

Windrush pioneers

A reflection on where we have come from: the development of pastoral care

BY DR CHARLOTTE V V JOHNSON

I came across an old article in the **accord** magazine and decided to make it my bedtime reading as a way of relaxing after a very long day. I was delighted to read about Rev Bridgette Brook's journey of establishing her pastoral care ministry at her local church in Luton. I was so inspired that I thought I would write a short article to emphasise the point that both mentoring, and a Pastoral Care course can be so life changing to one's personal, vocational and professional development.

I originally met Rev Bridgette when I attended the same Pastoral Care – Helping People in Crisis course at the New Testament Church of God's (NTCG) Leadership Training Centre (LTC) in Northampton. Like Rev Bridgette, the course played a pivotal and impactful role in my life and Christian ministry. The theme for this issue is focussing on Black History Month (BHM). This is an extra special edition of the **accord** because this year marks the 75th anniversary since the HMT Ship Windrush disembarked on the shores of Tilbury Harbour, Essex with the first cohort of mainly men, some women and children, following the invitation from the then British Government. People from the Caribbean, as colonised people of the Islands, believed that they were coming to help the indigenous population rebuild Britain at the end of the Second World War. Government sources named people from the Caribbean who travelled to Britain between 1948 to 1971 the 'Windrush Generation.' At the 61st Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence, 'Windrush 75th Commemoration' Service at Westminster

Chapel on the 5th August, the Windrush Generation were acknowledged as the 'Windrush Pioneers' for all that they encountered during those hostile and challenging years when they first arrived and then settled in Britain. As a descendent of the first generation of the Windrush Pioneers, I remember with pride what many of the members of my community of hard-working people overcame during their lifetime.

Having completed the Pastoral Care course in 2013, I went back to my local church with so much enthusiasm to share what I had learnt. Far more importantly, I began to implement what I understood pastoral care to look like for my community. One of the first things I did was to share my learning. I gave a presentation to the church leaders, namely our Church & Pastors Council (C&PC) focussing on the definitions and core values of pastoral care. This led to a conscientious journey of pastoral care development at NTCG @ Willesden with the support of mentors who gave invaluable guidance and advice. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry 'Pastoral Reaching Out' (PRO) was birthed to support congregants, particularly the elderly and the vulnerable within our church community – see the article, 'Case Study: A Place where Love Grows'. Like everywhere else in Britain, we are now experiencing post-COVID. The PRO ministry has continued to serve our congregants and has gone beyond the walls of the church to serve and support the wider local community, going from strength to strength.



I celebrate the growth of Rev Bridgette's ministry as a Pastoral Care leader. This year she was inducted and is now the Senior Pastor at NTCG @ Hitchin. As one of the descendants of the original Windrush Generation, Rev Bridgette will continue to develop her ministerial work in pastoral care with her leadership team for the benefit of the local community. As disciples of Jesus Christ, Rev Bridgette and I are passionate about offering pastoral care to those seeking love and acceptance, and therefore pay tribute and appreciation for the mentoring and learning in the area of pastoral care.

Also, I want to acknowledge Rev Phyllis Thompson, who Rev Bridgette described as a 'reliable mentor.' Rev Phyllis has been a positive role model in my ministerial journey from undertaking the Pastoral Care course to achieving my Doctor of Ministry (Dmin) qualification in 2021. Rev Phyllis falls within the category of an original Windrush Pioneer who have influenced numerous women and men during her time as an educational professional and minister of religion. I can attest to the time when her mentorship skills became evidential. Suddenly, I was at a low point in my life when I experienced a personal crisis in 2014 that almost derailed my studies. It was Rev Phyllis's belief in me and her continuous support that got me through one of the most difficult periods in my life.

Today, I can confidently say that many of the women like me, Rev Bridgette and younger descendants of the Windrush Generation have benefited from and continue to benefit from women like Rev Phyllis who stand in the gap offering mentoring, pastoral care, counselling or just being a positive role model for others to be inspired by.



About the author



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A word of encouragement

BY PAULETTE PETERS



SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT IN PRACTICE



Becoming a therapist is like a 'call' to ministry. You walk into your purpose, not in isolation, even though you have to do it alone. If I have learnt anything over the 33 years of therapeutic practice, it is that I need the

help of the Lord. As a Christian counsellor, and a woman of colour, the weight of isolation and minoritization in any sphere of professional practice, has taught me two things:

1. I need spiritual discernment, and
2. I have to know and trust myself.

I entered the practice with a strong desire to improve relationships, perhaps more based on my own failures and life lessons learnt, than a pursuit of professional prestige or position. The therapist of tomorrow has the unenviable task of knowing their stuff, whilst being humble enough to rely on the Holy Spirit for insight and empowerment. The challenges brought into the counselling room are increasingly more complex and the therapist has to know where they go for spiritual and emotional restoration. Isaiah 30:21 says, ... "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it" - and have the courage to follow that inner voice.