

Interview with Roberto Kelly

Interviewer:

Interviewee(s): Roberto Kelly

Year of Birth: 1961

Location of Interview: Panama

Language of Interview: English

**INTERVIEWER:** Good morning Bishop Kelly, thank you so much for participating in this project.

**KELLY:** Good morning.

**INTERVIEWER:** We're hoping that this will benefit the community now and in the future, and we're just collecting answers about your life, in narrative form, feel free to answer as much as you'd like.

**KELLY:** Mm-hmm

**INTERVIEWER:** The first thing I want to ask you, can you tell us a little bit about the place of your birth, and what was going on then and there, when you were born?

**KELLY:** Okay, I was uh born in the, province of Bocas del Toro, um, I grow up there as a young boy. On, in my youth I travel on to the island of Bocas, where I study up my secondary school and finish up there, and got married and travel on to Costa Rica, for my theo—theological study, and then returned back to Panama, and now I'm here in the city of Panama. Directly, my religion is um the St. Jude International Spiritual Baptist Church, we are spiritual, we are uh—the people's common call it—jump up—but it is um Revival, okay, from the African Amer—um Jamaican descendants, so, at now I'm just bishop in one of the branches here in the city of Panama.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, so do you see a connection between your religion and that heritage, you said it's, it's of African descent—

**KELLY:** —Yes, exactly, not according to how, we the younger one have it, but according to what our grandmother, grandparents told us about our religion, coming on from, Jamaica, cross the Antilles Islands and, to the Isthmus of Panama. So according to um what they told me is that this religion were brought to Panama s—the Isthmus of Panama the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1910 by the Reverend Isaac, who were establishing the Isthmus of Panama and established the first religion uh as the mopuran International Baptist Church and from there other uh groups spring from, the—mo—the, from the mopuran.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, thank you and what was your childhood like?

**KELLY:** Oh, my childhood was, (laughs) it wasn't as today that we saw it, okay, my

childhood was more, go to Sunday school, on Sunday, um in the weekday is go to school, um those time we go to school twice a day, we go in the morning and we come off in the afternoon and we go back, and come six and that we rest, and we uh, my parents was very poor so I spent my youth helping by selling things on the street um, like what we call today brugudab, those in the island we called it bakes because we use different expression to the things uh that our food line, bakes and fried fish, and we go selling it on the lines, and uh the dock, we call it dock, it's a port but anyway. And I passed my childhood that way, helping my, my mother and my father, in their business.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of food did you eat?

**KELLY:** Okay, we usually eat um, we have different meals, okay, and Sunday is our special dish with our rice and peas and chicken and fried plantain with, um chicha, and then in the week we might eat white rice and fish and, breadpines what we called grungfood, um yucca, banana, plantain, boils together with meat, whenever have meat, but it's codfish—something, and any things alike but that's those, our food, eh, majority's grungfood, today, the young peoples wants rice. In my days, we don't, we have rice, but the rice is special for Sunday, and then you drink your cocoa, your chocolate, and your bakes and your pudding in the morning, Sunday, Easter, special—everyday is something special Every festivity is a different, making, baking, and preparation for that day, today, we don't know the different between date meals because, everything is just transformed now, okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you have any particular fond memories from when you were a child?

**KELLY:** Okay, concerning?

**INTERVIEWER:** Like anything that stands out to you about your childhood?

**KELLY:** Well I just remember that, yes, when I was a child and, you know like all we grow, what we call in the outskirts, in the outskirts we call it, well we s—when you're in town, and we inside we say we in the bush, and we want to come out the bush, and we want to come to town to see what's going on in town, and I remember when I was smaller, that always, my brother and I, we are always on the idea that we want to go to town, we want to go to town, want to come out the bush because we ain't getting nothing, and we want to go into town, so we just planned that, we going to, leave momma, leave poppa and we going to run away 'cause we coming out of the bush we going to town. And I remember, we was going, coming from Bocas to Colon to see what's, is this, the new town, and I remember that, coming, coming on there, they asked us, where are you all going? Say, we going to Colon, well you have to pay, you're all just kids, you're all just of six years and we didn't know where we going anyway and they just take us and carry us back and I remember my mother, my father give us a lash that I will never forget that, we never think again to come to town. We stay in the bush until when we get big and everybody start to go to school.

**INTERVIEWER:** That's funny, and so who were your friends in that time? Who were your best friends?

**KELLY:** Um, my best friends at those time were, I, a young lady by the name of Adele Mar, we go to school together, we grew all over—and uh a young fella by the name ar—Ernesto, eh Linton or so, we go school together and we used to do, whatsoever child's—this, rudeness, we say then together, so, that was my good, those are still my good friends, because we graduate our school together. Now they are profession, they take on a, career, and I take theological part of, of studies.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you've maintained those friendships, do you talk about your childhood together?

**KELLY:** Yes, sometime when we meets together. But time because um, I am here in Panama, she's in Bocas, and my other friend is in Changuinola, here we are, so we are separate but, we just call one another and talk, over and over childhoods and so forth.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me about your parents and grandparents, what were they like and where were they from?

**KELLY:** Okay, my - my grandparents is from, my grandfather, from - mother's side, is from Jamaica, okay, they say that he is from Saint Catherine, I don't know of it, I'd never been to Jamaica, and my grandfather from my father's side is from Grand Caymans, and in Spanish we called it Islas Caimán , okay, and—we, they, they are told us of different stories and things like that but the mind don't really project, because those times we are not interested, we young, we are not interested in—in those things, what they uh, used to told us—but the root of my descendants is from Jamaica and Caymans Island.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**KELLY:** Directly.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um, and what was school like for you?

**KELLY:** School?

**INTERVIEWER:** And who were your teachers?

**KELLY:** Oh, school for me those days is just to go and play, okay, and no, there wasn't interested in school those day but, the more we was, I were growing up, I realize the, the importancy of going to school, because, to tell you that I graduate from my secondary school when I was 20, and I went on to university tell you how long I stayed in primary, going around, repeating, but I remember uh a teacher by the name of, teacher Edna Burke, uh she draw my attention as she told me, uh Mister Kelly? You're leading up to be an old man in primary school, it's time enough for you to get out—and don't run down life, give life time, and time will give you what you want, and I take that and I will, I never

forget that word until today, and I put it in and I went on, force on, and I remember I passed my s—primary school with that teacher, because she was, she used to counsel me a lot and I take it in because, I wasn't too good, I run here, run there, and try to do every little things those time, when we was kid, you know by fighting here, make trouble in school and so forth, for them to throw me out to school, to don't go back to school and so forth, it's not like today, we used to do those kind of thing okay—but as my school—my school career, and I enjoyed being in primary, and when I reached the secondary, then I realize, the—serious it was, okay—but thank God to where I reach today.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what type of music did you listen to when you were growing up?

**KELLY:** Well, in those day when I was growing up, we used to listen more at home, we couldn't listen to nothing else but just the music momma put, we couldn't pick radio, and oh we want to listen to this, unh unh. What she put is what we listen to, and the majority of the music is, in the morning, you listen to your news, in, after comin' onto 8, 9 o'clock, they put on the religious music until they start to cook, and that pot been cooking from 10 o'clock, 12, 1:30, just finishing cook, so, you, the majority of the music we used to listen at home is religious music, when we go outside we listen to other music. Um most of our friend in the school, party, salao we called it, okay, we listened to our music but I wasn't so acquainted with the music so I can't tell you, those days, what music most used to, but I knew most used to be, something like rock or something with a lot of shaking up, not reggae, that wasn't exist in my time, this is now, but there was more bolero, bailada, salsa, in those days—but I was more, home too because I was, trying to tie it up because I was getting out of hand, so they pulled me as I was more after I reached a certain age I, calmed down.

**INTERVIEWER:** So what kind of music do you like now? Do you listen to music now?

**KELLY:** Now. Now, I love most my romantic music... uh, and slow music, too much nice.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of foods do you eat now?

**KELLY:** Uh now I like to eat my rice and peas and my chicken, uh my rice and peas with my pork meat, and my fried plantain, or my rice and peas with fish, stuffed fish, and my chichi, as our dish, practically at home today, cause my children don't eat meat, so we don't fool much at home with beef, chicken, fish, and that's it.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what are your favorite sayings? Sayings, do you have any favorite sayings?

**KELLY:** Ah yes, and archangel Michael, cause right now I am the, the bishop, leader of the Saint Michael Revival Spiritual House of Prayer, so my saint, archangel, and uh, the archangel, now the saint is St. Jude Thaddeus, has two different, one is, the angel is Michael and the saint is St. Jude Thaddeus.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how do you identify yourself, like in terms of your identity, how do you identify yourself?

**KELLY:** Uh, well I identify myself as a calm collected person, think twice before I act, and when I'm going to do something, I try to, first, to find out what, what I'm going to gain out of it, or what will be the negative side of, of it, before I go forward, and—I just like to be calm.

**INTERVIEWER:** And culturally do you feel like you identify yourself one way culturally?

**KELLY:** Um, with my culture? Oh yes, yes, I am a African descendants, and uh, and that's the reason why I um most in the, in the revival movement because it is more attached to the descendants, although my cousin told me that um, we say that we are African descendants, but for us really to getting, to get into the history of the African descendants, which we don't really get into as we just say because of what we heard, but now that we go and study the Africans, first he say that we don't speak the language of African, first he said that we—that we don't live as African live, and so many of the culture that we have that we say that we are African descendant, we don't really practice it, but uh, that's what he said, okay, but, according to here, where we move around and, I just carry around by history that we are a part of African descendants and, our culture come from African descendants and we are moving on into the African descendants, so and according to school they say that we did come from Africas, and we come according to the Antillas, and we travel on, travel on until our descendants reach to where we are—but with the young people we don't, we don't trace our culture, we just stop at what we hear, and worse with the young one we don't wanna hear anything of the color, don't wants to be English, from the beginning, which is, is a part of the culture, many don't want to believe that we are dark-skinned, we say that, no, we are chocolate, we aren't chocolate, my color is black, and I'm black. And we at home, we practice English with my daughter, she understand English very good, she don't want to speak English because she says, it's not to speak, but we don't speak Spanish at home, we speak English. Okay because a part of, if it's not even what we know, is a part of what we grow up in, so we continue it that it don't die, okay - so I, I identify myself as a part of the uh Jamaican African descendant, whatsoever it is, I identify myself of, of a part of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what do you know about your West Indian ancestry?

**KELLY:** Very little, because the majority of them used to, didn't like to give you s- give you the history, many of them tell you, you will learn, and and just leave it that they will learn and many of the old one die with many of the, the culture and the history, cause they don't pass it on, and who pass it on right now, the brains is not working to remember many things, so, very few I know, things I know about that, okay - not not not, not so much.

**INTERVIEWER:** And for you, what comes to mind when someone says West Indian? what histories, qualities, cultural behaviors do you identify as West Indian?

**KELLY:** Okay, that's—that's interesting—West Indie, West Indies, we the West Indies as I call myself, is a part, that we are very active people, we are very active, but the segregation, in English segregation, has caused us to withdraw ourselves from participating in the many things but I know that we are very intelligent, if we get the opportunity we can express our intelligence but we don't have much opportunity, but I know that we are just cultural, cool, calm, collect—just give us the opportunity and we will demonstrate that we have the capacity to go forward.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how do you think others in Panama view people of West Indian ancestry?

**KELLY:** Um—it's not uh, we need, we need more to express, our culture, we need Panama, we say that it's our liberty—a distinction cultural, okay, because for instance, if you want to do something and, you go forward and it's, both of you, all going to do the same thing, you are a little clear, you get opportunity, and you a little dark, they tell you come back, and, we will call you, and so forth, so - it's kinda, in Panama it's not so, they don't show outward but inward, in the inner sphere they have power, it is there, they don't give us that liberty to go forward.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you see discrimination in terms of skin color, what about, how are people treated who s—who speak English and are black here in Panama, how do you feel people are treated?

**KELLY:** Oh.. We have discrimination in Panama, we have discrimination in Panama, and uh the majority have, we have to talk about the past, but not the present, we got the present now everybody want to speak English, and everyone want to mix up with the English-speaking people, to learn to, a little English, but let us say couple years ago we had a, we had a discrimination, at, at least in history I don't know, but uh they told me, my parents told me that in Panama once you couldn't speak English, you had to speak Spanish to be a Panamanian, because if you speak English you are not a Panamanian and they look to send you back home and get on the Marcus Garvey boat back to Jamaica. Uh and so, and, you still have the root, the little roots around, but like all now, the technology have be advanced now that everybody have to learn English, now everybody, want to be amongst, we the speaking, English-speaking people to see what they can get from that, I don't know if they want to, just use this opportunity, or is door, God's opening door for us English-speaking people, to go forward, in this new area of modernism, could be, I don't know, the Lords know.

**INTERVIEWER:** okay, Bishop Kelly, can you tell me a little bit about your family, you're married?

**KELLY:** Yes I'm married

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you meet your wife?

**KELLY:** Ah no, we, we live very loving and understanding, uh you know.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how did you two of you meet?

**KELLY:** You know, in a, in a family, a wife and a husband, um, the both people said teeth and tongue will meet, but at night, you reconcile back together, because you know, as the Bible say, we must make that the sun go down on our... so we, but, always there will be misunderstanding, cause there is one thing that my grandmother told me —eh—if you and a person live together and the two of you all agree on everything at all times, something is wrong, because, there must be a misunderstanding, but we, those, always try to communicate together and talk it over, and whosoever have the, the mistake or made a wrong will say I'm sorry, honey, um, I'm very sorry, I hope not to do it again, uh whether she, whether I, whosoever, okay, uh but we try to, comprehend one another and understand one another at times.

**INTERVIEWER:** And where did you meet her?

**KELLY:** Where did I meet her? Ah, I meet her in Bocas Island, um when I was um, about the, ah I finished school already and were in, I met her in church, I remember, eh, on a Friday night because our service, revival service is a Friday, we go int—go to church and—what took place and happened, I really don't remember, it was so night and beautiful, that I don't remember, but I met my wife - I met the lady that became my wife at church.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, and how would you characterize her cultural background?

**KELLY:** Well we didn't really talk about our culture and background because all of us are black people and most have the same culture, and, but I do know that I am from Almirante, okay, what we call mainland, and she's from the island, and their system of living were different, to we that live in mainland, but I got myself adapted to the cultural system of the living of the people on the island, because the people on the island have nowhere to go, they have nothing to do, but just eat, go to work, and sleep, and I have that myself in that, and that is part of the culture of the island, okay, of Bocas Island, so I adapt myself and, we try to and I try to a, and then, she adapt because I'm a person, I just like to be here and everywhere, I just like to be, I don't want to be one place and I got sick when I got on the island because the place, you can't go nowhere, uh, but we try to understand each others, okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** And, did her family have any issues with you being chosen as her partner, with her choosing you as a partner, being that you were from separate, different—?

**KELLY:** Well yes, because they say that I was too young for her, and she was too, she was too old for me and, we're not gonna make it and, when um age come down and, this, going to get a young girl and I want to leave her and go and blah blah blah blah - and now we have 3 kids, that's my oldest daughter, 16, sev—going for 17 years, my boy

is 30, and my baby girl is, 11, and we are there, going on until the Lord's ready, so what all they prognosticate did not work.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your children, how do they define themselves culturally?

**KELLY:** My children?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, how do they define themselves?

**KELLY:** Well, I do believe that they are—okay, the problem is that—it's not a problem, okay, is that—when I were out of the country studying, the majority grow with the momma, so they started to grow in a different way and so they are with me, you know, when we are together and I try to bring them, but they love me a lot, I thank them for that, and they also love their mother, so they are growing up in that part, and we are teaching, trying to teach them our culture and trying to bring them into a form of living, a form of living, that they don't stray, but, it's hard, but we pray, I pray and leave it in the hands of God, cause it's hard for, for me with the young m—the younger one, the one, in the way that I grow more closely at home and so forth. And then my wife, she doesn't, she don't have the patient with them, okay, so I try to make them run, so what I do is I chastise them, I don't beat them, I just take away what they like and, don't give them what they want, at times and, so forth, and things are, I do believe that they appreciate it because they love they papa.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what specific message would you want to communicate to the younger generation?

**KELLY:** Okay, that God is love, and that in this new evolua—let me get it in English, in the new area of the evolution, that they have to turn to God. Cuz the only person can save them is God, although the Bible says that this generation will be the vi—generation of vipers, there will be more worsor, but he is their gift with his arm open to receive them, all they have to do is open their heart and accept him as their personal savior, and his precious blood has been shed for all of us will shed for them and cleanse them and bring them to all redemption, see Christ, look for Christ, and they will be saved, that's my message to the young people, look for Christ.

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you mind telling me what year you were born?

**KELLY:** Oh, no, no problem, I was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1961, I'm forty- what? 46, I think now.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what was the last grade of school you completed?

**KELLY:** Uh last school?

**INTERVIEWER:** The last grade of school, the last level that you completed.



**KELLY:** Oh oh, yeah I reached to second year university.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what is your profession or job?

**KELLY:** Um, security guard

**INTERVIEWER:** What city and state in Panama do you live in?

**KELLY:** Uh I live right now in San Joaquin.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how many months a year do you spend there?

**KELLY:** Uh, one year now.

**INTERVIEWER:** And San Joaquin, is that the name of your neighborhood?

**KELLY:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, is there any other information you want to share with us?

**KELLY:** Um, sp—specifically, if you have, might be, if I have the answer, or can help you with, I can, but the most I can tell you that um, that—we the, the Black race, we have to try very hard to let the young one know that's coming behind, to keep up this culture because it is dying out, and if we want it to continue we have to, from the young coming up, and the most is to learn them that—to speak the language, love the religion, our religion, because the most of native religion is spirituan, Baptist, Methodist, Anglican, but the majority of today, they don't want, they don't want to go to the Spanish church and it's, it's not a part of our culture, to learn to dance our Maypole dance, calypso and whatsoever, part of our culture, we have to bring it to our children, and it is ..., so this idea that you all have is very good, and is a part that we go forward now to, in our home, and our neighborhood, where we got our children to bring them into our culture, that it don't die. It might go down, but, don't die. So, that's the message I would like to leave this afternoon.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you

**KELLY:** Okay, God bless.

## Roberto Kelly

.... = Unintelligible

*Italics* = Sounds like

I = Interviewer

R = Roberto Kelly

I: Good morning, Bishop Kelly. Thank you so much for participating in this project

R: Good morning.

I: We're hoping that this will benefit the community, now and in the future, and we're just collecting answers about your life, in narrative form. Feel free to answer as much as you'd like. And the first thing I want to ask you, if you can tell us a little bit about the place of your birth, and what was going on then and there, when you were born?

R: Okay, I was born in the province of Bocas del Toro. I grow up there as a young boy, and, in my youth, I travel on to the island of Bocas, where I study up my secondary school and finish up there, and got married and travel on to Costa Rica, for my theological study, and then returned back to Panama, and now I'm here in the city of Panama. Directly, my religion is the St. Jude International Spiritual Baptist Church. We are spiritual, we are the people....call it "jump up", but it is revival, okay, from the African Amer-, Jamaican descendants, so, at now I'm just bishop in one of the branches here in the city of Panama.

I: Okay, so do you see a connection between your religion and that heritage, you said it's of African descent, that religion?

R: Yes, exactly, not according to all, we the younger one have it, but according to what our grandmother, grandparents told us about our religion, coming on from Jamaica, cross the Antilles Island and to the Isthmus of Panama. So, according to what they told me is that this religion were brought to Panama, the Isthmus of Panama, the tenth of January, 1910 by the Reverend...., who were establishing the Isthmus of Panama and established the first religion as the....International Baptist Church whereupon the other groups spring from the....

I: Okay, okay. Thank you. And what was your childhood like? What was your childhood like?

R: Oh, my childhood was - it wasn't as today that we saw it, okay, my childhood was more, go to Sunday school, on Sunday. In the weekdays is go to school, those time we go to school twice a day, we go in the morning and we come off in the afternoon and we go back, and come six and that, we rest, and we, my parents was very poor so I spent my youth helping by selling things on the street, like what we call today *bracadab*.

Those on the island, we call it “bakes” because we use different expression to the things that our food line, bakes and fried fish, and we go sell it on the lines, and the dock, we call it dock, it’s a port but anyway. And I passed my childhood that way, helping my mother and my father in their business

I: So, and what kind of food did you eat?

R: Okay, we usually eat, we have different meals, okay, and Sunday is our special dish with our rice and peas and chicken and fried plantain with *chicha*, and then in the week we might eat white rice and fish and, *breadtines*, what we called *grungfood*, yucca, banana, plantain, boiled together with meat, whenever have meat, but it’s catfish – something in it, but, that’s our food, majority’s *grungfood*. Today, the young peoples wants rice; in my days, we don’t, we have rice, but rice is special for Sunday, and then you drink your cocoa, your chocolate, and your bakes and your pudding in the morning, Sunday, Easter, special – everyday is something special. Every festivity is a different, making, baking, and preparation for that day. Today, we don’t know the different between that meals because, everything is just transformed now, okay.

I: Do you have any particular fond memories from when you were a child?

R: Okay, concerning?

I: Like anything that stands out to you about your childhood.

R: Well, I just remember that, yes, when I was a child and, you know like how we grow, what we call, in the outskirts we call it, well we, ....in the bush, and we want to come out the bush, and we want to come to town to see what’s going on in town, and I remember when I was smaller, that always, my brother and I, we are always on the idea that we want to go to town, we want to go to town, want to go out bush, we ain’t getting nothing, we want to go into town, so we just planned it, we going to, leave momma, leave poppa, and we going to run away, and we coming out of the bush and we going to town. And I remember, we was going, coming from Bocas to Colon to see what’s, is this, the new town, and I remember that, coming, coming on there, they asked us, where are you all going? Said, we going to Colon, well you have to pay, you’re all just kids, you’re all just have six years, we didn’t know where we going anyway. And they just take us and carry us back and I remember my mother, my father give us a lash that I will never forget that, we never think again to come to town. We stay in the bush until when we get big and everybody start to go to school.

I: That’s funny. And so who were your friends in that time? Who were your best friends?

R: My best friends at those time were a young lady by the name of Adele Mar, we go to school together, we grew all over, and a young fellow by the name Ernesto, we go school together and we used to do whatever childs, this “rudeness” we say then, together. So, those my good, those are still my good friends, because we graduate our

school together. Now they are profession, they take on a career and I take theological part of studies

I: So you've maintained those friendships. Do you talk about your childhood together?

R: Yes, sometime when we meets together. Yeah, but time because, I am here in Panama, she is in Bocas, and my other friend is in *Changuinola*, here we are, so we are separate but, we just call one another and talk, over, you know, childhoods and so forth.

I: Tell me about your parents and your grandparents. What were they like and where were they from?

R: Okay, my grandparents is from, my grandfather, from mother's side, is from Jamaica, okay. They say that he is from Saint Catherine. I don't know of it, I never been to Jamaica. And my grandfather from my father's side is from....Caymans, and in Spanish we called it Islas Caimán, okay, and we, they, they are told us of different stories and things that about the mind don't really project, because we are not interested, we young are not interested in those things what they used to told us. But the root of my descendants is from Jamaica and Caymans Island directly.

I: Okay.

I: And what was school like for you? What was school like for you and who were your teachers?

R: Oh, school for me those days is just to go and play, okay, and no, there wasn't interested in school those day but, the more we was, I were growing up, I realize the importancy of going to school, because to tell you that I graduate from my secondary school when I was 20, and I went on to university tell you how long I stayed in *priminary*, going around, repeating. But I remember a teacher by the name of, teacher Edna...., she draw my attention, and she told me, "Mr. Kelly, you're getting up to be an old man in *priminary* school. It's time enough for you to get out. And don't run down life, give life time, and time will give you what you want." And I take that and I will, I never forget that word until today, and I put it in and I went on, force on. And I remember I passed my *priminary* school with that teacher, because she was, she used to counsel me a lot. And I take it in because, I wasn't too good, I run here, run there, and try to do every little things those time, when we was kid, you know by fighting here, make trouble in school and so forth, for them to throw me out the school, to don't go back to school and so forth. It's not like today, we used to do those kind of thing, okay. But as my school, my school career, and I enjoyed being in *priminary*, and when I reached the secondary, then I realize, the serious it was, okay. But thank God to where I reach today.

I: And what type of music did you listen to when you were growing up?

R: Well, in those day when I was growing up, we used to listen more at home, we

couldn't listen to nothing else but just the music momma put. We couldn't pick radio, "Oh, we want to listen to this!" Uh, uh. What she put is what we listen to, and the majority of the music is, in the morning, you listen to your news, in, after coming on to eight, nine o'clock, they put on the religious music until they start to cook, and that pot been cooking from ten o'clock, twelve, 1:30, just finishing cook. So, you, the majority of the music we used to listen at home is religious music. When we go outside, we listen to other music. Also a friend in the school, party, ....we called it, okay, we listened to our music. But I wasn't so acquainted with the music, so I can't tell you those days what music most used to, but I knew most used to be something like rock or something, a lot of shaken up. Not reggae – that wasn't exist in my time. This is now. But there was more bolero, balada, salsa, in those days. But I was more, home too, because I was trying to tied up because I was getting out of hand, so they pulled me as I was more, after I reached a certain age I calmed down.

I: So what kind of music do you like now? Do you listen to music now?

R: Now I love most my romantic music. And slow music. Too much nice.

I: And do you like to eat? What kind of foods do you eat now?

R: Now I like to eat my rice and peas and my chicken, my rice and peas with my....meat, and my fried plantain, or my rice and peas with fish, stuffed fish, and my chichi. Same as our dish practically at home today, cause my children don't eat meat, so we don't fool much at home with beef, chicken, fish, and that's it.

I: And what are your favorite sayings? Sayings, do you have any favorite sayings?

R: Ah, yes, Archangel Michael, cause right now I am the bishop, leader of the Saint Michael Revival Spiritual House of Prayer, so my saint, archangel, and the archangel. Now the saint is St. Jude Thaddeus. It's two different – one is, the angel is Michael and the saint is St. Jude Thaddeus.

I: How do you identify yourself, like in terms of your identity, how do you identify yourself?

R: Well I identify myself as a calm, collected person, think twice before I act, and when I'm going to do something, I try to, first, to find out what I'm going to gain out of it or what will be the negative side of it before I go forward, and, I just like to be calm.

I: And culturally do you feel like you identify yourself one way culturally?

R: With my culture? Oh yes, yes. I am a African descendants, and that's the reason why I most in the revival movement because it is more attached to the descendants, although my cousin told me that we say that we are African descendants, but for us really to getting to we would have to get into the history of the African descendants,

which we don't really get into as here, we just say because of what we heard, but now that we go and study the Africans....First he say that we don't speak the language of African, first he said that we....that we don't live as African live, and so many of the culture that we have that we say that we are African descendant, we don't really practice it, but that's what he said, okay, but, according to...., we all move around and I just carry around by history that we are a part of African descendants and culture come from African descendants and we are moving on into the African descendants. And according to school they say that we either come from Africas, and we come according to the Antilles, and we travel on, travel on until our descendants reach to where we are. But with the young people we don't trace our culture, we just stop at what we hear, and worse with the young one, we don't want to hear anything of the color, don't wants to be English, from the beginning, which is a part of the culture. Many don't want to believe that we are dark-skinned. We say that, "No, we are chocolate." We aren't chocolate. My color is black, and I'm black. And we at home, we practice English with my daughter. She understand English very good. She don't want to speak English because she says it's not to speak. But we don't speak Spanish at home, we speak English, okay, because a part of, if it's not even what we know, it's a part of what we grow up in, so we continue it that it don't die, okay. So I identify myself as a part of the Jamaican African descendant, whatsoever it is, I identify myself of a part of it.

I: And what do you know about your West Indian ancestry?

R: Very little, because the majority of them used to, didn't like to give you the history. Many of them tell you, you will learn, and just leave it that they will learn, and many of the old one die with many of the culture and the history, cause they don't pass it on, and who pass it on right now, the brains is not working to remember many things, so, very few I know, things I know about that, okay, not much.

I: And for you, what comes to mind when someone says West Indian? What histories, qualities, cultural behaviors do you identify as West Indian?

R: Okay, that's interesting. West Indies, we the West Indies are like, on myself, is a part, that we are very active people, we are very active, but the segregation....which draw ourself from participating in the many things. But I know that we are very intelligent, if we get the opportunity, we can express our intelligence, but we don't have much opportunity, but I know that we are just cultural, cool, calm, and collected. Just give us the opportunity, and we will demonstrate that we have the capacity to go forward.

I: And how do you think others in Panama view people of West Indian ancestry?

R: It's not, we need more to express, our culture, we need, Panama, we say that it's.... distinción cultural, okay, because for instance, if you want to do something and, you go forward and it's, both of you, all going to do the same thing, you are a little clear, you get opportunity, and you a little dark, they tell you come back, and, we will call you, and so forth, so it's kind of, in Panama, it's not so, it don't show outward, but inward, in

the atmosphere that have power, it is there. They don't give us that liberty to go forward.

I: So you see discrimination in terms of skin color? How are people treated who speak English and are black here in Panama? How do you feel people are treated?

R: We have discrimination in Panama, we have discrimination in Panama. And the majority have, we have to talk about the past, but not the present,....present everybody want to learn to speak English, and everyone want to mix up with the English-speaking people, to learn to, a little English. But let us say couple years ago we had a discrimination. At least in history, I don't know, but they told me, my parents told me that in Panama once you could speak English, you had to speak Spanish to be a Panamanian, because if you speak English, you are not a Panamanian, and they look to send you back home and get on the Marcus Garvey boat back to Jamaica. And so, and, you still have the root,....roots around, but like all the technology have be advanced now that everybody have to learn English, now everybody, want to be amongst, we the speaking, English-speaking people to see what they can get from us. I don't know if they want to just use this opportunity, or is door, God's opening door for us English-speaking people, to go forward in this new area of modernism. No? Could be. I don't know; the Lords know.

I: Okay, Bishop Kelly, can you tell me a little bit about your family. You're married?

R: Yes, I am married

I: How did you meet your wife?

R: ....?

I: How did you meet your wife?

R: Ah, no, we live very loving and understanding.

I: And how did you two of you meet?

R: You know, in a family, a wife and a husband, the old people say, "Teeth and tongue will meet, but at night, you reconcile back together," because you know, as the Bible say, we must make that the sun go down...., so we, but, always there will be misunderstanding, cause there is one thing that my grandmother told me: if you and a person live together, and the two of you all agree on everything at all times, something is wrong, because, there must be a misunderstanding. But we, those, always try to communicate together and talk it over, and whosoever have the mistake or made a wrong will say "I'm sorry, honey. I'm very sorry. I hope not to do it again" Whether she, whether I, whosoever, okay. But we try to comprehend one another and understand one another at time.

I: And where did you meet her?

R: Where did I meet her? Ah, I met her in Bocas Island when I was about the, I finished school already, and were in, I met her in church, I remember, on a Friday night because our service, revival service is a Friday. We go to church and wasn't too clear...., I really don't remember, it was so nice and beautiful that I don't remember that, but I met my wife, I met the lady that became my wife at church.

I: Okay. And how would you characterize her cultural background?

R: Well, we didn't really talk about our culture and background because all of us are black people and most have the same culture, but I do know that I am from...., okay, what we call mainland, and she's from the island, and their system of living were different, to we that live in mainland. But I got myself adapted to the cultural system of the living of the people on the island, because the people on the island have nowhere to go, they have nothing to do, but just eat, go to work, and sleep. And I adapt myself in that, and that is part of the culture of the island, okay, of Bocas Island, so I adapt myself and, we try to, and I try to, and then, she try to adapt because I'm a person, I just like to be here, there, and everywhere. I just like to be running. I don't like to be one place and I got sick when I got on the island because the place, you can't go nowhere. But we tried to understand each others, okay.

I: And did her family have any issues with you being chosen as her partner, with her choosing you as a partner, being that you were from separate, different....?

R: Well, yes, because they say that I was too young for her, and she was too old for me, and we're not going to make it, and, when age come down and they say I going to get a young girl, and I want to leave her and go and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And now we have three kids, that's my oldest daughter, sixteen, going for seventeen years; my boy is thirteen, and my baby girl is eleven. And we are there, going on until the Lord's ready. So what all they prognosticated did not work.

I: And your children, how do they define themselves culturally?

R: My children?

I: Yeah, how do they define themselves?

R: Well, I do believe that they are, okay, the problem is that, it's not a problem, okay, is that when I were out of the country studying, the majority grow with the momma, so they started to grow in a different way, and so they are with me, you know, when we are together and I try to bring them. But they love me a lot, I thank them for that, and they also love their mother, so they are growing up in that part, and we are teaching, trying to teach them our culture and trying to bring them....into a form of living that they don't stray, but it's hard. But we pray, I pray, and leave it in the hands of God, cause it's hard for me with the young, the younger one....in the way that I grow more



closely at home and so forth. And then my wife, she don't have the patience with them, okay, so I try to make them run, so what I do is I chastise them, I don't beat them. I just take away what they like, and don't give them what they want, at times, and so forth, and things are, I do believe that they appreciate it because they love their papa.

I: And what specific message would you want to communicate to the younger generation?

R: Okay. That God is love, and that in this new, let me get it in English, in the new area of the evolution, that they have to turn to God. Cause the only person can save them is God. Although the Bible says that this generation will be the generation of vipers, there will be more worser, but he is there giving with his arm open to receive them. All they have to do is open their heart and accept him as their personal savior, and his precious blood that have been shed for all of us will shed for them and cleanse them, and bring them to all redemption. See Christ, look for Christ, and they will be saved. That's my message to the young people: look for Christ.

I: Would you mind telling me what year you were born?

R: Oh no, no problem. I was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1961. I'm forty, what? 46, I think now.

I: And what was the last grade of school you completed?

R: Last school?

I: The last grade of school, the last level that you completed?

R: Yeah, I reached to second year university, "en el curso de administración de empresa turística."

I: And what is your profession or job?

R: Security guard.

I: What city and state in Panama do you live in?

R: I live right now in San Joaquin Pedregal.

I: And how many months a year do you spend there?

R: One year now.

I: And San Joaquin, is that the name of your neighborhood?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. Is there any other information you want to share with us?

R: Specifically, if you have, might be, if the answer, or can help you with, I can, but the most I can tell you that we, the Black race, we have to try very hard to let the young one know that's coming behind to keep up this culture because it is dying out. And if we want it to continue we have to, from the young coming up, and the most is to learn them that to speak the language, love the religion, our religion, because the most of native religion is spiritual, Baptist, Methodist, Anglican. But the majority of today, they don't want, they don't want to go to the Spanish church, and it's not a part of our culture, to learn to dance our Maypole dance, and dance our calypso and whatsoever, part of our culture, we have to bring it to our children, and it is lost. So this idea that you all have is very good, and is a part that we go forward now to, in our home, and our neighborhood, where we got our children to bring them into our culture that it don't die. It might go down, but it don't die. So, that's the message I would like to leave this afternoon.

I: Thank you.

R: Okay.