

Home Away From Home

The Caribbean Diasporan Church is analysed in the book 'Home Away From Home';

The book which analyses the Caribbean Diasporan church in the black Atlantic tradition, was launched late November in Clarendon, Jamaica.

Authored by Jamaican national Rev. Dr. Reid-Salmon, who is pastor of the Grace Baptist Chapel in New York, U.S.A., the book explores the experience of Caribbean nationals living abroad in light of their Christian beliefs. It argues that the faith Caribbean people brought with them into the Diaspora, plays a critical role in their adjustment and development.

Rev. Reid-Salmon, in his remarks at the launch, said that the book was born out of a need to provide members of the Caribbean Diaspora with 'a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of home';

He disclosed that initially, when he went to the United States, he became deeply depressed, because even as one went in search of a better life, and opportunities that were not readily available in Jamaica, there was a constant feeling of being misplaced, isolated, and unaccepted. As he searched for the inner peace his spirit demanded, he found that the church provided some comfort.

The book therefore, while a source of theological discourse, is also intended to instruct the thousands of others who found themselves in similar positions. It is intended to help assuage the feeling of hopelessness faced by Caribbean nationals, who find themselves in a strange land, often caught up in racial and other tensions.

Additionally, he said, it was necessary to have others understand that as immigrants, Caribbean nationals were not just 'takers'; but were contributing to the development of the societies of which they were now a component.

'It's not just writing for the sake of writing, it is much more than that,' Rev. Reid-Salmon said. 'It is about helping the members of the Caribbean community to understand their situation, and make sense of the racism, the rejection, the disappointments, the frustrations, the guilt and the struggles they encounter when they leave home, for these, sometimes hostile settings, in light of their faith in Jesus Christ,' he stated.

The study identifies three forms of Caribbean Diasporan identity, provides a theological interpretation of the Diasporan experience, delineates the foundational theological principles, traces the patterns of and proposes the distinctives of the Caribbean Diasporan church and thus, offers a Caribbean Diasporan ecclesiology.

While focus is placed on the Caribbean nation in the American society, it also draws on the British experience.

Pastor Ernestine Bailey, retired teacher, believes that it will be a powerful tool in assisting immigrants to understand, and deal with the various issues they inevitably encounter, in their transplanted settings.

Source : Jamaica Information Service, Jamaica