and inhabitants completely at their mercy for many hours.¹⁷¹ However, the authorities did not display any such restraint. Bleby said that acts of violence were committed against the “unarmed and unresisting people” leaving “a multitude of widows and fatherless children without a shelter.”¹⁷² An English Baptist publication said, “The terror has been universal.”¹⁷³ H. R. said the military authorities engaged in a “carnival of torture and slaughter.”¹⁷⁴ It was also reported of the killings: “the soldiers enjoy it.”¹⁷⁵ And the official Inquiry discovered a “tone of levity which is to be found in the letters and the language of some of the officers while engaged in serious and responsible duties.”¹⁷⁶ Edwin Palmer, who witnessed some of the executions during his six months of imprisonment, said:

¹⁷¹ Bleby, Reign of Terror 47.

¹⁷² Bleby, Reign of Terror 49.

¹⁷³ “Terror Stops the Expression of Opinion,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 59. For a description of the terror see: Bleby, Reign of Terror and Underhill, Tragedy 110-19. See also “Port Antonio,” Colonial Standard 19 Oct. 1865: 2.

¹⁷⁴ H. R., Insurrection of Jamaica 4.

¹⁷⁵ “Jamaica. (From the “Dublin Review.”): (Concluded.),” Morning Journal 23 Jan. 1867: [2] and H. R., Insurrection 6.

¹⁷⁶ JRC Vol. 4 40.

Districts once densely populated are now desolate, villages swept clean, townships blotted out. It is stated that from Morant Bay to Monkland, a distance of fourteen miles, including Stoney Gut, York, Middleton, Hillside, Font Hill, Trinity Village, Somerset, &c., there is scarcely a man who has not been catted; and that from Morant Bay to Manchioneal to Portland, there were very few black inhabitants left. ¹⁷⁷

Another report said, “The soldiers were let loose in this country, and did their work with savage fury, shooting down the good, bad, and indifferent, spreading death and desolation. The road for miles was said to have been insufferable, from the stench of the rotting bodies of men and women.” ¹⁷⁸ Phillippo, in a letter dated 5 January 1866, described the swift punishment of the protestors thus:

Of men wantonly shot down from the roof of their houses when employed in repairing them; of women stabbed, in their huts, with children at their breasts, or in other indescribable condition, the children dashed upon the ground and murdered – of men flogged and then hanged – of numbers paraded through the town to execution, with halters round their necks – and of still greater atrocities perpetrated in the woods and open fields. ¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ “The Case of the Rev. Edwin Palmer,” Baptist Magazine Mar. 1866: 191-92.

¹⁷⁸ Underhill, Tragedy 51.

¹⁷⁹ Underhill, Life 340.

Palmer estimated based on “several witnesses” that there were “between two or three thousand” victims.¹⁸⁰ An old unnamed missionary estimated that 3,400 were killed¹⁸¹ which was much more than the official estimate of 439.¹⁸²

This “reign of terror” was not unique to Jamaica but was part of the colonial mentality, which reacted with excessive force to protests, which were seen as threatening lives and properties. The *New York Times* reported “ ‘Two Thousand Negroes Killed-Eight Miles of Dead Bodies! . . . It was so in all massacres of Ireland and Scotland -it was so in the Indian mutiny, and it was so in Jamaica. They get into panic and they kill, kill, kill.’ ”¹⁸³ The brutalities were intended to teach a lesson. The newspaper also said that the punishment of the Africans who protested included “smoking with brimstone” which was to give “a taste of hell before they got there.”¹⁸⁴

The violent reprisals were undertaken with relish and executed with wild abandon with the aim of frightening the peasants into never contemplating organizing resistance again, to stifle any ambition about political governance, to

¹⁸⁰ “The Case of the Rev. Edwin Palmer,” *Baptist Magazine* Mar. 1866: 191-92. The estimate from Palmer’s wife, see also: “Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* Feb. 1866: 121.

¹⁸¹ “Jamaica,” *Baptist Magazine* Feb. 1866: 123.

¹⁸² *JRC* Vol. 4 40.

¹⁸³ Interesting Letter from our London Correspondent, “Affairs in Great Britain,” *New York Times* 15 Dec. 1865: 1. H. R said “From Long Bay to Manchioneal, the road for eight miles is strewn with dead bodies so that it is difficult to pass”: H. R., *Insurrection* 4.

¹⁸⁴ S. Copland, *Black and White; Or, the Jamaica Question* (London, 1866) 23.

force them back unto working for low wages on the estates and to remind the governed that the rulers could strike with brutality at any time.

After the 1865 Native Baptist War, Teall went to Stony Gut, the location where a Native Baptist chapel stood before it was destroyed by the authorities, and held a worship service. There, an unnamed man related his ordeal to Teall and said, “Minister them use me very bad. They cut my back, and shut me up for nine days and nights in a condemned cell. They burnt my house and everything I had in it; but I thank God, Minister, I don’t feel any resentment. My breast is clear.”¹⁸⁵

Also, at the end of the service, George B. Clarke addressed the congregation, saying, “ ‘My friends, all the wrongs which so many of us have suffered unjustly at the hands of the authorities and soldiers - I know I speak your sentiments as well as my own when I say we freely forgive, as well as all who have injured us in any way.’ ”¹⁸⁶ The Native Baptists displayed a forgiving spirit in spite of the carnage experienced. The Native Baptists who survived the ordeal of the reprisals met there and pronounced forgiveness on those who had wronged them. They showed a willingness not to exhibit any bitterness, hatred, or anger toward those who had caused the offence. They followed the command in the Bible to forgive “until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22). This is perhaps one of the reasons the Native Baptists were attracted to Isaac Watts’s hymns because he had removed invectives from them and therefore, unlike the Psalms, these hymns did not advocate revenge. Abigail Bakan, political scientist and Marxist, said that in the 1865 event, the protestors invariably sought allies in the church and state in order

¹⁸⁵ “Jamaica. Visit to Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Oct. 1866: 662.

¹⁸⁶ “Morant Bay,” Baptist Magazine Sept. 1866: 599-600.

to legitimize their protest even when the dictates of the church and state were the very objects of protest.¹⁸⁷ Bakan thought the persons who were oppressed were too accommodating to people who were oppressing them. This, however, was a misunderstanding of the role of forgiveness in the lifestyle of the Native Baptists. After the Native Baptists had resisted the injustices and after they had survived the deadly destruction and witnessed the carnage of their family and friends they had the capacity to forgive. They had no intention to exterminate the oppressors but instead forgave them.

Equally important about this service where forgiveness was pronounced was that the Native Baptists did not make any confession of sins. They were the victims and they did not think that they had engaged in pre-meditated murders. They also thought it was a duty to resist oppression. In addition, the English Baptist missionary did not demand that the Native Baptists repent because apparently they were perceived as wronged rather than doing wrongs.

In addition, Gordon did not hold a grudge even toward his greatest opponents. He pitied the Governor who denied him a fair trial, saying “May the Lord be merciful to him” and in his last letter to his wife, Lucy, “Remember me affectionately and forgivingly to all.”¹⁸⁸ The same blessing he craved for his wife was what he desired for his adversaries. He was able to bless those who guarded

¹⁸⁷ Abigail Bakan, Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1990) 134.

¹⁸⁸ King, Sketch 8, 12, 13.

him while in prison and he petitioned that the Lord would bless Brigadier General Nelson, commander of the troops ¹⁸⁹ and all the soldiers.¹⁹⁰ His last words were to forgive all whether they knew what they were doing or not, whether they were directly or indirectly involved.

Summary of the Nature of the 1865 Native Baptist War

To claim that Bogle and his followers engaged in pre-mediated killings and were motivated by race war would seem to be out of character for Bogle as the evidence would suggest otherwise. It would mean that the Biblical hermeneutic of liberation that was based on equality and justice did not inform their prophetic response to the situation. It would mean that these deeply religious persons suspended or abandoned their religious faith when they needed it most. It would mean that Bogle would have had undergone a total transformation of character from the time of the first march in August 1865 to the third march in October 1865. But there were testimonials to the sterling character of Bogle. Harvey and Brewin said that Bogle had “always borne a good character.” ¹⁹¹ This statement was indicative that Bogle did not change his disposition and was a person of noble character and actions. In addition, persons associated with the Native Baptist Communion had great testimonials. The Commissioners inquiring into the uprising of 1865 asked Clarke, “You are Mr. George B. Clarke that the justice

¹⁸⁹ “From the Disturbed Districts,” Colonial Standard 16 Oct. 1865: 2.

¹⁹⁰ King, Sketch 13.

¹⁹¹ Harvey and Brewin 22.

gives such a good character of.”¹⁹² The leaders associated with the Native Baptists were well respected. The Native Baptists’ hermeneutic of liberation, that is, their reflection on their lived experience in the light of the Scriptural teaching on equality and justice as they understood it, shaped the nature of their practised resistance. The killings were not pre-meditated. They believed that they were compelled to resist oppressive conditions that provoked a response. They tried peaceful means at first, such as the walk to Spanish Town to see the Governor, but never ruled out resistance. Their understanding of the Biblical hermeneutic meant that they could respond forcibly if necessary to prevailing conditions. However, their response was informed by their belief in the equality and justice for all. Therefore, they could not respond excessively but only with decorum. Any excess was not sanctioned by Bogle and was definitely outside the ambit of their Biblical hermeneutic. The glue that held the movement and protest together was not race or desire for revolution as their detractors tried to make out and it was not even their innate character as some missionaries implied, but the religious faith of the Native Baptists, and in particular their Biblical hermeneutic. There was no widespread killing because justice demanded that punishment must be commensurate with the crime and they always hoped for reconciliation with the oppressors. The hermeneutic of liberation demanded that they resisted oppression even as they were open for reconciliation with the oppressors.

¹⁹² JRC Vol. 5 127.

Scope of the Native Baptist War

The hermeneutic of liberation approach employed by the Native Baptists in the 1865 Native Baptist War largely determined the scope of the resistance, which was unique. It was not following the paradigm of the Maroons of Jamaica who fought and won freedom in 1738 and established sovereignty within Jamaica, but only for themselves, while they returned to their masters other enslaved persons who ran away. It was not modelled after the Haitian revolution with its goal of racial sovereignty, the first successful revolt by the enslaved that led to a “Black Republic” in 1804. It was not patterned after the American Christian uprisings by the enslaved in the early nineteenth century. Instead, it was more a replica of the Sam Sharpe led 1831 Baptist War, which was a passive resistance which envisioned the planters working together with the labourers as paid, freed workers. The hermeneutic of liberation is based on mutuality of seeking the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressors.

Not Jamaican Maroonage, Haitian or American

Gordon warned that Eyre was provoking a “Second Maroon War” (see page 303 above). However, this was a reference to the principle of resistance rather than an attempt to follow that blueprint in terms of the scope of a resistance movement. In 1738, Maroon Cudjoe, a leader of runaways, after negotiations with English Colonel John Guthrie and Francis Sadler, established the first free

settlement in the British West Indies for the formerly enslaved Africans.¹⁹³ The Maroons fought for their freedom but it was for Maroons only. It was a freedom that was confined to those who fought for freedom. And there have been criticisms of that paradigm, with Patterson claiming that the treaty was “a completely unnecessary sell-out” because Cudjoe “had sealed the fate of future freedom-fighters” with “no slave could hope to escape the tyranny of his master, either by running away or by rebellion”¹⁹⁴ and historian Mavis C. Campbell labeling it “more a victory for the colonial powers than for the Maroons”, because what the British could not get on the battlefield “they now gained in full measure over the negotiating table.”¹⁹⁵ It was to the advantage of the colonial authority and the local plantocracy.¹⁹⁶ In addition, after the treaty of 1738 between the English and the Maroons, the Maroons helped hunt down runaways in exchange for tracts of land and self-government within their settlements.¹⁹⁷ The Native Baptists were more universal in their outlook wanting justice for all, freedom for

¹⁹³ Edwards said “articles of pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney Town, concluded March the first, 1738”: Bryan Edwards The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica, in Regard to the Maroon Negroes (1796; London: Negro UP, 1970) xvi-xvii. However, Patterson has “On the first of March, 1739, a fifteen-point peace treaty was signed between the Leeward Maroons and the whites (JHD, Vol. 3:457)”: Orlando Patterson, “Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Sociological Analysis of the First Maroon War, 1665-1740” Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas ed., Richard Price (2nd ed. 1973; Baltimore: Hopkins P, 1979) 272. For the significance of this treaty see Kenneth Bilby, True-Born Maroons (Kingston: Randle, 2006) xiii.

¹⁹⁴ Patterson, Slavery and Slave Revolts 273.

¹⁹⁵ Mavis C. Campbell, The Maroons of Jamaica 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal (Granby, Massachusetts: Bergin, 1988) 129.

¹⁹⁶ Campbell, Maroons 131. See also a clause-by-clause critique of the treaty: Campbell, Maroons 131- 37.

¹⁹⁷ Barbara Lalla, and Jean D’Costa, Language In Exile: Three Hundred Years of Jamaican Creole (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1990) 24

all based on the equality of all. They worked for the upliftment of all Africans. Furthermore, while the Native Baptists respected the British Crown, they were averse to the local plantocracy.

In addition, the Native Baptists were not interested in creating an enclave for themselves but were willing to live among and work with the English also. The 1865 Native Baptist War was not akin to the Maroon model.

Another indication that it was not after the Maroon model was that the Maroons not only did not co-operate with Bogle but also were adverse to Bogle's mission. It was the Maroons under the command of Captain Fyfe who captured Bogle.¹⁹⁸ Eyre arranged a reception in Kingston for the Maroons in honour of their "deeds of heroism" in quelling the resistance.¹⁹⁹

Not Haitian

Most scholars claim that the Haitian revolution was not replicated in Jamaica though it might have been an inspiration (see page 84 above). However, the ruling class claimed of Gordon, Edwin Palmer, J. H. Crole, James Roach, H. B. Harris: "All of the men thus named, have been scheming and plotting for the overthrow of legitimate government and for the creation of a government of terror like that of the monster Souloque [sic], in the once important, but now

¹⁹⁸ JRC Vol. 4 431.

¹⁹⁹ "The Maroons," Gleaner 9 Nov. 1865: 2.

ruined colony of Saint Domingo.”²⁰⁰ Faustin Soulouque was President, and later became Emperor of Haiti. Hume claimed that the protestors wanted to emulate Haiti and create “another Negro kingdom.”²⁰¹ However, there appeared to be a lack of any political strategy that showed an interest in wanting to control the commanding heights of the economy or wanting to administer the affairs of the country. Harvey and Brewin said, “We have not found a trace of evidence of any political element in the movement . . .”²⁰² Bogle and his followers had no desire to take over central government. H. R. having quoted extensively from colonial papers that were supportive of the rulers and their own statements and dispatches concluded: “the alleged conspiracy to murder white people, and convert Jamaica into a black republic, there is at present not the smallest iota of proof,” and the allegations were an attempt by men to justify “one of the most horrible butcheries recorded in the annals of history.”²⁰³

There was no evidence that Bogle and his followers desired to establish a “Black Republic” as existed in Haiti. In addition, Gordon “never thought of the ‘revolutionary spirit’ of Hayti, that is, he never once thought its example might be followed with advantage.” It was further said of him, “This is the man who ‘looks

²⁰⁰ “Editorial Topics: The Rebellion,” Falmouth Post 31 Oct. 1865: 1.

²⁰¹ Hamilton Hume, The Life of Edward John Eyre (London, 1867) 116.

²⁰² Harvey and Brewin 23.

²⁰³ H. R., Insurrection 8 and repeated in H. R., The Troubles in Jamaica: A Condensed Statement of Facts (London, 1866) 11.

for a higher source of relief than the example of Hayti.’ ” ²⁰⁴ The movement’s thinking was not driven by the desire for racial superiority or racial sovereignty.

An unnamed veteran missionary said in a letter dated 21 November 1865 that, there was “no intention whatsoever to be disloyal to the Queen” on the part of the protestors. ²⁰⁵ The protestors loved the Queen and believed in the Queen. Craddock, one of the leaders of the protest said, “The other day you have sent in a petition to our beloved Queen, and the answer came out saying you must work, but I don’t believe it went half way. How many years have you been working, and what have you got?” ²⁰⁶ Perhaps for that reason Robotham stated that one of the deadly flaws of the Bogle movement was its “naïve monarchism.” ²⁰⁷ However, Bogle, like Gordon, appreciated the British Crown and believed that the local authorities were corrupting the good intentions of the Queen. Therefore, they were not agitating for a distinct government, such as in Haiti, but would co-operate with the British once there was good governance.

Not American Christian Uprising

The 1865 Native Baptist War was not similar to some American rebellions of the enslaved in the early nineteenth century. In the USA, there was a West African

²⁰⁴ “Political Tear-Dropping in Vere,” Falmouth Post 22 Sept. 1865: 2.

²⁰⁵ “The Outbreak in Jamaica,” Baptist Magazine Jan. 1866: 58.

²⁰⁶ JRC Vol. 4 418.

²⁰⁷ Robotham 22.

inspired Christian armed rebellion led by Gabriel Prosser, who wore long hair like his hero Samson. Samson killed a thousand Philistines with a donkey jawbone (Judg. 15: 8-15). For Prosser, the slaveholders were the new Philistines and he led a rebellion in August 1800 against them in Henrico County, Virginia with the intent to exterminate them. Prosser wanted “ ‘a new black kingdom in Virginia with himself as ruler.’ ”²⁰⁸ In 1822, Denmark Vesey, resurrected the ideas of Prosser in Charleston, South Carolina. He grounded his actions in Luke 11: 23 which said, “whoever is not with me is against me.”²⁰⁹ He also led a violent rebellion. The followers of the enslaved Nat Turner of the USA expected a new world to be established by divine revelation.²¹⁰ Turner acted to what he believed to be signs from heaven on 13 August 1831 and killed his master and the master’s family.²¹¹ David Walker, African American Abolitionist, who was born free to a freed mother and an enslaved father, believed that “a slave was morally justified in taking the life of his master, if necessary, to command his freedom.”²¹² Since freedom was the highest human right ordained by God then there was moral legitimacy of armed struggle to overthrow slavery. This appeared to be a dominant position among persons of African descent in America. However, this was not the position of the Native Baptists.

²⁰⁸ Dwight N. Hopkins, Down, Up, and Over: Slave Religion and Black Theology (Fortress P, Minneapolis, 2000) 132, 137.

²⁰⁹ Hopkins, Down, Up, and Over 134.

²¹⁰ Mary Reckord, “The Slave Rebellion of 1831,” Jamaica Journal 3 (1969): 31

²¹¹ Reckord 31.

²¹² David Walker, David Walker’s Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World (1830. Introd. James Turner. 3rd ed., Baltimore: Black Classic P, 1993) 17.

The Native Baptists had no desire to replicate a Haitian republic in Jamaica nor to create a closed community similar to the Maroons or lead an armed rebellion such as happened in the USA. Their reading of the Bible from the perspective of equality and justice meant that they were always open to reconciliation with oppressors even as they resisted injustices.

1831 Baptist War Paradigm

Heuman believed that Sam Sharpe and the 1831 Baptist War influenced Bogle and his followers (see page 84 above). Rev. Edward Key, Stipendiary Curate for Manchester and St. Elizabeth, testified that he believed that Sam Sharpe and his followers were an inspiration to Bogle and his followers. He claimed he found a book circulating in some Baptist schools:

Holding up the people who had been condemned in the late rebellion of 1832 as martyrs; naming so and so, and saying what a pious man he was, that he was praying in his house, and the authorities came and dragged him out and shot him, and how he sung hymns as he was led to the execution, making him out to be a perfect martyr.²¹³

²¹³ JRC Vol. 5 712.

This book was in circulation in 1864, the Jubilee of English Baptist mission on Jamaica and Phillippo wondered if it was a reference to the Voice of Jubilee.²¹⁴ This was hardly likely to be the Voice of Jubilee, which was not published until 1865, and more importantly does not venerate Sharpe and his followers as martyrs.

Obviously, the populace heard about the exploits of Sam Sharpe. The English Baptists by the 1860s were claiming Sharpe as their own and perceived him as a “Christian Hero”²¹⁵ and he and his followers as martyrs, that is Christians who die for the cause of Christ. There was an unidentified English Baptist missionary who viewed Sam Sharpe and his followers as martyrs based on the title of his article as “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica” and the content of his article. He viewed their deaths as modelled on Jesus’ crucifixion, thereby making them martyrs.²¹⁶ Sharpe and his followers were not only Christians who were killed but were martyrs who died as a result of fighting in the cause of the work and witness of Christ. The mission to obtain wages and freedom was consistent with the mission of Christ.

The 1865 Native Baptist War resembled the 1831 Baptist War in terms of intent and outcome. As stated in Chapter Three, Sam Sharpe did not lead a crusade

²¹⁴ JRC Vol. 5 714.

²¹⁵ By a Returned Missionary, “The Christian Hero: Another Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter July 1864: 305.

²¹⁶ “The Martyr Brethren: A Reminiscence of the Insurrection in Jamaica,” Baptist Reporter June 1864: 248. See the Biblical references Isaiah 53: 7 and Acts 8: 32.

against the Europeans but organized a strike for wages and freedom through the means of passive resistance. The burning of estates and the killing of a few Europeans was not part of Sharpe's plan. The enslaved were "for the most part armed only with a cutlass, (one of the implements of their daily toil,) . . ." ²¹⁷ Sharpe's inspiration was the Bible, which he said made all persons equal. There was no desire on the part of Sharpe to destroy the Europeans but a willingness to work with them for wages (see pages 253-54 above). Callam speaking of Sharpe and his followers in the 1831 Baptist War said that Sharpe did not desire to destroy their oppressors but wanted to humanize them. The aim was "the emancipation of the oppressed and the oppressor – so that in the end everyone may rejoice." ²¹⁸ Likewise, Bogle and his followers were not seeking to annihilate their oppressors but rather that both oppressors and oppressed might be liberated and experience justice as equals. They sought the liberation of the oppressed and the oppressors through marches for justice.

There were uncanny parallels between the 1831 Baptist War and the 1865 Native Baptist War. Both were concerned with justice issues. There was no pre-planning to kill the oppressors. In addition, both movements envisioned co-operation between oppressed and oppressors after the protests.

²¹⁷ Henry Bleby, Scenes in the Caribbean Sea: Being Sketches from a Missionary's Notebook (London, 1854) 48.

²¹⁸ Neville Callam, "Hope: A Caribbean Perspective," Ecumenical Review 50 (1998): 141.

Liberation of Oppressed and Oppressors

The desire for the liberation of the oppressed and the oppressors led the Native Baptists to resistance and at the same time to hope for reconciliation. It held resistance and reconciliation together in tension, leading to resistance, which was restrained by a desire for reconciliation with the oppressors. The Native Baptists advocated and agitated for equality and justice and desired responsible governance based on that principle. They engaged in resistance while being hopeful of reconciliation. This approach to hermeneutics was first detected in the approach of Liele especially through his Anabaptist Covenant. The Covenant was a prime example of restrained resistance and a commitment to work with the authorities (see pages 245-46 above). It could be said, with much justification, that the rhetoric of the Native Baptists was however, more strident than that of Liele. The resistance motif was very strong and they made a frontal attack on oppression. It was not a subtle request for liberation but a demand for liberation, which was a gift from God and a need in their lives.

Summary

The Native Baptists' hermeneutics affected the tone and goal of the 1865 Native Baptist War. The nature of the resistance was liberative, using the method of protest marches. They were committed to peaceful advocacy, protest and resistance. It might also have been informed by practical considerations such as the military might and superior weaponry at the disposal of the authorities. But

it was nevertheless, a primary commitment to use and exhaust all available non-violent means to show their attitude, to state their case and articulate their beliefs and rights. This hermeneutic of liberation approach did not exclude the use of force as last resort or resistance in order to achieve their goals. If the authorities would not respond to peaceful marches, letter and resolutions, then in the name of justice, they had to act to forcefully bring to the attention of the rulers their suffering. Hardships prevented them from living as human and as a means of self-affirmation they had to challenge the untenable situation by use of civil disobedience. In addition, the primary motive of the Native Baptists was not to murder and destroy but they were willing to die for a worthy cause as agents of change.

The goal of the 1865 Native Baptist War did not imitate the Haitian model, the Maroon example or the American Christian Uprisings but was more akin to the model of Sam Sharpe. The aim of the resistance was not to have racial governance or separated governance but to have a just and caring government, to the benefit of all. There was no intention to wrest power from the constituted authority and to establish their own political system. Instead, it was a quest for change their situations so as to fulfill their own potential for the benefit of all- the rulers and the ruled. This would enable the exploited and the former exploiters to live in harmony. This type of reading of Biblical texts and understanding of God gave them hope for the possibility of reconciliation even after resistance.

The Native Baptists forgave the atrocities experienced during the 1865 Native Baptist War and many joined the English Baptist mission after the destruction of their chapels. The English Baptists, largely had an inferior view of their race, attitudes, beliefs and practices. The English Baptists felt that they had done nothing wrong to the Native Baptists and believed that if they had been ministering in St. Thomas-in-the-East, the 1865 Native Baptist War would not have occurred. They saw themselves as saviours of a people who were led astray by the Native Baptists. They were going to correct the wrongs of the Native Baptists.

The Native Baptists did not ask the English Baptists to repent of the wrongs they had done before seeking reconciliation with them. Furthermore, the Native Baptists did not seek restitution from the authorities for the destruction of their chapels, huts and property and more so the brutal killing of their relatives. They might not have succeeded in gaining compensation but they could have, at least, proposed it as a viable and necessary option. Neither did the authorities offer any recompense for the atrocities. The owners of enslaved persons got compensation; the English Baptists got compensation for the destruction of chapels in 1832 but there was no restitution for the Native Baptists in 1865. Therefore, some of the gains garnered through the formation of the JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion were reversed in a model, which did not insist on repentance and restitution before reconciliation. However, what was not lost was a hermeneutic of liberation, which focused on equality and justice and facilitated resistance to oppressors while being open to reconciliation.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This dissertation reverses the largely negative and uninformed view of the Native Baptists and their practices by offering a coherent and detailed study of the origin and development of the Native Baptists and how their Biblical hermeneutic influenced the nature and scope of the 1865 Native Baptist War. It discovered that the Native Baptists existed and the Native Baptists became part of the lexicon of the official colonial record in the latter half of 1837 and became an institution between September 1839 and July 1840. They were an important group, which made significant contribution to Jamaica in the mid to late nineteenth century. This study made the Native Baptists central in the history of Jamaica in the mid nineteenth century, demonstrating that they ought to be important subjects of Jamaican history and not merely objects of their own story. This study shifts the focus from the European missionaries and indigenous African religious expressions as critical in the understanding of the 1865 Native Baptist War and suggests that credit instead be given to those of African origin who interpreted the Bible differently, namely, the Native Baptists. These Native Baptists were largely responsible for the 1865 Native Baptist War with their hermeneutic of liberation informing their prophetic response to their context of inequality and injustices.

This extensive interdisciplinary study about the Native Baptists reveals that contrary to the assertion by Schuler, Shirley Gordon and Catherine Hall, the term “Black Baptists” was not synonymous with Native Baptists because the skin

colour was not the most distinguishing feature of the Native Baptists. There were Baptists of African origin who were not Native Baptists such as Liele, Sharpe and Palmer. Neither was the description of “Spirit Baptists” as used by Simpson and Wright an appropriate term for Native Baptists. The Native Baptists did not neglect the Bible at the expense of ecstatic utterances. They were a people who relied extensively on the Bible and were inspired by hymns.

The Native Baptists came into being in response to the prejudice and spiritual snobbery encountered by Baptists of African origin at the hands of English Baptist missionaries. Therefore, Bryan and the Mansinghs were not correct in their claim that the Native Baptists did not respond to racism. Their First Annual Report demonstrated that the JNBMS was established in reaction to religious and cultural colonialism. The Native Baptists became a missionary society in reaction to racism and were leaders in the struggle against racism.

The JNBMS was the springboard from which the Native Baptist Communion developed of which George William Gordon, Richard Warren and Paul Bogle were major leaders. Neither the authorities nor the populace perceived that there was a difference between the JNBMS and the Native Baptist Communion groups perhaps because the Native Baptist Communion evolved out of the JNBMS and both also had a similar way of interpreting the Bible.

It can be concluded that the Native Baptists were:

- ✓ Untrained in the classroom of a theological institution.

- ✓ Interpreted the Bible differently from the Europeans.
- ✓ Not under the auspices of any European missionary society.
- ✓ Largely self-supporting and self-regulating.
- ✓ Persons who took the designation of Native Baptist.
- ✓ Agents for spiritual renewal, political activism and social change.
- ✓ Politically consciousness based on their interpretation of the Bible.
- ✓ Native-born and native-bred Baptists.
- ✓ Predominantly of African ancestry.
- ✓ Not Obeah practitioners.
- ✓ Bible-centred and orthodox.
- ✓ Well-organized.

This study has shown that the Native Baptists refuted the thinking that they were second-class citizens because they were inspired differently by their religious experience. They accepted diversity of interpretations by promoting the idea that any reader irrespective of educational background could give a legitimate interpretation of the Bible. Their recollection of history, their experience and understanding of God and their interpretation of Scriptures often did not coincide with the teachings of the European colonizers. Because of that the Native Baptists with their hermeneutical approach to Scripture and Scripture - related sources, which resembled the modern Reader-Response approach, have left a model which this writer calls a hermeneutic of liberation which is anchored in equality and justice and which facilitated resistance and reconciliation. This model recommends itself as it advocates the use of non-violent protest as a first

option while not excluding the use of forceful resistance as a last option or in self-defence or to engage in self-affirmation. It is a useful model because the Native Baptists, based on their interpretation of Scriptures were committed to forgiveness as the best way of resolving conflict and wrongdoing perpetuated against them. This is so in spite of the fact that forgiveness exacts its own cost from those who forgive as they open themselves to being hurt again. Yet not to forgive is also to bear a burden that gives the upper hand to the wrongdoer.

The ultimate goal of forgiveness is reconciliation. Reconciliation makes community life wholesome and sustainable. In a world that is torn by ethnic strife and wars, a world struggling with racism and economic blight for the majority, and a concentration of power in the hands of the few, there is a need for a hermeneutic that reads the Bible and other sacred writings from the perspective of liberation which is rooted in the belief in equality and justice and holds resistance and reconciliation in tension. This example allows for the oppressed to resist the injustices while being available for co-operation with the oppressor.

The Native Baptists' outlook and emphases are relevant today. In the 21st century there are grave injustices and inequality. The thinking, orientation and actions of the Native Baptist could help with these problems. Racism whether in the Church or the dominant political and economic structures could be defeated if church and society would apply the Native Baptists' hermeneutic of liberation in order to liberate both the racist and the victims of racism. The approach of the Native Baptists was to allow their experiences to shape their interpretation of the

Bible and to use that approach to develop a hermeneutic of liberation, which focused on the Bible and Bible -related texts, in dealing with equality and justice. This liberation was for both the oppressed and the oppressors.

Equally important is that based on the Reader-Response methodology, the Native Baptists were well qualified to teach and preach the gospel of the Christian faith. In addition, the manner in which the Native Baptists originated and developed helped to influence their Biblical hermeneutic and prepared them for societal injustices.

The Native Baptists can also be seen as visionaries. The Baptist Church in Jamaica that is affiliated to the Jamaica Baptist Union was the beneficiary of the Native Baptists' work. The Native Baptists left a legacy of confidence in local based leadership. So much so that the Baptist Church in Jamaica in 2008 is entirely led and staffed by Jamaican ministers. Though the Baptist mission became independent of the BMS in 1842, and although Calabar College was established to train locals for pastoral ministry, the leadership and clergy was still dominated by English missionaries in 1865. However, after political independence in 1962, many English Baptists returned to England, and the movement toward the Jamaicanization of the leadership and clergy in the Baptist Union gained momentum. This new reality appeared to be a fulfillment of some of the objectives of the Native Baptists.

The Native Baptists were visionaries in that they deliberately rejected the account of the history of the Baptist Church in Jamaica according to the English Baptists. They re-wrote the history highlighting their contribution and their understanding. The Native Baptists were not the first to document what persons of African ancestry accomplished through the Baptist Church in Jamaica. That honour belongs to George Liele. However, the Native Baptists were the first to challenge the official records of Jamaican church by recording their version of the history. In a sense they were pioneers of West Indian historiography.

The Native Baptists established the first local-based, indigenous missionary society, thereby displaying self-confidence. It was also the most significant indigenous organization based on the size of membership and quality of leadership. Their self-confidence was also displayed through their own style of speaking and pronunciation. They provided one of the earliest defences of the value of communication in a language that the hearers could understand rather than insisting on Standard English, which was a foreign language to most church members. They also affirmed the value of what persons would call a dialect or Creole language. Their self-confidence was also demonstrated in that they managed church affairs and did so successfully as evangelists and fundraisers.

The Native Baptists also displayed pride in being “native” and relished their African ancestry. Before, the Native Baptists, Liele demonstrated commitment to Africa and appreciation of Africa by calling his congregation the Ethiopian Baptists. The Native Baptists carried the baton ably by proudly identifying

themselves as Native Baptists and demonstrated a commitment to preach to their fellow countrymen and to peoples in Africa.

The Native Baptists through the development of an extensive network of congregations and the well-organized resistance to injustice in 1865 contradicted the myth that persons of African pedigree could not manage institutions and organize peaceful protests and marches for justice. They also demonstrated that they understood complex issues and discerned when they were being fooled and developed coping strategies to endure and overcome oppression.

However, perhaps the most outstanding contribution of the Native Baptists was claiming their right to preach and interpret sacred literature thereby leaving a legacy that emphasized equality, justice and a hermeneutic of liberation. The Native Baptists understanding of God grew out of their oppressed context. Therefore, they were suspicious of the interpretation the oppressors held of the Bible and instead they selected certain texts which were meaningful to their situation and which gave them hope for a brighter future. They were attracted to texts that addressed the issues of equality and justice.

Except for some work done by Swithin Wilmot the contribution of persons of African origin in fashioning the politics of Jamaica through the Church, has been neglected. This study halts that trend and agrees with Hutton and Heuman who recognized the positive contribution of the Native Baptists to the Jamaican society.

The Native Baptist leaders were law-abiding persons, contrary to those who posited that the killings were pre-meditated. Engaging in resistance was not unique to Native Baptists. There was a history of resistance by enslaved persons from as early as the sixteenth century. And this resistance was similar to the 1831 Baptist War. Both leaders, Sharpe and Bogle were seeking not to obliterate their oppressors but rather that both oppressors and oppressed might be emancipated.

Admittedly, more research needs to be done on the role of persons of African descent in the church and society in the nineteenth century. It could also be meaningful to delve into the reasons for the disappearance of the term Native Baptists to the extent that older generations, in areas where Native Baptists were dominant, were unaware of their existence. In addition, a determination needs to be made of which existing church groups operating in Jamaica is the successor of the Native Baptists in terms of their beliefs, interpretation and political activism. Another question to be answered is: Why have present-day Baptists of African origin retreated from the political activism of the Native Baptists of old?

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Appendix 1

January 5, 2004

Dear colleague in ministry,

All the best for the New Year.

Since September 2003, I have been pursuing the degree of M/Phil/PhD in Caribbean Studies at Warwick University. I am examining the Native Baptists and how they interpreted Scriptures, understood God and the ministry implications.

I am therefore seeking your help with this research. If you or your congregation have in your possession any information (book, paper or oral tradition) on the Native Baptists, I would appreciate you sharing it with me. Please contact me if you have any information or know where I could get information. The information can be sent to me at bbc@anngel.com or fax to 941 1453 or given to me when we meet in General Assembly next month.

This idea to contact you came from my supervisor when I met with him on December 12, 2003 and I hope this is convenient for you.

Thanks in anticipation.

Your brother in Christ

Devon Dick