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Building Homes in Babylon: Jeremiah 29: 4–7 and African Diasporic Activism in the UK

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Abstract: African immigrants in the UK, especially in places such as London, Birmingham, and Manchester, contend with institutional racism, xenophobia, and socio-economic marginalisation. This study analyses how first- and second-generation African diaspora communities understand Jeremiah 29: 4–7 to create resilience and belonging. This study uses desktop research from African diasporic churches and analyses the UK's Inclusive Britain Strategy (2023) to contend that biblical tales are reinterpreted to confront modern issues, including the Windrush Scandal and racial inequalities in NHS maternal care. The document emphasises the influence of African-led churches in formulating integration plans and promoting policy reforms in the UK. The findings indicate that African diaspora churches reinterpret Jeremiah 29: 4–5 to promote resilience and structural involvement in combating systemic racism and socio-economic disadvantage in the UK. The paper concludes by reinterpreting biblical tales to connect spiritual resilience with systemic activism, promoting hybrid identities, and integrating legislative reforms with community-driven initiatives for equity. The paper recommends the decolonisation of curricula, the enhancement of culturally competent healthcare training, the expansion of church–state collaborations, and the modification of legislation such as the Hostile Environment to foster inclusiveness. This study enhances academic discourse by merging diaspora theology with policy analysis, presenting an innovative framework for the theological examination of migration and elevating African agency within UK socio-political environments through decolonial hermeneutics and hybrid identity paradigms.

Keywords: African diaspora; UK immigration; racial disparities; Jeremiah 29: 4–7; diaspora theology; integration



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1. Introduction

Historically, individuals of African heritage have resided in the United Kingdom for centuries, albeit in limited numbers. In the 20th century, there was significant immigration, resulting in a considerable population increase. Their migratory history differs from that of other labour migrants who arrived here. Individuals from Africa who arrived in ancient times were first enslaved, subsequently came as students to enhance their education and employment prospects in their home countries, migrated as overseas labourers, sought political asylum to escape repressive regimes, or fled as refugees from conflicts in their nations. Many African political leaders, professionals, and academics continue to be educated in nations such as the UK and the US.

The African diaspora in the UK has experienced significant growth, with 2.4 million residents identifying as Black African or Mixed Black African in the 2021 Census, reflecting a 58% rise since 2011. Early migrants predominantly entered as students or refugees, such

as Ugandan Asians expelled in 1972, whereas newer groups consist of professionals and asylum-seekers from conflict regions like Sudan and Eritrea. Notwithstanding contributions to sectors such as the NHS (where 21% of nurses identify as Black or Minority Ethnic), systemic obstacles endure, including racial profiling by law enforcement (for instance, the Metropolitan Police's stop-and-search rates for Black Britons are four times greater than those for white individuals) and educational underperformance (for example, Black Caribbean students are twice as likely to face school exclusion). Many students have challenges when transitioning to new educational, cultural, and social contexts.

Determining how early African ancestors in the UK navigated issues of race, class, and nationality is challenging. Notwithstanding these adverse conditions, certain Africans have significant roles in academics, diverse sectors, and politics. The African diaspora churches play a vital role in confronting significant societal issues, including racism and integration, hence underscoring the importance of African churches. Utilising an interdisciplinary approach (theology, migration studies, sociology) and reinterpreting Jeremiah 29: 4–7 within a diasporic framework are innovative methods to comprehend the Bible's relevance in diasporic situations.

This study diverges from landmark studies such as Hanciles' *Beyond Christendom* (Hanciles 2008), which examine the worldwide agency of African Christians in altering postcolonial Christianity by concentrating on the UK context and its distinct socio-political problems. This study examines localised reinterpretations of Jeremiah 29: 4–7 in relation to structural racism and governmental failures, such as the Windrush Scandal and NHS inequities, in contrast to Hanciles' broader focus on international networks and missionary activities. Moreover, it connects diaspora theology with modern policy frameworks like the UK's Inclusive Britain Strategy, a facet lacking in previous scholarship. This study, drawing on Homi Bhabha's notion of the 'third space,' contends that African diaspora groups navigate hybrid identities, neither completely integrated nor wholly distinct, as a manifestation of prophetic resistance, resonating with Jeremiah's exhortation to 'build homes in Babylon.' Jeremiah 29: 4–7 has prominence within the British theological discourse, particularly the recurring citations by the African-led churches (ACEAC 2020). Also, according to the *British Future* (2022), about 62% of UK Black Christians use this as a basis for civic engagement. The thrust of Jeremiah to advocate for structural adjustment through 'building houses and planting gardens' squarely resonates with the UK diaspora socio-political context, and this should be distinguished from the liberation motif in the book of Exodus, which is mostly a US Black theology motif (Beckford 2010). Accordingly, this aligns with critical race theology, particularly extracting scriptures which are deemed transformative by diasporic and marginalised communities themselves.

The structure of this paper starts with a methodology section. The Section 3 explores the challenges faced by the African diaspora in the UK. This is followed by a rereading of Jeremiah 29: 4–7 in the light of diaspora context. The Section 6 provides recommendations for policy and practice. Finally, there is the conclusion of the paper.

2. Methodology

This desktop research study investigates the systemic obstacles encountered by African immigrants in the UK within the realms of healthcare, education, and policing, evaluating how diaspora communities understand biblical narratives, specifically Jeremiah 29: 1–7—to address systematic racism. The methodology, rooted in critical race theory and diaspora studies, incorporates theological and sociological analyses of existing literature, eschewing primary data collection. A comprehensive literature analysis establishes the basis, integrating UK government reports (e.g., Race Disparity Unit audits), published ethnographies of African Pentecostal congregations, and sociological examinations of racial disparities.

This research also integrates digital humanities frameworks (e.g., [Tufekci's \(2017\)](#) theories of networked activism) to examine how African diaspora churches utilise social media (e.g., TikTok sermons, Instagram Bible studies) to enhance the civic engagement mandate of Jeremiah 29.

Previous works on diaspora theology (e.g., [Hanciles 2008](#); [Wimbush 2017](#)) emphasise ethnographic or historical approaches; however, this desktop technique distinctly integrates policy analysis (e.g., Inclusive Britain Strategy audits) with theological exegesis. This method elucidates the intersection of biblical reinterpretation and state-led integration initiatives, addressing a deficiency in the current literature. [Wimbush's \(2017\)](#) 'scripturalisation' theory substantiates the reconfiguration of texts by communities for their survival, although critical race theorists such as [Gillborn \(2008\)](#) moderate optimism regarding assimilation narratives. Jeremiah's themes of demographic resilience in sermons contrast with published data on racial disparities in maternal mortality and school exclusion.

Jeremiah 29: 1–7 is preferred over Psalms of Lament due to its theological focus on long-term integration and active agency—concepts that correspond with recorded immigrant experiences. Jeremiah's exhortation to "build houses and seek the peace of the city" contrasts with the Psalms' focus on individual catharsis, offering a foundation for analysing structural involvement techniques. Campbell's hermeneutic of appropriation contextualises critiques of potential anachronism by examining the text's historical significance, Black theological interpretations, and contemporary uses through existing scholarship.

The case study analysis of published church materials is structured through three analytical lenses: Content of the Sermon: Theologically accessible interpretations of Jeremiah 29; Community initiatives: recorded ecclesiastical programs targeting education, health-care, and law enforcement; and Member narratives: documented accounts from diaspora media and scholarly publications. This methodology integrates theological exegesis with sociological literature and public data, providing a reproducible framework for examining biblical agency in migratory situations, utilising only available sources to achieve a balance between efficiency and analytical rigour.

Further, the selection of Jeremiah 29: 4–7 in this paper is due to its propensity to address long-term integration. Unlike the Exodus narrative liberation paradigm, Jeremiah accounts for migrants to seek peace, which resonates with the UK diaspora populace and reality as they attempt to negotiate belonging regardless of the hostile institutions; for example, the issue of the Windrush Scandal. A close look at the Windrush Scandal shows scripturalisation where utility, not frequency, is the one which defines textual relevance ([Wimbush 2017](#)).

3. Challenges African Migrants Face in the UK Diaspora

This study examines African migrants in the UK under three overarching themes: racial discrimination, educational hurdles, social exclusion, health inequalities, and the tension between cultural preservation and integration.

3.1. Racial Discrimination

A significant problem impacting individuals of the African diaspora is racial discrimination, which includes both overt racism and nuanced biases that hinder chances for those of African origin. [Howell et al. \(2016\)](#) assert that can be defined as any bias based on one's race, ethnicity, colour, or skin. The challenge of racism is that it can apply in several contexts, such as in business, school, socialisation, or belonging to a specific group. Across the globe, immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees are prone to racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance. The Human Rights Watch explains that racism is the major contributor towards displacement and a huge barrier to resolutions.

Racism is profoundly embedded in the societal structure of the UK. The 2023 Casey Review identified 'deep-seated racism' throughout UK institutions, as seen by the Metropolitan Police's management of Stephen Lawrence's murder and the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on Black communities, with death rates were 2–4 times greater than those of white groups (Casey 2023). Law enforcement is not equitable. Governments can expressly discriminate through legislation, such as policies of racial segregation, uneven law enforcement, or unequal distribution of resources. In England and Wales, black individuals are 4.3 times more likely to be subjected to stop and search compared to white individuals (Home Office 2023). Only 16% of Black Britons have confidence in the police, in contrast to 52% of White Britons (HMICFRS 2022). The 2023 examination of racial disparities in police criminal justice decision making revealed that Black individuals are three times more likely to be arrested than their White counterparts. The Runnymede Trust documented a rise in Islamophobia and animosity towards migrants, with racially charged riots in Southport revealing persistent racial tensions in the UK.

3.2. Economic Exclusions

Economic exclusions are equally pertinent to racism. The African diaspora faces significant wealth disparities relative to non-minority individuals, attributed to lower income levels, elevated unemployment rates, and limited access to financial resources that intensify economic inequalities. Economic exclusions are prevalent among Africans. Black African households earn GBP 8900 less per year than white British households (ONS 2022). The median hourly wage for Black African workers is GBP 12.55, but it is GBP 15.88 for white British workers (ONS 2023). Black households are twice as likely to experience enduring poverty (Social Metrics Commission 2022).

Economic isolation is inextricably linked to social exclusion. The Windrush Scandal exemplifies institutional racism impacting the African–Caribbean population, which may be connected to the wider experiences of the African diaspora. The African diaspora frequently faces social exclusion based on their ethnic or cultural backgrounds, complicating the formation of relationships within new communities and leading to exclusion from particular professional or cultural environments.

Social exclusion is typically associated with the issue of equal opportunity, as certain individuals are more susceptible to exclusion than others. The marginalisation of specific groups is an issue in numerous economically advanced nations, where the bulk of the populace benefits from substantial economic and social opportunities.

3.3. Education Barriers

Discrimination can manifest at every stage of the educational and employment continuum, encompassing pre-employment enquiries, recruitment methods, remuneration, job assignments and conditions, employee privileges, advancement, disciplinary actions, and termination. Educational obstacles constitute an additional problem encountered by African migrants. Statistics reveal the achievement disparity: merely 23% of Black Caribbean students receive a grade of 5 in GCSE English and Maths, in contrast to 51% of white students (DfE 2023). Nonetheless, a commendable instance exists: the Black Curriculum initiative, which incorporates African diaspora history into UK educational institutions, addresses systemic erasure. In 2022, 23% of Black Caribbean students attained a grade 5 in GCSE English and Maths, compared to 51% of white students (DfE 2023). Merely 6% of black students are enrolled in Russell Group universities, in contrast to 12% of white students (UCAS 2023). Black Caribbean students are 3.5 times more likely to face permanent exclusion compared to white students (DfE 2022).

Nonetheless, the success of interventions is evident as schools implementing The Black Curriculum experienced a 15% rise in engagement among Black pupils (The Black Curriculum 2022). Different institutions employ affirmative action to reduce the challenge of racism. At times this involves a deliberate recruitment of certain under-represented minority groups, or racial quotas. However, this is also seen as reverse discrimination. The problem is that members of the dominant or majority group face prejudice.

The African diaspora encounters difficulty in obtaining adequate education and health-care services due to socio-economic challenges that result in limited access to resources and systemic prejudice. Borrett and Zysk (2007, p. 45) contend that international students often face difficult times as they attempt to adapt to their new learning environments. Although settling in a new environment can be challenging, individuals should be willing to accept the new social community while also being anticipated to adhere to local norms and ethical standards (Mushibwe 2009). According to Lee and Opio (2011), Black-African students encounter more difficulties assimilating into their new surroundings than detaching from their homeland.

Nonetheless, international students collectively encounter a range of adjustment issues. This encompasses educational challenges, communication issues, financial limitations, housing difficulties, social isolation, significant nostalgia, concerns regarding relatives abroad, discrimination, and the adaptation to social customs and cultural disparities. While these issues are not unique to international students, however, particular issues are more pronounced for many African black students. Boafo-Arthur (2014) asserts that racial discrimination is the primary issue for Black African students, as they encounter unfamiliar, unfavourable preconceptions linked to African diasporans. Manyika (2001) explains that the issue of social class is prominent in the UK. Notably, the study by Maringe and Carter (2007) on the experiences of African students in the UK did not expressly highlight issues of discrimination; nonetheless, the scarcity of research on Black African students in the UK suggests that this issue cannot be dismissed as a potential concern. Beoku-Betts (2006, p. 154) identified numerous instances of “a chilly laboratory or classroom climate” stemming from the racial discrimination experienced by African female postgraduate students in the UK. Black African students additionally face challenges related to adverse perceptions of African cultures, frequently regarded as “backward” due to “the colonial experience and the marginal status of their societies within the global economic framework”.

Positively, the Black Curriculum initiative, integrating African diaspora history into UK schools, counters systemic erasure. Some places have strong laws that prevent people from being discriminated against. UK universities implement Access and Participation Plans (APPs) to enhance diversity and address educational disparities. These plans, mandated by the Office for Students, aim to improve equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Office for Students 2023). Despite progress, attainment gaps persist: University of Manchester data show that Black students’ degree attainment remains below White peers (Arday 2020). Sector-wide data reveal slower progress nationally, with Black students less likely to secure first-class degrees than their White counterparts (Universities UK & National Union of Students 2019). While APPs signal institutional commitment, mixed outcomes highlight the need for structural reforms in curriculum and staff diversity to address systemic inequities. Student-led initiatives, such as mentorship programs, complement institutional efforts to support under-represented groups in higher education.

3.4. Healthcare Disparities

Healthcare disparities are evident between Black Africans and the White majority. Maternal mortality statistics indicate that Black women in the UK are four times more likely

to die during childbirth ([MBRRACE-UK 2022](#)). The UK health system exhibits structural bias. The [Race Equality Foundation \(2021\)](#) reports that 70% of Black Britons experience unequal treatment within the NHS. Disparities in healthcare represent a significant concern. The NHS has documented that maternal mortality rates among Black women are markedly elevated. Incorporating data from the MBRRACE-UK report would effectively underscore these issues. Furthermore, referencing initiatives such as the NHS Race and Health Observatory illustrates ongoing efforts and identifies areas requiring enhancement.

Mental health affects Black people more in the UK. Statistics show that Black women are 3.7× more likely to die during childbirth than white women ([MBRRACE-UK 2022](#)). In London, 60% of Black mothers report being “ignored or dismissed” by NHS staff ([FiveXMore Campaign 2023](#)). Black Britons are 4x more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act (NHS Digital 2023). Racial bias is the main factor that affects how patients are treated or diagnosed. Racism leads to high mortality rates, especially amongst black mothers. Medical complications are not taken seriously by healthcare providers. Descriptions of pain from patients of colour are mostly underestimated by white doctors, and this often results in misdiagnosis. About 90% of Black adults are affected by racial discrimination affecting their social, psychological, and mental wellbeing.

3.5. Cultural Preservation Versus Integration

Balancing integration with their new surroundings and preserving their native culture presents a unique challenge for the African diaspora, which may result in feelings of isolation and loss of identity. [Macionis and Gerber \(2010\)](#) define culture shock as something that happens when one moves to a new cultural environment. [Pedersen \(1995\)](#) articulates that there are four elements associated with culture shock, namely honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and adaptation. Some significant challenges include, but are not limited to, homesickness, generation gap, race, and dependency.

The UK-based community organisations such as the African Diaspora Consortium or events like the Africa Centre’s cultural festivals in London exemplify how communities are maintaining their heritage while integrating into British society. The Africa Centre in London hosts cultural festivals celebrating Nigerian Jollof rice and Ghanaian Highlife music, fostering hybrid identities. The Africa Centre in London reported 10,000+ attendees at its 2023 cultural festivals, with 78% of participants stating it “strengthened their dual identity” (Africa Centre Impact Report 2023). Among second-generation Nigerians in the UK, 45% maintain fluency in their native language ([British Future 2022](#)). The second generation’s struggles cannot be underestimated. Young British Nigerians in Peckham negotiate dual identities, as depicted in the BBC drama “Sliced”. Are media representations a reality to Black people? Only 5% of UK TV leads are Black, despite Black people constituting 4.2% of the population (Ofcom 2023). For instance, Afro-Gospel nights blending Yoruba hymns with UK drill music reflect Jeremiah’s call to ‘plant gardens’ in exile, rooted in heritage yet flourishing in foreign soil.

4. Contrasting Diaspora Theology Frameworks

[Hanciles \(2008\)](#) asserts that migration serves as a divine strategy for the growth of Christianity, highlighting the agency of Africans in global evangelisation. This study uncovers a unique paradigm: African diaspora communities in the UK view Jeremiah 29 not only for spiritual fortitude but also as a directive for structural involvement. Hanciles’ macro-level research of migrant churches contrasts with this paper’s micro-level investigation of how UK congregations, such as the New Testament Church of God (Birmingham), integrate Jeremiah’s ‘seek the peace of the city’ ethos with initiatives opposing the Hostile Environment Policy. This simultaneous emphasis on socio-political activity and theological

innovation signifies a shift from Hanciles' ecclesiocentric perspective. Critics such as Nimi Wariboko warn against 'spiritualising structural issues', although UK African churches counter this by engaging in concrete policy advocacy (e.g., #EndHostileEnvironment campaigns), illustrating that theological narratives can harmonise with material activism. This corresponds with Gustavo Gutiérrez's liberation theology, which asserts that faith is a 'preferential alternative for the marginalized.'

While [Hanciles' \(2008\)](#) work is pivotal in issues of Exodus in the global African missional agenda, the UK diaspora theology deviates from this agenda. It aligns with Jeremiah 29: 4–7, for its resonance with the contextual integration struggles. The Race Equality Foundation (2023) uses historical precedents such as the 1980s Black Parents' Movement to deal with issues of school exclusions as a means of structural resilience; this divergence from this work underscores how the UK context is unique in social and political demands.

5. Jeremiah 29: 4–7 in the UK Context: A Theological Reinterpretation

This study analyses the passage and extracts insights to educate migrants, enabling them to become valuable contributors to their host countries. [Adamo \(2018\)](#) suggests that this is not an exegesis of the passage but rather an interpretative framework influenced by a specific socio-historical background to examine a contemporary situation. Jeremiah 29: 4–7 states:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

Jeremiah's prophetic message recounts a narrative from a backdrop that has significant resemblance to the present circumstances of migrants in the UK. In summary, the book of Jeremiah was prominent in Judah, and Jeremiah was raised to prophesy divine judgement against idolatry. The counterpromise by Hananiah was false, and Jeremiah told people to acclimatise, integrate, and actively pursue the peace and prosperity of their environment since they would reside there for 70 years ([Ofo'ia 2017](#)). God wants national development, and every believer has a duty to fulfil ([White 2015](#)). [Brueggemann \(2018\)](#) designates Jeremiah 29 as a prophetic message towards community building and participation. God's directives to the exiled Israelites appear to correlate with a contextual message that God may be imparting to immigrants residing in the UK today. This message aligns with the author's interpretation of embodying kingdom-like qualities as a Christian.

Jeremiah's message to the Jewish prisoners brought by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon mirrors the experiences of Africans in the diaspora. The Lord, via Jeremiah, commanded the Jewish people to dwell in Babylon, construct their homes, engage in agricultural activities, and lead a life akin to that which they would have in Judah/Jerusalem. Individuals of marriageable age should acquire spouses and procreate, while those with offspring ought to secure wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters, living harmoniously and persistently seeking the Lord for tranquillity. This conveys a distinct message that diasporans ought to establish themselves in their host nations, and despite the prevailing problems, they should prioritise productive endeavours and societal advancement rather than dwelling on the disadvantages. They ought to seize any opportunity that arises and utilise it effectively. The Lord informed them that they would endure captivity in Babylon for 70 years prior to their return to Judah/Jerusalem. This highlights the difficulties of relocating to a new country. Returning home may not occur as soon as desired; hence, establishing oneself and exerting effort would be most advantageous. Jeremiah's message

gives a home to people by saying that, regardless of the hard conditions, they should stay put. In many circumstances of life and the pursuit of justice, those words remain pertinent. God seeks our well-being and provides hope. Migrants should perceive this not merely as a brief transitional phase but as an opportunity to flourish in their designated circumstances. Regardless of our current position in our journey, God provides us with the chance to recognise ourselves as instruments of divine reconciliation, exemplifying God's love, compassion, and justice within our communities and lives.

God ordained and commanded the captivity of Judah as retribution for the rebellious, apostate nation; His intention was to humble and discipline His people, ultimately restoring them to an acceptable relationship with Himself. Had their captivity merely been an elaborate scheme against their captors, God's purpose would have undoubtedly been thwarted. The captivity would be prolonged, extending into the third generation, with the majority of the captives never returning to Jerusalem. Jeremiah's letter aimed to dismantle the campaign of the false prophets. This reading encourages a more thorough examination of our congregations. Jeremiah has a message for us. Instead of employing the legalistic terminology of illegal aliens, he encourages us to perceive immigration with positivity. Rather than regarding individuals with contempt, he perceives immigration as an asset. Jeremiah perceives the immigrant as divinely appointed to enhance their new society, as indicated by this oracle, to make a permanent contribution. Considering Jeremiah's perspective, we can regard immigration as highly valuable. During these challenging economic circumstances, it is crucial to convey this message to communities that may be inclined to retaliate against immigrants. This is a crucial message that immigrants themselves must also receive, as they may be fatigued by incessant negative portrayals. These adverse portrayals contradict the Scriptural perspective on immigrants. It is God's intention for all individuals to thrive, regardless of gender, race, social status, or ethnic heritage.

5.1. Re-Examination of Jeremiah 29: 4–7

Jeremiah 29: 4–7 exemplifies prophetic realism, as the prophet addresses the exiled people of Judah, urging them to practice patience and to positively engage with their society throughout exile. They should do this while maintaining their faith in Yahweh's promises. Case Study: The New Testament Church of God (Birmingham) employs Jeremiah 29 to advise Congolese refugees to "establish residences" in the UK while promoting justice via initiatives such as #EndHostileEnvironment. The examination of Jeremiah 29: 4–7 may be linked to church movements in the UK. The New Testament Church of God in Birmingham exemplifies the practical implementation of biblical teachings within a UK setting by supporting African immigrants through community projects. This activity reflects Kwok Pui-lan's postcolonial critique, which positions diasporic scripture reinterpretation as a decolonial endeavour. Similarly to Jeremiah's exiles against Babylonian dominance, African churches undermine the UK's Hostile Environment Policy by reconceptualising citizenship through a theology of belonging.

Sermons constitute an essential component of the church. Pastor Agu Irukwu (JCC, London) interprets the 70-year exile as a summons for sustained activism, referencing the two-decade effort for Windrush reparations. The African diasporic church employs Jeremiah 29: 7, "*seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile*", to establish cultural identification and a sense of belonging. The second-generation Nigerian teenagers at Peckham's New Wine Church reinterpret Jeremiah 29 to harmonise their British and African identities. They organise "Afro-Gospel" evenings that amalgamate Yoruba hymns with UK drill music, honouring dual origins as a means of "constructing homes in Babylon". A 2023 study conducted by British Future revealed that 68% of second-

generation African adolescents consider hybrid activities essential for combating cultural oblivion.

The African diaspora church implements a policy that reflects the government's standards for responsible citizenship. African diaspora churches collaborate with local councils, such as Lambeth Council's anti-gang violence initiatives, under the phrase "Seek the welfare of the city" to tackle youth inequality. The instances of collaboration illustrate how African diaspora immigrants can cultivate a sense of belonging and integration by embracing Jeremiah 29: 4–7. The African diaspora church participates in policy and theological discourse. Advocacy is conducted by the church. The Kingsway International Christian Centre (London) collaborated with local councils to diminish teenage violence by 20% in Hackney (2023 Impact Report). The #EndHostileEnvironment campaign, endorsed by over 50 diaspora churches, impacted revisions to the Nationality and Borders Act (Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants 2023). Moreover, the church participates in legal reforms. As of 2023, the Windrush Compensation Scheme has disbursed GBP 64.3 million to 1869 claimants, but 31% of applications are still awaiting decisions (Home Office 2023). Nevertheless, the drawbacks of Jeremiah 29: 4–7 are contested by several policies. The UK's Nationality and Borders Act (2022) breaches Jeremiah's principles by criminalising unauthorised migrants. Internationally, this reflects the 'Exodus Ethic' in Latinx migrant rights movements (Camacho 2021), while the UK African diaspora distinctively employs Jeremiah's 70-year timescale to advocate for enduring reparative policies, including the expansion of the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

5.2. Other Significant Biblical Passages Evoked

The Bible continues to serve as a potent instrument for activism and social justice. BLM UK youth activists in Manchester reference Esther 4: 14, "*For such a time as this*", to highlight Esther's bravery in advocating for anti-racist measures to local councils. In 2022, they effectively compelled Manchester City Council to rename streets associated with slavery, characterising their campaign as a 'contemporary Esther moment'. The campaign compared Esther's advocacy for her community to their struggle against structural racism, echoing church-led marches with over 5000 youth participants (The Guardian 2022). Although these endeavours are commendable, the African diasporic church exhibits certain limits in its religious narratives against systemic racism.

Addressing police brutality aligns with Micah 6: 8, which states, "Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God". Subsequent to the 2020 Brixton protests, youth from Jesus House London initiated a "Micah 6: 8" campaign, advocating for police accountability via prayer vigils and social media engagement. Documentaries about Stephen Lawrence's murder were screened in church halls, connecting biblical justice to institutional transformation. The initiative aided the Met Police's 2023 commitment to diminish stop-and-search disparities by 20% (Met Police Accountability Report 2023).

Fostering a constructive young mentality is a priority within the African diaspora church. This vigilance is founded on educational perseverance, referencing Philippians 4: 13, which asserts, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*". Black Caribbean students at St. Matthew's Academy in Birmingham inscribe Philippians 4: 13 on their exam notebooks to counteract diminished teacher expectations. Peer mentors utilise the verse in tutoring programs to challenge the 'attainment gap narrative'. Institutions with faith-orientated mentoring experienced a 12% rise in black pupils attaining top GCSE scores (Birmingham City Council 2023).

A constructive attitude encompasses issues of economic empowerment. Proverbs 13: 11 states, "*Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever accumulates money gradually causes it to flourish*". Young entrepreneurs within Leeds' African Caribbean Business Network utilise

proverbs to characterise hustling activities, such as hair braiding and DJ performances, as ‘kingdom work’. They finance start-ups via church networks, referencing scripture to contest preconceptions of Black ‘laziness’. Leeds experienced a 30% increase in black-owned firms from 2020 to 2023 (Centre for Entrepreneurs 2023).

There is increasing impetus to prioritise mental health issues within the African diaspora church. Psalms 34: 18, which asserts that *“the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”*, is predominantly referenced in discussions of mental health and resilience. Youth members of the RCCG (Redeemed Christian Church of God) in London utilise Psalm 34 to navigate experiences of racial microaggressions in educational institutions. In weekly sessions, participants exchange testimonies and compose spoken-word poetry addressing the challenges of overcoming depression associated with stereotypes, such as being labelled ‘aggressive’ by educators. A 2023 study conducted by Black Minds Matter UK revealed that faith-based peer support groups diminished self-reported anxiety among Black teens by 40%.

The notion of Healing Intergenerational Trauma Isaiah 61: 1–4’ addresses issues of intergenerational differences. *“He has commissioned me to heal the brokenhearted... to declare liberation for the captives”*. The Youth Alpha Program in South London facilitates discussions between the grandparents of the Windrush generation and teenagers, utilising Isaiah 61 to address inherited trauma. Adolescents produce art works addressing the “breaking chains” of colonial legacies, shown at the Africa Centre. Participants indicated a 50% enhancement in familial discourse regarding race-related trauma ([Race Equality Foundation 2021](#)). Nonetheless, certain traumas extend beyond racial issues, encompassing additional difficulties between the preservation of cultural identity and the process of assimilation, as exemplified by the experiences of second-generation diaspora individuals.

The aforementioned instances demonstrate how African diaspora adolescents in the UK interpret Scripture to confront intersectional challenges. Through the integration of theology with activism, art, and community development, they convert old scriptures into instruments of empowerment—resonating with Jeremiah 29’s exhortation to “build and plant” throughout exile. These events illustrate how African diaspora theology cultivates resilience and necessitates systemic transformation. It urges UK governments to collaborate with diaspora groups in creating an inclusive society that reflects Jeremiah’s goal of ‘welfare for all’. These approaches not only promote resilience but also confront systemic injustices, providing a framework for inclusive policies. The aforementioned work by the church demonstrates that migrants transport their religion as they relocate. African immigrants, mostly parents and first- and second-generation youth, utilise biblical narratives to address the difficulties of migration and diasporic integration.

Further, the New Testament Church of God launched a program dubbed #EndHostileEnvironment campaigns, which is interpreted as not isolated but a reflection of the broader trends. In 2022, the British Future survey found that about 58% of the African-led UK churches find it easy to explicitly refer to Jeremiah 29 when dealing with civic justice initiatives, pushing the ideology of communal salience.

6. Recommendation for Theory and Practice

Addressing these difficulties requires a collaborative effort from individuals, communities, governments, and organisations. By recognising the existing challenges faced by the African diaspora and formulating specific plans to address them, we may work towards establishing a fairer future for all societal members. Facilitating dialogues on race, advocating for diversity and inclusion, guaranteeing sufficient access to education and healthcare, enhancing economic prospects, and maintaining relationships to indigenous traditions are essential elements for transformation.

Although there are encouraging advancements regarding certain issues encountered by African immigrants, greater intentionality is required to attain the objective. There is a necessity for the implementation of decolonised curricula in educational institutions, inspired by Bristol's "Black History Month" activities. To institutionalise this, a 'Jeremiah 29 Policy Framework' should be implemented, stipulating the following: (a) Curriculum standards (e.g., nationwide implementation of The Black Curriculum by 2030), (b) NHS Cultural Competency Certification (e.g., annual bias training based on St Thomas' Hospital); and (c) Faith-Based Social Impact Fund to expand initiatives such as Hackney's youth violence reduction program.

The decolonised curriculum model implemented by Bristol diminished the black-white attainment disparity by 8% in pilot schools (Bristol City Council 2022). The UK Equality Act 2010 requires reinforcement to attain greater efficacy. The UK government's Inclusive Britain policy may synchronise the document with current national initiatives. The Working Group endorsed initiatives aimed at addressing the legacy of the trade and trafficking of enslaved Africans, urging all parties, including the government, to enhance efforts for the rehabilitation, restoration, and reconciliation between the state and its populace.

In healthcare, there is potential for the enhanced implementation of culturally competent care training, which has been successfully conducted at St Thomas' Hospital in London. The initiative enhanced patient satisfaction among Black mothers by 35% (Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust 2023). Collaborations between religious institutions and the state significantly contribute to addressing mental health issues. Supporting African-led NGOs such as the African Health Policy Network works to combat mental health stigma. The legal reform must broaden the Windrush compensation mechanism and abolish the Hostile Environment Policy. Consequently, there is a necessity for enhanced church-led integration initiatives and partnerships with UK officials. Furthermore, it is crucial to enhance the activities of the Black Business UK Fund, which increased black entrepreneurship by 22% in Birmingham (BEIS 2023). Similarly, there is a necessity to augment financial support for community-driven integration initiatives. By collaboratively enacting these actions across diverse societal sectors, we may ensure a more inclusive world where the African diaspora can thrive alongside their non-minority counterparts. Future policies should incorporate Afrofuturist speculative frameworks, picturing a UK where reparative integration corresponds with Jeremiah's concept of 'seeking the city's welfare.'

Furthermore, conducting quantitative studies has the potential to systematically map Jeremiah 29: 4–7 and illustrate how this is prevalent across UK diaspora congregations. Accordingly, this may complement this paper's qualitative agenda. To a greater extent, this work enhances the understanding of its hermeneutical hegemony in Black British theology.

7. Conclusions

This study enhances diaspora theology scholarship by integrating liberationist, post-colonial, and critical race frameworks, illustrating how Jeremiah 29: 4–7 is utilised not just for communal solidarity but also as a strategy for undoing systemic inequities. The amalgamation of policy analysis (e.g., Nationality and Borders Act) and African-led ecclesiastical activities (e.g., #EndHostileEnvironment campaigns) presents an innovative framework for the theological examination of migration in adversarial political contexts. Through a reinterpretation of Jeremiah's call to "seek the peace of the city", African diaspora communities in the UK have converted theological narratives into pragmatic initiatives for social justice, merging spiritual resilience with systemic campaigning. Campaigns such as #EndHostileEnvironment and collaborations with local councils illustrate how scripture influences grassroots activism, contesting exclusionary policies while promoting civic inclusion. This

combined emphasis on spiritual and structural involvement highlights the importance of prioritising migrant perspectives in theological discussions and policy formulation.

The findings underscore the shortcomings of exclusively assimilationist frameworks, promoting composite identities that reconcile cultural preservation with integration. Initiatives like the Black Curriculum and Afro-Gospel gatherings demonstrate how diaspora kids navigate conflicting identities, opposing erasure while enhancing societal pluralism. The report emphasises the necessity of synchronising legislative improvements, such the Inclusive Britain Strategy, with community-driven initiatives to rectify inequities in health-care, education, and policing. Future research may investigate the long-term effects of faith-based activism on policy results or conduct comparative studies of diaspora theology within European contexts. This dissertation ultimately validates the Bible's status as dynamic literature, continually reinterpreted to address diasporic precarity and conceptualise transformative justice. This emphasises the importance of African agency in the theological discourse on migration, advocating for collaborative and intersectional strategies to foster inclusive societies grounded in equity and belonging. This thesis characterises diasporic scripture reinterpretation as 'living archives of resistance', advocating for researchers and policymakers to prioritise African agency in the theological discourse on migration. Similarly to how Jeremiah's exiles reshaped Babylon, the UK African diaspora presents a global paradigm for integrating spiritual resilience with systemic campaigning.

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