

THE HERMENEUTICAL HISTORY OF SKIN FOR SKIN

An excerpt from Skin for Skin: Biblical Language in Jamaica's Morant Bay Rebellion by Stephen C Russell

military.

The phrase *skin for skin* was a central slogan of the rebellion. It was used not only in Bogle's letter of October 17 but also in efforts to recruit Black residents of the parish, especially men, in the days prior.¹¹ On October 10, following the initial disturbance In a well-known scene in Job, Yahweh boasts to the satan of the at Morant Bay, a small number of policemen journeyed to Stony Foster, "Bogle said, 'Swear his life! Skin for skin!" (RJRC moral aphorism or gnomic proverb, or a variation on one. for color (RJRC 1866 2.18; 2.45; 2.381).

The phrase *skin for skin* derives from the Bible. As a Native echoes of biblical language can be found in the very few words we can reliably attribute to him.¹⁴ For example, following the initial uprising, Bogle purportedly offered a public prayer in his chapel at Stony Gut thanking God "that he had gone to do that How did skin for skin shift from this meaning in Job to its use as

In a publicly circulated letter dated October 17, 1865, six days <u>1866</u> 1.37; cf. <u>RJRC 1866</u> 1.14), echoing the prayer book version after the burning of the courthouse, Bogle and three of Psalm 90:17: "Prosper, Thou, the work of our co-signatories called on fellow residents of St. Thomas-in-the- hands!"¹⁵ Indeed, Bogle had a copy of the Psalter on his person East to join their ranks: "It is time now for us to help ourselves; when he died, which had certain of its passages marked.¹⁶ Or, for skin for skin; the iron bars is now broken in the parish; the white example, in the letter of October 17, Bogle's use of the people send a proclamation to the governor to make war against singular my black skin is odd in its grammatical context but us... war is at us, my black skin, war is at us, from to-day to echoes the biblical clause my skin is black (Job 30:30, KJV). to-morrow" (*RJRC 1866* 2.929–30).¹⁰ The letter invoked the And the letter's metaphorical use of *irons bars*, which are phrase *skin for skin* in support of its call for *us to help ourselves*. now *broken*, echoes Psalm 107:16. As transcribed in the Royal A few sentences later it glossed us with my black skin, whom it Commission's report, the letter brackets skin for skin between opposed to the white people. Bogle used skin for skin, then, to semicolons as an independent clause borrowed from elsewhere call on every Black resident of St. Thomas-in-the-East to join in support of its argument. I can find no use of skin for skin in with every other Black resident in a war against the white contemporaneous English prose that is not a quotation from the plantocracy who were supported by the government and the Bible-below I discuss several occurrences of the phrase in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works. Recruits were made to kiss the Bible as they uttered an oath that evidently included the phrase *skin for skin.*^{$\underline{\Gamma}$} In light of all this, then, it seems to me that Bogle took skin for skin from the Bible.

steadfastness of his servant Job despite misfortune. The satan Gut to execute the warrant that had been issued against Bogle. replies, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for They encountered hundreds of rebels in Stony Gut, who quickly his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his overpowered them. One of the policemen, James Foster, testified flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 2:4-5, KJV). To that the rebels seized and beat him and that Bogle personally judge by the syntax of these verses and the rhetorical force of the threatened his life with a loaded double-barrel gun. According to satan's speech, skin for skin evidently constituted a traditional 1866 2.134). Foster and other Black policemen were compelled Whereas its meaning may have been transparent to the ancient to swear an oath of race loyalty by kissing the Bible.^{12*} Peter readers of Job, for the modern reader this short phrase abounds McDowell and Alexander Francis, both bookkeepers on the in ambiguities. Skin can refer both to human and animal skins Coley estate, testified that two days later, on the morning of and, by metonymy, to the body.¹⁸ Both occurrences of skin need October 12, the rebels raided Coley and compelled them to join not have the same referent. And the preposition translated in the the fight on pain of death. Recruits at Coley were also made to King James Version as for has a range of meanings. One swear an oath of loyalty and seal it by kissing the Bible. common scholarly interpretation-rooted in the parallel use of McDowell testified, "They said we must go to Stony Gut and the same preposition in skin for skin and in the inference the consent to join them, skin for skin" (RJRC 1866 2.93). Francis satan draws from it, for his life-is that the phrase originally stated, "They said that we must join the blacks, skin for referred to a fair contract in which items of equal value were skin" (RJRC 1866 2.94). And the crowds who joined Bogle were exchanged.¹⁹ The satan uses the phrase as part of his dismissal of reported to have chanted the evidently synonymous phrase color Job's supposed integrity. For the satan, there is nothing particularly noteworthy in the fact that Job should give up all that he had to preserve his own life. It is only reasonable that Job's own body, understood in essentially medical terms as Baptist minister, Bogle was familiar with the Bible.¹³ Other referring to health, was more important to Job than anything outside of his body, including vast wealth and even beloved family members.

work and that God had prospered him in his work" (RJRC a slogan for race loyalty in Bogle's letter? Long before

Bogle, skin for skin had become part of public discourse about firmness under the process of personal mutilation, to secure that race relations, slavery, and abolition. Consider, for example, the natural inalienable privilege of humanity" (Buckingham 1852, use of the phrase in the writings of Ottobah Cugoano, who was 188). As an epigraph to the whole narrative, Buckingham quotes, born in Ghana, sold into slavery in Granada, gained freedom in with subtle alteration, from the book of Job: "Skin for skin; yea, England, and became an active member of the Sons of Africa all that a man hath will he give for his' freedom." Whereas in the who advocated for abolition (Gates 1988, 146-52; Carretta 1998). In 1787 he published *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil* and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, in which he argued that slaves had a duty to escape. $\frac{20}{20}$ Cugoano writes,

But if any man should buy another man without his own consent, and compel him to his service and slavery without any agreement of that man to serve him, the enslaver is a robber and a defrauder of that man everyday. Wherefore it is as much the duty of that man who is robbed in that manner to get out of the hands of his enslaver, as it is for any honest community of men to get out of the hands of rogues and villains. (Cugoano 1787, 73)

One strand in Cugoano's theological and philosophical treatise takes up the language of Job. As part of his proof of the wickedness of slavery, Cugoano extends the logic of skin for skin. He argues,

Any property taken away from others, whether by stealth, force, or violence, must be wrong; but to take away men themselves, and keep them in slavery, must be worse. Skin for skin, all that a man hath would be given for his life; and would rather lose his property to any amount whatever, than to have his liberty taken away, and be kept a slave. It must be an inconceivable fallacy to think otherwise. (Cugoano 1787, 54)

Cugoano thus interprets skin for skin in Job to refer not just to the body in medical terms but also to what we might today call bodily autonomy, that is, personal liberty, or the rights of the self in its own body. For Cugoano, the underlying logic of skin for skin in Job is that one's self is worth more than any quantity of external property in which the self enjoys rights. As such, slavery, which is the theft of the self, is more heinous than any other form of theft.²¹

Related arguments were put forward by American abolitionists. In 1852, Boston journalist and politician Joseph T. Buckingham published the evidently fictional account *Seymour Cunningham*; or, All for Liberty.²² The narrative opens with a courtroom scene in which Seymour, charged with being a runaway slave, is able every man, march them down to Stony Gut" (RJRC 1866 2.929). to produce a certificate attesting his liberty. His accuser admits the authenticity of the certificate but claims it belongs to diversity as a singular entity, "my black skin" (RJRC someone else. To prove the certificate is his, Seymour displays the wounds described in the document-a missing toe, a missing finger, a missing calf, and a fractured arm. It later emerges that the papers do in fact belong to someone else and that Seymour enlisted the help of a butcher to disfigure himself to match the certificate. For Buckingham, the story offers "a striking illustration of an irrepressible desire for freedom from Slavery, -an undaunted resolution to recover it, -an unflinching

book of Job, the satan used the phrase to distinguish the bodily self from external things, Buckingham here imagines the self as willing to suffer disfigurement of the body to attain liberty.

Evidently skin for skin had become so closely associated with abolitionism in America that one advocate for southern secession attempted to turn the phrase on its head. In the midst of the Civil War, Reverend Jacob Cooper published a pamphlet in Philadelphia calling on American patriots to support the divinely appointed, that is, the elected, government, especially President Lincoln (Cooper 1864). A small rhetorical aside in Cooper's argument is of special interest to us here. He writes, "Surely we are not prepared as the disunionists are to accommodate the language of a noted secessionist, 'Skin for skin, all a man hath will he give for his-niggers!" (Cooper 1864, 100). The name of this secessionist is now lost to us, but the rhetoric of Cooper's argument depends on the slogan and its source being well-known to his audience. In turn, the slogan itself only functions as a reversal-confirmed in our printed source by the use of an em-dash to mark the pause that highlighted the reversal of meaning. Furthermore, it hardly reads as a reversal of an arbitrarily selected biblical verse. Rather, the reversal worked because it targeted the evidently well-known use of skin for skin in abolitionist discourse. This aside by Cooper thus confirms the close association of the language and logic of skin for skin with advocacy of Black rights.

Although Bogle's rebellion erupted only a year after Cooper's pamphlet appeared in print, by 1865 emancipation had been legally settled in Jamaica for decades. Bogle gave the phrase skin for skin a new meaning that was more relevant to post-emancipation society while being firmly rooted in the legacy of its association with public discourse about race and Black rights. Grammatically, the shift in Bogle's use of *skin for* skin was two-fold: he used skin to mean race, or, more precisely, all those with predominantly African ancestry, and he used the preposition for to mean join with, be in support of. Bogle, however, did not offer a grammatical exegesis of the phrase he borrowed from Job. Rather, he presented skin for skin as containing a transparent meaning. It is this self-evident meaning, this function of the biblical phrase in Bogle's public rhetoric that interests me here. With skin for skin Bogle called for a Black alliance in the face of white oppression. He emphasized the need for all Black residents to join in the war against a common enemy: "Every black man must turn out at once, for the oppression is too great; the white people are now cleaning up they guns for us" (<u>*RJRC* 1866</u> 2.929). He encouraged recruits to compel fellow Black residents of the parish to join the war, "Blow your shells, roal your drums, house to house, take out And he referred to the parish's Black population in all its <u>1866</u> 2.929).

Opportunities

ST. ANDREW PREPARATORY SCHOOL



The Board of Directors, ST. ANDREW PREPARATORY SCHOOL seeks to recruit a suitably qualified candidate to fill the position of PRINCIPAL as at March 2023.

JOB SUMMARY

The principal is the instructional leader and is responsible for directing the affairs of the School in a manner that harmonizes with the policies established by the Board of Directors and the guidelines of the Ministry of Education. S/he plans and directs the activities of the school through prudent financial management, adherence to a well-defined strategic development plan and sensitive human resource management, while maintaining the highest quality of educational and physical facilities offerings.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Applicants should meet the following criteria.

- Master's Degree in Education/Educational Administration or a related field
- Trained Teacher Certification.
- Knowledge of the Education Act and Regulations as well as school administrative processes
- Knowledge of ICT in Education.
- At least (3) years' experience in a similar capacity or in a senior leadership position
- · Possess excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to work with team members at various levels
- · Excellent oral and written communication skills along with strong presentation skills
- A propensity to think creatively and "outside the box" with highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills

KEY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- Knowledge of the school's philosophy and mission.
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Exceptional interpersonal skills for developing working relationships with a wide range of persons
- Excellent Customer and Client Management skills
- Ability to multitask and manage a varied workload
- Excellent Time Management and Organisational Skills
- Outstanding analytic, problem-solving, and decision-making skills
- Good Administrative and Managerial skills
- Distinct display of initiative, high level of integrity and confidentiality
- Ability to work under pressure and for extra-ordinary hours

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

* Share a common vision of the school with stakeholders that sets high expectations for staff and students. Develop the School Improvement Plan in collaboration with the Staff, School Board, Supervisory Officer and other stakeholders

- * Ensure that the school's objectives are aligned to the policies of the Ministry of Education and the Churches' Christian principles.
- * Encourage and support parental involvement in students' learning.
- * Maintain visibility with students, teachers, parents and the School Board
- * Utilize financial and human resources to fully accomplish the goals and mission of the school
- * Establish and maintain an effective inventory system for all school supplies, materials and equipment

* Assist the School Board in verifying the existence of vacant posts and participate in the recruitment and selection process for all staff.

- * Establish the annual master schedule for instructional programmes in the face-to-face and/or virtual domain
- * Maintain a positive school climate and school morale.
- * Ability to effectively interact with the public

Interested persons should submit their application by February 28, 2023, to:

THE CHAIRMAN C/O ST. ANDREW PREPARATORY SCHOOL 2-6 CECELIO AVENUE, KINGSTON 10

OR email: stapsbursarydept@gmail.com with ATTENTION: PRINCIPAL VACANCY in the subject line

WE WISH TO THANK ALL APPLICANTS FOR THEIR INTEREST HOWEVER, ONLY SHORT-LISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED FOR INTERVIEWS.

The International University of the Caribbean is seeking the services of a Recruiter.

Requirements

- Be competent with the basic software applications
- Have knowledge of the marketplace
- Be able to offer strong marketing within the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands network
- Be able to meet commission-based recruitment targets
- Have great social skills
- Be student-friendly

Send your Resume and Cover Letter to <u>ceemis@iuc.edu.jm</u>

Circulate within your network.



RE : SYNODICAL SPORTS DAY 2023

Greetings; Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youths, Youth Advisors

I pray all has been well with you and your fellowships. As you know the Covid-19 pandemic has hindered a lot of physical events for us. It is however with great joy I announce that **Synodical Sports Day will be a physical one.** This year we gather understand the theme **"Rooted, Resilient: Reignited by The Spirit".** This theme is in tune with the Synod Theme as we seek to remind ourselves that we must be; **Rooted** in the Word of God, our faith and our Christian identity. **Resilient** in how we face the challenges of life with Christ by our sides. **Reignited by The Spirit** let us start a fire in the United Church Young People's Fellowship and the wider church blazing with the fire of the Holy Spirit to engage in mission and ministry. Join us on Saturday, March 18, 2023, at the Naranda Sports Complex, Discovery Bay for our National Sports Day. The day proceedings starts at 8:00 am.

As you prepare to turn out in your numbers. Please note that Our sporting event will have a few changes this year. These changes are specific to this year's staging of Sports Day. We are all looking forward to seeing you come out in your regional colors and of course to see who will take home the trophy this year! Feel free to contact the Synodical or Regional Executive for more details. See You There

Yours truly,

Trifener Reid (Ms)



UCJCI

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT

The UCJCI Communication and Information Technology Unit is inviting applications for a six-week internship programme for Graphic Designing and Video Production.

If you are creative, have experience using Adobe photoshop, Adobe Premiere Pro or Canva, is reliable, meet deadlines and can work under pressure, this internship programme is for you.

This intern will be required to work with a team to:

- produce graphics based on a content map for Instagram and the promotion of events
- record and edit videos based on a content map for YouTube and Instagram

Compensation will be given.

How to Apply

Submit your resume and cover letter to synodhr@ucjci.com. If you can, include in that email a link to your work.

The deadline for application is February 17, 2023.



NOTICEBOARD



TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS

Quipping the saints for the work of ministry

IT'S TIME TO REGISTER!

Register now for Module 1.

Training begins **March 11, 2023** and continues **2nd and 4th Saturdays** (9-1:30 pm) and **Thursdays** (6-8 pm) following each training Saturday. Module 1 concludes in August.

Delivery online via Zoom. Learners may join online from one location in each region by special arrangement with Regional Mission Council offices. **Cost: \$9000**

ORIENTATION SESSION

Come and learn about the Training

An Orientation session is planned for those who register as well as others who are interested in learning more about the Training for Lay Leaders Course.

This will be held on Saturday March 4, 2023 online from 9 am - 11:30 a.m. via Zoom Meeting ID: 879 2238 3834 Passcode: 192859

UCJCI Lay Leaders Certificate Course is designed to prepare lay persons to serve in leadership.

For more information, contact your Regional Mission Council or email: laytraining admin@ucjci.com or WhatsApp 876 8818783





- Those affected by earthquake in Syria and Turkey
- The McNish family as they mourn the passing of Mr. Leslie McNish, former Chairman of WRMC and Elder of the St. Paul's United Church
- Rev. Tamara Smith Coleman who lost her father
- The son of Mrs. Sheila Arscott Smith, Jerome, who is recovering from injuries from car crash
- Ms. Joy Williams who lost her brother and sister
- Members of staff with relatives affected by COVID-19
- People affected by the war between Ukraine and Russian
- Crime and violence in Jamaica and the security force and government as they respond

Dear God,

God, help us to value diversity beyond variety. Help us value diversity with a vision for a progressive future that acknowledges our strength together as well as the power, creativity, ideas, and part that we all bring when we are all welcome – to come to the table and taste and see that the Lord is good.

Help our brothers and sisters in suffering. Ordain a band of unity and support in chaos and turmoil.

Amen.

Liturgy for

Worship at Home

February 19, 2023

Transfiguration Sunday

Reconciled with God through Christ

- Exodus 24:12-18
- Psalm 2 or Psalm 99 2
- Peter 1:16-21
- Matthew 17:1-9

TECHNICAL SUPPORT NEEDED Lay Leaders Training

Are you skilled in using the ZOOM platform?

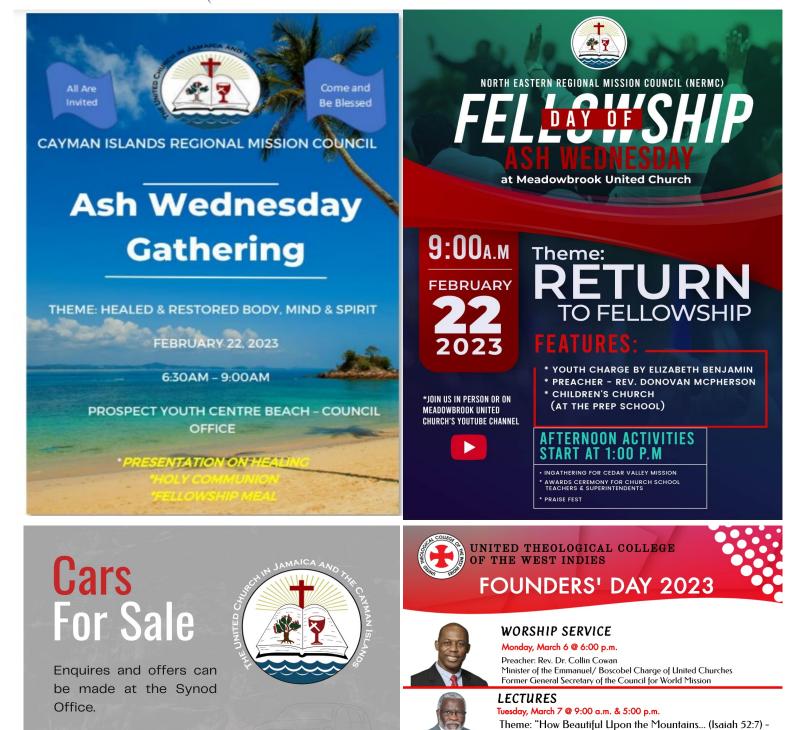
Are you available 2nd and 4th Saturdays and the following Thursday?

If your answer is YES, we need you!

Contact: Karen Francis, Lay Training Coordinator karen-francis@ucjci.com

a gratuity will be offered





Hyundai Tuca 2017 Volkswagen Tiguan

Address: 12 Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10 Telephone No: 876-926-8734



ON PREACHING Wednesday, March 8 @ 9:00 a.m Topic: "The Celebration of Preaching in the Caribbean Church." Speaker: Rev. Neville Callam

THE INAUGURAL CLEMENT GAYLE COLLOQUIUM

Former General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance 🗖 Meeting ID: 823 2586 7640 Passcode: FD2023

Speaker: Dr. Winston A. Thompson President, Jamaica Theological Seminary

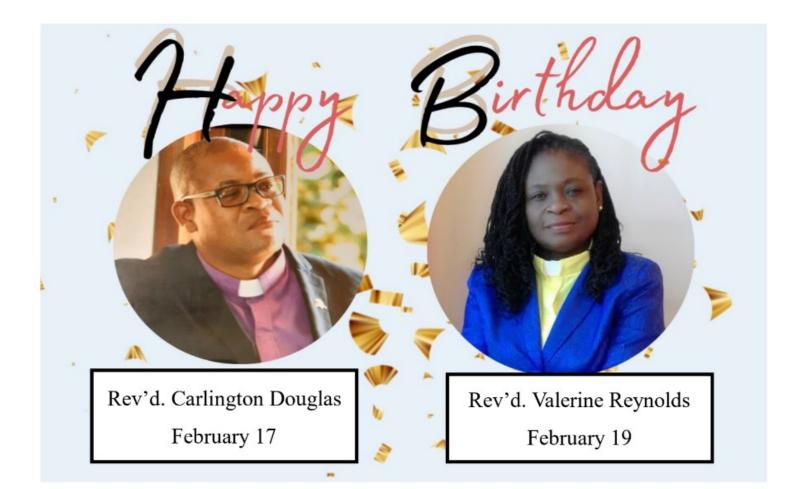
The Caribbean Pulpit"

💡 UTCWI Chapel

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The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian

Moderator:

Rt. Rev. Gary Harriott

<u>General Secretary</u>:

Rev. Norbert Stephens

Regional Deputy General Secretaries

Cayman Regional Mission Council-Bloomfield Rev. Dr. Yvette Noble-

North-Eastern Regional Mission Council - Mrs. Rose Wedderburn

Southern Regional Mission Council- Mrs. Janet McConnell

Western Regional Mission Council- Mrs. Mauleen Henry

Contact Us

<u>Address:</u> 12 Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10 <u>Telephone No:</u> 876-926-8734

<u>E-mail Address:</u> synod@ucjci.com <u>Website:</u> www.ucjci.com <u>YouTube:</u> UCJCI's Channel <u>Instagram:</u> @UCJCI

We appreciate your feedback. Please send your comments and input to citc@ucjci.com