



Report: Youth Culture and Gang Violence

April 2015

A report written by Selina Stone, Youth Development Officer at Ascension Trust

Foreword

The issue of guns, gangs and knife crime defines a threatening and unacceptable subculture that pervades urban areas. Unfortunately many of our youths have adapted this alternative lifestyle which points to a future of violence, participation in the alternative economy, unemployment and social alienation. A disproportionate number of black youths are caught up in these issues. Black Church Leaders must identify with these issues because many of these youths are from our congregations and or indeed our children.

*It is our hope that this report will assist the process of a 'Big Conversation,' and that it will allow Church Leaders and other key stakeholders to begin the scoping of a difficult problem with the aim of providing a strategic framework, that leads to acceptable solutions. **Bishop Wilton Powell, OBE, FRSA***

Bishop Wilton Powell OBE FRSA, National Leader of Church of God of Prophecy, **Revd Les Isaac OBE**, CEO of Ascension Trust and **Revd David Shosanya**, Regional Minister of the London Baptist Association, convened the first ever '**Church Leaders Gangs Summit**' in November 2014. Black church leaders gathered together with the probation service, the police, prison chaplaincy and community initiatives to discuss, think and pray about the issue of gangs. This report has been born out of that summit.

Gangs provide a refuge for many young people in metropolitan spaces; they are alternative communities in which they belong and can discover a sense of meaning. Churches on the other hand have the tools to expose the lies of the 'gangsta lifestyle' and to provide genuine communities of hope. Our hope is that this short report will help to awaken church leaders to that possibility and serve as a 'call to action'.

Revd David Shosanya

I believe that one of the greatest threats we face within African and Caribbean communities is the undermining of our young boys and girls by gang violence. In more recent times the problem has extended from gun violence and drug activity to sexual violence and the exploitation of girls and women.

Our failure to take these problems seriously will not only result in the undermining of the black community at present, but will have a wide range of implications for the next generations. We must join forces to overcome these challenges; only through 'joined-up thinking', pooling resources and sharing expertise can we effectively tackle this issue.

I remember some years ago a young man was stabbed to death in our community and I was asked to take his funeral which was held on his birthday. As I looked around the congregation, I could see apart from



myself and one other person, everyone in the church was aged below 30. The most striking moment for me was standing at the graveside doing the committal, when the young people threw ganja, whisky and drugs into this boy's grave. It seemed that they had wanted to do a gun salute in his honour.

*Over the last 18 months, there have been numerous stabbings and murders where the victim has been directly connected to a local black Pentecostal church. This problem is no longer just on our streets, it's no longer on the door steps of the Church, it is now impacting our Church members and all of us in a very direct way. It is my hope that this report will move us closer as a community to understanding this problem and acting to tackle it. **Revd Les Isaac OBE***

Introduction

For over 20 years, Ascension Trust has been committed to equipping local churches to serve the vulnerable in their communities both here in the UK and abroad. Through Street Pastors which began in response to increasing street violence, we have now trained over 12,000 people to patrol communities and be a pastoral presence on the streets. The care and protection of young lives is an essential aspect of the work of Ascension Trust.

The problems associated with gangs and gang culture are not new to the British context. In the early 19th century, the metropolitan police were concerned by the impact of hardened criminals and their influence over children and young people.¹ The conditions of rapid social change, economic deprivation and political disengagement which characterised that era are clearly evident in our contemporary setting. Consequently, young people currently find themselves in positions of vulnerability and uncertainty both in the home and also in wider society.

As with all contemporary social issues, this problem is multi-faceted and manifests itself in many forms and contexts. However, there are clear indications that the peak of current activity is in London and that men from African and Caribbean backgrounds are disproportionately involved. It is for this reason that this initial report gives specific attention to the black community and its churches and also focuses on activity in the capital.

The purpose of the report is to inform community and church leaders about the impact of gang activity, to reflect on work that is currently taking place and to provide recommendations for action. It is our intention that this piece of work will contribute to a wider context of research and reporting on the issues surrounding young people in the urban setting and the place of Christian ministry. Any attempt to tackle this issue effectively rests on our ability to recognise and maximise the work that is already taking place in this area.

¹ Shore, Heather, 'Crime, Policing and Punishment' in Chris Williams (Ed), *A Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004) p.387

Gangs and Gang Culture

In general, the British population develops an understanding of gangs and gang culture through the headlines presented by the media and other agencies. The sporadic reporting of the most 'newsworthy' stories and statistics falls short of providing a consistent and accurate portrayal of the persistent trends and areas of concern. Official statistics from the Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Home Office assist us by offering a more consistent flow of data on the basis of reported crime. In addition to this, the stories and facts shared by individuals and organisations who work in local communities illustrate what is taking place in real time. This report will rely on a combination of both official statistics and testimony from practitioners.

"We become disengaged from our families and from society, so we create our own. We have our own economy, our own justice system and our own laws..."

Ex-Gang Member, 2014

What do we mean by 'gangs'?

The debate about the use of the label 'gang' is a worthwhile point of consideration. There is a clear distinction to be made between what are known as 'organised criminal gangs' and those known more commonly as 'street gangs'.

Organised Criminal Gangs are often invisible and historic operations which specialise in high level criminal activity including human trafficking, the supply of Class A Drugs and dealing in firearms.

Street Gangs often comprise of young people in inner city areas and are focused on activities ranging from personal robbery, fraud and drug dealing to stabbings, kidnap and sexual exploitation.

For the sake of this report, we will be focussing on street gangs as defined above. We will adopt the following definitions from the work of Professor John Pitts. By using the term 'gang' we mean:

*'children and young people who see themselves, and are seen by others, as affiliates of a discrete, unnamed group with a discernible structure and a recognised territory.'*²

² John Pitts, *Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing face of youth crime* (Oregon: Willan Publishing) p.6

By 'gang culture(s)' we mean:

*'the distinctive beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviours and rituals of the gang and its affiliates, as well as the passive, defensive or aggressive responses elicited from unaffiliated or reluctantly affiliated young people and adults.'*³

What do we know about the people who are involved in gangs?

Gangline estimates that there are approximately **11,000** individual gang members in London alone and **35,000** across the UK

www.gangline.com

The majority of gang members who feature on the Metropolitan Police's Trident Matrix are young adults:

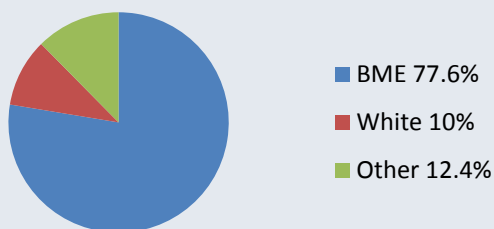
70% are aged between 17 and 23 years of age, with over a **quarter** of all individuals listed as either 19 or 20 years of age.

MOPAC, *Strategic Ambitions for London - Gangs and Serious Youth Violence*, 2014

The typical gang member has **9 offences** in their history, though there was a range of **up to 146 previous offences**. Around **59%** had a previous drugs sanction, **36%** for public disorder, and **35%** had a previous sanction for an offence involving a weapon, typically a knife or bladed instrument. Gang members were **15 years old** when convicted of their first offence. Approximately **57%** were first convicted before their 16th birthday and **83%** before their 18th birthday.

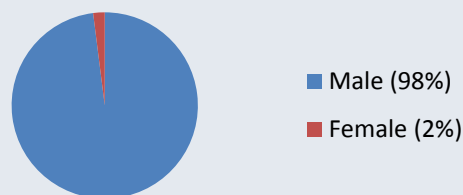
MOPAC, *Strategic Ambitions for London - Gangs and Serious Youth Violence*, 2014

Ethnic Background



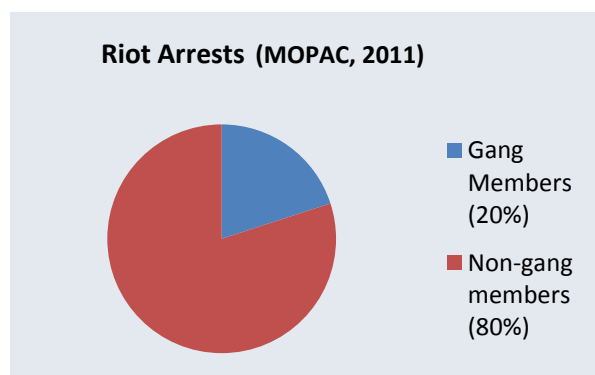
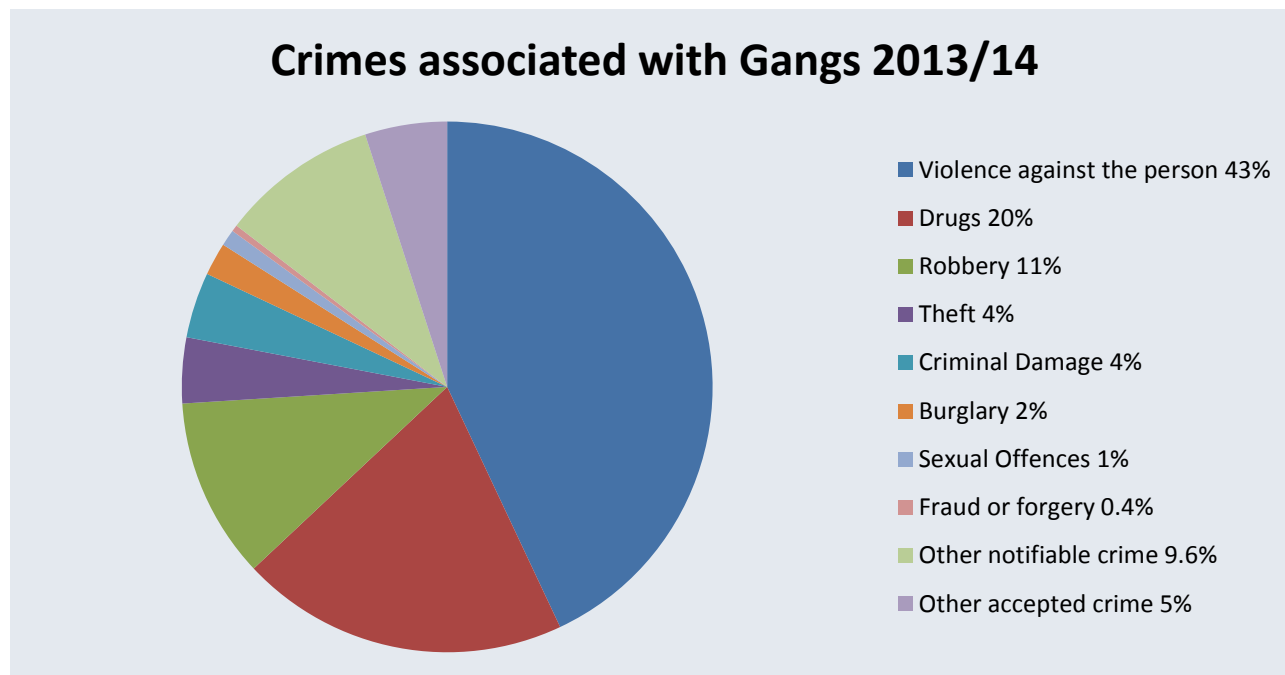
MOPAC, *Strategic Ambitions for London - Gangs and Serious Youth Violence*, 2014

Gender
(Gangline, 2014)

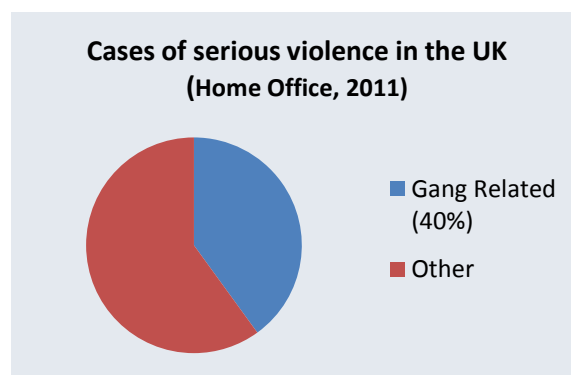


³ John Pitts, *Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing face of youth crime* (Oregon: Willan Publishing) p.6

Which criminal activities are associated with gangs?



MOPAC report, 2011



Home Office, Ending Gang and Youth Violence report, 2011

How are children and young people being impacted?

MOPAC reports that street gangs are made up mainly of young people aged **18-24 years old**

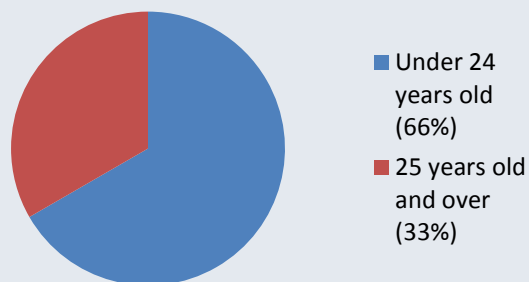
The **Home Office Select Committee on Gangs and Youth Crime** reports that children as young **7 years old** are at risk of gang involvement.

981 school children have been found to be carrying weapons into schools including primary schools across the UK **in the last 3 years**.

6% of **10-19 year olds** in England and Wales describe themselves as belonging to a gang.

Gangline, 2014

**Victims of Shootings in London
(MOPAC, 2015)**



The Centre for Social Justice released a report in 2009 highlighting the fact that up to **6% of 10-19 year olds** self-report belonging to a gang. In the five years leading up to the report, there was an **89% increase** in the number of under-16s admitted to hospital with serious stab wounds. The percentage of school children reporting having carried a knife increased by **more than 50% between 2002 and 2005**.

Centre for Social Justice, *Dying to Belong: An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain* (2009)

Sexual Exploitation

A report commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner into sexual exploitation in gangs revealed that: **65%** of the young women interviewed had been pressured to engage in sexual activity, **41%** had been the victim of rape by one perpetrator and **34%** had been the victim of gang rape. **50%** of these young women aged between 13 and 28 had engaged in sexual activity in order to gain status or protection, **39%** did so to obtain tangible goods and **23%** had sex to obtain money.

At least **6000 girls** are victims of sexual exploitation by gangs across the UK...

Gangslane, 2014

Sephton's Story

I am speaking on behalf of individuals who are lost in street culture. By 'street culture', I mean lifestyles that eventually involve gang affiliation, hustling, drug use, and illegal activity, and inevitably cause people to be outcasts from society.

A person is directed to a life of street culture at an early age, it doesn't just happen in a moment. Poverty, violence, broken families, and verbal and emotional abuse can all combine to make a child highly insecure, stressed, anxious and suffering from extremely low self-esteem. Many parents are in denial about the reality of their child's situation and fail to understand them and show them compassion. Instead of feeling loved, valued, worthy and supported, the child is left embarrassed, ashamed, helpless and lonely. Loneliness makes a person feel that the world is mad at them; it makes a person hate themselves. In society today, loneliness wears the mask of a thug who then becomes a victim of social discrimination and is deprived of human dignity. For them, there is no hope, and no will to change. Society avoids looking at what has happened in troubled people's lives; it only sees and judges people as they act in the present. Someone in this position does not just need to be judged and punished; they need to be disciplined and guided in the right direction.

I'm 26 years old, and I've spent almost 8 years of my life floating through different prisons. I was suffering and I had no knowledge of how to change my life. I have experienced social abandonment but have found an escape and I now have the insight and passion to make an escape possible for others. We cannot look at gang members only as troublemakers; they themselves are in trouble – they themselves are victims of violence and discrimination, aggression and racial hate. We show compassion and sympathy for other victims of abuse but not to gang members who often come from a history of abuse. We must look at the psychological impact that social discrimination has on the mind, and recognise the emotional and mental difficulties that are faced by troubled individuals in our streets.

The Government Response



The **Home Office** has produced a range of reports which inform its policy on reducing knife, gun and gang crime. In the last few years, reports have been produced on the themes of ending gang and youth violence (2014), firearms control (2012) and women and girls (2013).

£1.6m has been committed to fund work to tackle the sexual exploitation of women and girls in gangs.

New firearms legislation and offences for threatening with a knife have been introduced to increase prosecution rates.

Gang injunctions have been introduced for under 18-year-olds available to the police and local authorities.



Local Councils who recognise the issue of gangs have partnered with various organisations to employ a range of tactics including:

- Support planning for prominent gang members to help them leave gangs
- Running preventative programmes with 'at risk' young people
- Aiming programmes at the families of gang members and their communities
- Launching multi-agency gangs teams to visit schools, youth groups and colleges
- Deploying street workers
- Intelligence sharing between agencies



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

TOTAL POLICING

The Metropolitan Police and MOPAC launched the **Trident Gang Crime Command** in 2012 which has made almost **1,300 arrests**, leading to gang members being sentenced to over **1,134 years**. It has seized **87 firearms** and over **£900,000** in cash.

The **Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)** is the strategic oversight body which sets the direction and budget for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and holds it to account on behalf of Londoners.

MOPAC has produced several reports and issues related to gangs. In 2010, The Mayor established the **London Crime Reduction Board** which has included gangs as one of their top three priorities.

MOPAC has also invested **£3m** in 25 different gang initiatives as part of the London Crime Prevention Fund.

The Community Response

Aside from local and national government initiatives, community leaders are leading creative and innovative organisations, programmes and projects to address some of the key problems:



Word 4 Weapons (W4W) was founded by Michael Smith in 2007 to counteract the prevalent knife and gun crimes in local communities. The initiative works by promoting the voluntary surrender of knives and other weapons in exchange for a free 'All I Need' bag, which can contain a Bible.

Since the initiative started, W4W has had in excess of **13,000 weapons**, including a number of firearms, deposited in its bins. It has installed over **30 weapons bins in London, 8 in the West Midlands**, with more to follow in other counties around the UK.

Plans for 2015 include a national roll-out of weapons bins and the provision of a programme of community education in addition to its existing Schools Involvement Programme.

<http://www.word4weapons.co.uk/>



TLG is a Christian charity that believes that education is a basic human right and aims to provide a second chance to all children and young people who have been excluded from school or who are at a crisis point in their education.

This charity is opening up to three new Education Centres and many more Early Intervention Centres each year. Each centre is delivered in partnership with a local church partner to reflect the community in which they are based and ensure that they bring the best possible support to children, young people and their families.

<http://www.tlg.org.uk/web>



The Mind and Play is a programme founded and run by Peter Isaac whose ethos is built around being honest with yourself first and then with others.

The programme aims to build cohesion in families (between parents and young people) and also in communities, through a process of developing trust and understanding.

The initiative involves 121 sessions with individuals and families as well as group work and sports activities in schools and community settings.

www.2trfootball.com

Case Study: Gangsline

Gangsline is a non-profit organisation established in 2007 to provide help and support to young men and women involved in gang culture. The team, made up entirely of ex-gang members, advises young people to help them to exit gangs, and simultaneously runs an effective prevention service for young people on the peripheries of gang activity. Central to their ethos and success is a proactive, spiritual and non-enforcement led approach to gangs, and the gang violence embedded in local communities. Since its inception, Gangsline has effectively addressed the root causes of why young people turn to the 'comfort' that gang membership provides. Their services are underpinned by the notion of taking responsibility, morality, positive thinking, anger management, self-belief, leadership, success and purpose.



Sheldon Thomas, founder and chief executive of Gangsline, spent his teenage years and early adulthood on the other side of gang activity; as a leading gang member in the 1970s and 80s. Angered by the social and racial injustice that typified that era, Sheldon vented his frustration by rejecting the society that had shunned him; instead choosing to establish his identity in a life of crime and violence. However, Sheldon's life took a turn for the better under the mentorship of the late Bernie Grant MP who recognised the potential within this troubled young man. Through his connection with the then MP for Tottenham, Sheldon met civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and travelled to Jamaica to learn strategies for tackling gang violence. Sheldon is now considered a leading expert in gang culture on both a local and national level and is an advisor to the Home Office, New Scotland Yard and Operation Trident.

My parents are in the church...they didn't have time to socialise with their kids so I didn't have a father figure, I looked up to my brother who was into gangs...I got involved in gangs when I was 11 years old ...a youth worker was concerned about me because I had a serious court case coming up and she recommended that I work with Gangsline. When I first met Sheldon I was hostile...but the way he spoke to me, I could tell he had been there and he had done that...we built a relationship from there...

Ex-gang member, 17 years old

What can we learn?

Gangsline offers services and expertise that are in tandem with the gaps that currently exist within certain areas of church-based ministry. It has been acknowledged in our consultations that black church leaders would greatly benefit from partnership with organisations that can train and equip them to engage effectively with gang members and those on the periphery of



gang activity. In conversations and interviews with the team at Gangsline, several areas were highlighted for further consideration:

- The strengthening of the family unit is an essential aspect of any attempt to tackle youth violence and other forms of dysfunctional behaviour. Churches may be able to play a more significant role in family development so that all members, including children and young people, feel secure, cared for and loved.
- It seems evident that male identity is at the forefront of many of the crises we are currently witnessing, whether fatherlessness, sexual violence, territorial rivalries or child exploitation. Considerable effort is to uncover and treat the source of these many forms of aggression.
- Street gangs are one aspect of a complex criminal system that involves networks between organized criminals and individuals in economic, social and political institutions. This should be at the forefront of our minds when tackling what is only 'visible' crime. In order to tackle the effects of this system, community organisations, institutions and experts must work together to share information and best practice.
- The spiritual element of gang activity should be highlighted from a Christian perspective. The impact of unseen factors such as territorialism, the degrading of human life and the use of covenant should also be acknowledged.

The Church Response

Churches continue to hold a significant place in the lives of many within the British community. This is even more evident when considering those of African and Caribbean origin. According to the London church census, black churches are the fastest growing congregations and black people attend church more regularly than any other group in the city⁴.

In the light of what seems to be the growing influence of these churches, there is a need to consider the effectiveness and relevance of their ministry. Having developed through the challenges of immigration, many of these churches have evolved from a survivalist model to one that leads them to activism. As well as providing communities of faith, hope and love, these leaders are concerned with issues of social and political import.

The Church Leaders Gangs Summit

In November 2014 Revd Les Isaac, CEO of Ascension Trust convened a summit in collaboration with Bishop Wilton Powell, leader of Church of God of Prophecy and Rev David Shosanya of the London Baptist Association.



Leaders from the Christian community gathered together for this initial meeting in order to listen to input from practitioners and to consider how they could respond practically to the issue of young people and gang culture. The leaders who attended were informed by presentations from a range of specialists:

Peter Isaac, Director of The Mind and Play provided insight into the various identity crises faced by many young people in contemporary Britain and the resulting attraction to gangs and criminality.

Marcia Dixon, Editor of Keep the Faith magazine shared her knowledge of some of the concerning trends and areas of interest from her 25 years as a journalist specialising in the Black Christian community.

⁴ 19% of the black population in London goes to church each week, compared to 4% of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi; 8% of the white population and 16% of the Chinese, Korean and Japanese population. London Church Census 2012 <http://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/images/londonchurches.pdf> accessed 14/01/15

Delphine Duff of the London Community Rehabilitation Company praised the role of black churches in the community and encouraged leaders to consider what action their faith would lead to.

Raymond Veira, Senior Pastor of COGOP House of Praise, Bristol shared his perspective as an ex-gang member who is now a minister mentoring men who desire to make a similar transition.

Sheldon Thomas, CEO of Gangsline presented the landscape of gang activity in the UK and the circumstances which lead young people to get involved.

Alison Smith, Chaplain at Belmarsh Prison explained the spiritual and emotional needs of young men in prison and the support they need post-release to live changed lives in mainstream society.

Det Supt Sean Oxley of the Metropolitan Police expressed his hope for the relationship between the police and the community to be improved so that these issues can be solved for the long term.

Notably, the summit also included testimonials from two young men who have transitioned from a lifestyle associated with gang culture to being members and leaders of mainstream society.

Conclusions

Through reflections and discussions, a core list of issues and focus points emerged:

Male Identity is in need of greater attention and focus, specifically in terms of emotional support, mental health, spiritual development and family relationships.

Christian Ministry can address the needs of men, women and children through family support and spiritual care but also through offering practical solutions in the areas of business, training and housing.

Cultural Identity needs revitalising through education and community development.

Theology can contribute to transformation when it leads to loving relationships, community focus and activism being emphasised in ministry practice.

Academic input would benefit future discussions and local churches would be better equipped through the knowledge of experts and specialists.

Recommendations

The summit concluded by highlighting several action points for attendees and for Ascension Trust:

- Each leader is encouraged to consider what he/she can do immediately to address this issue in his/her context of work or ministry.
- Ascension Trust has committed to compiling a report on this issue which will include case studies of the ministries of Rev Raymond Veira in Bristol and Sheldon Thomas in Essex.
- In view of this report, a Steering Group will be formed to coordinate and lead on the strategy.
- Consideration must be given to a Media and Communications strategy
- Ascension Trust are prepared to organise a conference in 2015 with the intention of gathering a wider cohort of black church leaders and especially those under 30 years old.
- The work of Gangsline should be promoted within the network of black churches in order that an increasing number of Christian leaders can be trained to understand and tackle gang and street culture.
- A theological symposium would gather together researchers, academics and intellectuals to consider the web of issues and contribute to the strategy going forward.
- It was highlighted that churches and stakeholders should consider making a financial commitment to ensure that resources are available to support this agenda.

Case Study: Church of God of Prophecy, Bristol



Bristol, the largest city in south-west England, has a history similar to that of the larger cities in the UK. While many Jamaican immigrants arrived in London and Birmingham, significant numbers also made their home in Bristol during the 1960s. Years later, Bristol has welcomed communities from various parts of Africa and Asia and more recently by those from Eastern Europe. Members of these diverse groups live peaceful lives together as participants in their localities. Nevertheless, like all major cities in the UK, beneath the veneer of social harmony lie tensions which occasionally manifest themselves in a threatening reality. Social unrest in the 1980s led to riots similar to those of London and Birmingham. A generation later, Bristol provided the backdrop for scenes of conflict between the police and angered citizens in 2003. This city has also experienced the impact of persistent gang subculture which has plagued young people, especially men from the black community. This world, created and managed by gang members and their affiliates exists separate from mainstream society. For this group of people, crime and violence are the norm, and there is no easy road out.

Pastor Raymond Veira is familiar with this context having grown up in Bristol since the age of five. Raymond's formative years were characterised by abuse, insecurity and loneliness both inside and outside of the home. In addition, he was impacted by the challenges faced by many young men in his generation in regards to male identity and race issues. However, in a moment of unforeseen clarity, Raymond decided he wanted more from life than to live within the limitations of his background and current circumstances. While in this state of mind, Raymond also came to faith and his life began to take a completely different path. Once ignored by teachers and struggling with dyslexia, Raymond now began to excel in study and work, eventually running several businesses on an international scale. Not content with his own success, Raymond became a full time minister with a passion for mentoring men who have walked a similar journey so that they too can make the transition to a more wholesome life.

The Impact

I am never tempted to go back to that life...now that I am living this life...I have a family...I have a house...I'm not on the streets no more. Everything feels right now. I am never tempted...

Interviewee Z

Meeting Pastor Ray and being taken under his wing I feel like I am on the right track. It has been an amazing journey so far...I know definitely in the future that God wants me to lead his ministry

Interviewee X

I remember my dad telling me specifically one day “you will go to jail” but it went over my head...praise God he wasn’t right. ...Once you have been on that road for a long while, you see all the pitfalls...you know where it will end eventually...you either decide to stay on or jump off...I chose to jump...

Interviewee Y

Lessons Learnt

The ministry that is taking place in Bristol under the leadership of Pastor Ray is undergirded by certain guiding principles that have led to its current success. The work is evolving and developing, but holds true to several core values which provide useful points of reflection:

- Pastor Ray supports several men each with a unique story. The foundation of this ministry is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of engagement, but a commitment to authentic relationship. The men thrive in relationships characterised by respect, acceptance and consistency.
- Discipleship is the focal point of these relationships and sensitivity is required to know when and how to offer guidance, encouragement and at time, rebuke.
- The support being offered is holistic; it does not simply deal with their spiritual life in relationship with God, but also their mental, emotional and psychological health. This care extends beyond them as individuals and has great impact on their partners and families.
- Rather than focussing solely on the Sunday service, Pastor Ray actively encourages engagement in small groups as the primary model of meeting. These small groups facilitate authentic relationship development and are thriving as a result. Many members of the local community are able to connect to the church more easily in these groups than in the main church service.

Conclusions

The challenge of tackling gang culture and ministering to those who are or have previously been embroiled in this lifestyle must not be underestimated. Thousands of men, women and children across in the UK are being impacted either directly or indirectly by gang activity. The inner turmoil and external pressure experienced consistently by these individuals is expressed in a plethora of destructive ways and with far reaching consequences for themselves and those around them.

Unity is the source of strength for street gangs and for all those who adopt this way of life in order to survive. Any attempt to dismantle these groups and eradicate their destructive effects, demands a firm and unified response from churches and Christian leaders. There must be a unified effort to recognise where the gaps in ministry are and to work towards filling those gaps through training and partnering with specialists.

Government strategies are proving inefficient in tackling the persistent internal and external challenges faced by young people. The circumstances that lead young people to involvement in gangs or criminal activity are multi-faceted and require consistency and determination to solve them. The unique position of churches as communities of faith, hope and love means that they have the potential to respond to the holistic needs of young people.

Recommendations

In this section, we are presenting a list of recommendations on the basis of research into the national picture of gangs, conclusions derived from the Gangs Summit and consultations with specialists and experienced practitioners. This list includes suggestions of how leaders within the Christian community may respond actively to the issues we have highlighted

- Organise awareness training for Christian leaders in contexts where gangs are prevalent
- Support specialist gang workers to continue and expand their ministry
- Conduct further research into the significance of race and ethnicity in gang activity
- Support women and girls affected by sexual abuse and exploitation by gangs
- Form a steering group to drive the agenda for the church response going forward
- Convene a second summit for a wider group including young and emerging leaders
- Facilitate a conference for a wider group of Christian leaders to engage with funders, practitioners, the police, the probation service and politicians, to map current activity, develop best practice and avoid duplication.

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- Sephton who has provided great insight both at the summit and in writing his story for this report
- The leaders who attended the first Church Leaders Gangs Summit in November 2014 whose passion and dedication encouraged the writing of this report