

Liberty University School of Divinity

Discipleship: Encouraging
Haitian Churches in the United States to Fulfill
The Great Commission Mandate

A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty School of Divinity
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

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Abstract

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This thesis project makes a comparative analysis between the way discipleship was performed by the first century Christians with the way it is accomplished by the Haitian-American churches today. Extant studies in this field demonstrate that there is a lack of participation in missionary work and discipleship among Haitian-American Christians. They are failing to fulfill the command of Jesus Christ in Matthew's to "Go and make disciples" (28:19-20). This project surveyed Christians in twenty-five Haitian American churches in order to evaluate their understanding of the Great Commission. The author also consulted religious and historical documents with the goal of conducting a comprehensive study on this important issue. The ultimate aim of this research is to encourage Haitian-American Christians to become more involved in missions.

ABSTRACT LENGTH: 124 words

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Chapter 1

Discipleship and Mission Methodology

Introduction

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8

As a community of God’s people, set apart to reflect the good news of Jesus Christ, the Great Commission is God’s directive for the church to evangelize the world.¹ This is a very meaningful command for the original disciples and applies to all Christian people. According to the Bible, anyone who converts to Christianity is a disciple of Christ (John 9:27-29). It is clear that some of the people who claim to be Christian believers do not know what it takes to be a genuine Christian. A genuine Christian must obey Christ’s command at all times. Jesus commands His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matthews 28:19-20). Jesus knew that this was not easy to accomplish. He knew the dangers that the disciples would face in a world that was very hostile to the Word of God. He was aware that they would face death, hatred, prisons, mistreatments, humiliation, and deception. In addition, Jesus knew that the disciples must receive proper training in order to be well equipped for the work. The Lord knew that, without the strength and the presence of the Holy Spirit, they would not be able to resist the danger that is in front of them. Therefore, Jesus took the time to teach them the techniques of evangelization through which the sinners will receive Christ and become disciples. He comforts

¹ It is interesting to note that the command imperative in Matthew 28:19 is “to make” (from the Greek verb, *mathēteúō*), not “to go.” All Christians can keep the Great Commission by reflecting the Gospel in their daily lives, even if they are not “called” to serve in a foreign country. See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 486.

and warns them about the danger they will face and encourages them to carry their cross while they are on Earth (Luke 14:17). He promised and sent them the Holy Spirit to strengthen and to give them the knowledge they need to fulfill their mission. During Jesus's last meeting with the disciples in Jerusalem, he instructed them not to start the mission that he commanded them until they received the Holy Spirit. The Bible notes that, after Jesus departed to the heavens, the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.²

Jesus Christ fulfilled his promise by sending down the Holy Spirit that the disciples needed to go about doing the work of creating other disciples for the Kingdom of God. The concern of this study is that the same promise that the original disciples received is still alive, and all Christian believers need to follow the command of producing new disciples.³ This project is intended to serve as an encouragement for others to conduct more research in the Haitian-American community in order to find out the causes behind this situation. While this project itself is not a remedy to the problem of inadequate participation in missions noted in the Haitian-American community, it will provide a much-needed wakeup call for these Christian believers. They need to be aware that the order to make disciples pertains to all believers of all ages, to Christian leaders as well as the members of the churches. In addition, this thesis project will encourage the Haitian-American Christians to contribute their time and possessions for the purpose of missions. It is important to note that a few Haitian-American Christians do go on mission trips occasionally; yet, many financially sound Haitian-American churches do not have a

² Acts 2:1-4.

³ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few at a Time* (Downers Groves, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 70.

budget dedicated to missionary work. This decision is not driven by economic difficulties, but rather lack of awareness of the importance of missions as an integral aspect of church ministry.

Objective

This project will also motivate the Christian pastors and leaders in the Haitian-American community to reconsider the way they practice church ministry. For several reasons, church ministry in America can be a challenge, especially for the foreign pastors. Some of the challenges are due to lack of education, inadequate ministerial knowledge, and poor administrative and managerial skills, which result in churches that are poorly managed and administered. In most of the Haitian-American churches in the United States, the church members are not adequately taught about their roles as disciples of Christ and the importance of going to missions. The pastors do not give much importance to missionary work. In a few of the churches, they organize mission trips once a year. However, these trips are initiated by members of the churches, rather than by the pastors. If the pastors had taken the initiative to teach the congregation about the importance of missions, it is likely that many more would have gone to the mission fields. Most of the time, the churches are run by incompetent pastors and board members. Some of the Haitian-American churches do not even have a competent board or a committee to assist the pastor. These pastors lead their churches independently as a choice, because it allows them to perpetuate corruption.

This thesis project will allow the Haitian-American pastors and Christian believers to gain a better understanding of the mandate of creating disciples of all nations. Once the pastors and the members of the Christian churches realize the significance of this invaluable command, they would likely leave their comfort zone and go to the fields, where they will talk to the sinners about the love of God for them, and teach them about the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ that redeems the sinners. It is important to note that the problem of lack of participation in Christian missions is not superficial; it is a major problem in the Haitian-American churches. It is also noteworthy that, while the Haitian-American churches minimize the importance of missions, some other Christian leaders have paid a great price, even with their lives, so that the unsaved world can receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Among these Christian leaders, William Carey is particularly prominent, as he devoted his life to doing missionary work in order to bring the gospel to India. According to Dayton and Fraser, “the world we live in today is much more Christianized than in the time of Carey because more people have been exposed to and converted to Christianity.”⁴ Yet, the evangelization of the world is still a daunting task that the Christian community has to complete before the second return of Christ. It is extremely important for every member of the Christian family to engage wholeheartedly in this work. The Haitian-American Christians need to dedicate much more of their time and effort toward missionary works. The main goal of this study is to encourage them to be more involved in missionary work. The work presented here also aims to highlight the importance of complying with the Christian mandate of going and making disciples. This is an imperative that every Christian must fulfill.

⁴Edward R. Dayton and David Allen Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 1.

Every Christian needs to go to missions; hence, sending someone else to do the work instead does not satisfy this mandate. The Greek word, *poreuō*⁵ indicates that one needs to move or displace from one place to another for the purpose of sharing the gospel. The original disciples were neglecting the importance of moving from place to place to evangelize the world. God allowed a persecution at Jerusalem that forced the disciples to move from their homes to go to other places, such as Samaria and Antioch. According to the Acts of the Apostles, the deacon Philip successfully evangelized Samaria with the help of the Holy Spirit.⁶

Many Christian believers assume that it is enough to contribute money to a church or to a missionary organization to send others to missions. This assumption is wrong. While monetary contributions are certainly commendable, they do not preclude someone from going to missions. Many Christians are committing the sin of rebellion against God by not going to do the work of evangelization through missions. This is wrong, as a faithful Christian must follow Christ's command. Greg Ogden, states that "helping a person to become a disciple of Christ is an imperative for all Christian believers."⁷ This thesis project aims to address this deficiency, by raising awareness of the Haitian-American Christians of the importance of missionary activities. Even though nothing can physically force someone to fulfill Christian duties, this study will show the benefits and the consequences of so doing. Jesus Christ counts on the obedience of every one of his disciples. Like the Christians of the first century church, present-day Haitian-American Christians do have that same obligation to make disciples of all nations for Christ.

⁵ Matthews 28:19, see also Strong's G4198 - *poreuō*.

⁶ Acts 8:5-8.

⁷ Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 14.

Biblical Relevance

The principles on which the notion of discipleship stands are strongly grounded in the teaching of the Bible. Both the conceptual framework and the historical approaches are firmly rooted in sound theological teachings. There are many verses of the Scripture that teach discipleship and the importance of missions. Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to continue to do the work that he had trained them to do while he was with them.⁸ When Jesus Christ was on Earth, he emphasized the importance of discipleship by taking the disciples with him wherever he went.⁹ Jesus taught them through real life situations about the nature of discipleship and Christian missions. After the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles continued to promote and disseminate the contents of the Great Commission through missionary works. The spiritual conversion of Saul of Tarsus, whose name was changed to Paul, brought an entirely new dimension in the field of Christian discipleship and mission.¹⁰ The Apostle Paul went on several missionary journeys, sometimes accompanied by others. He spread the gospel wherever he went and brought many sinners to Christ. He proclaimed the name of Christ to princes and kings, and he planted many churches throughout Asia Minor and Europe. Through his missionary works, the Apostle Paul expanded Christianity from Jerusalem, to Syro-Palestine, as well as Asia Minor and Europe.¹¹

⁸ Matthew 28: 19.

⁹ John 6:3.

¹⁰ Acts 9: 1-19.

¹¹ See the Acts of the Apostles for Paul's missionary journeys.

Discipleship and Human Needs

The work of disciples is not limited to learning and to teaching the Scripture only, as they have to deal with real human needs, such as the need for food, clothing, shelter, and so on. Some of the miracles that the Lord Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples pertained to hunger and healing.¹² The biblical authors realized the significance that Jesus Christ placed on the human side of his ministry, as all four Gospels report the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus wants his disciples to know that good discipleship involves taking care of the people who are in need, whether the need is physical, emotional or physiological. Ralph F. Wilson, in his comment about the “multiplication of loaves and fish (John 6:1-15),” states that “this miracle is not simply a miracle, but a lesson that all Jesus’s disciples need to learn and apply in their personal life; they need to help those who are really in need.”¹³ The feeding of the five thousand was one of the greatest lessons taught to the disciples by the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson implied that discipleship involved carrying the burdens of others, as well as the neglect and abandon of oneself in behalf of others.¹⁴ It is clear that the disciples were not worried about their own hunger, focusing instead on others that were both hungry and tired.

¹² John 6:5-15; Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17.

¹³ Ralph F. Wilson, “Feeding the Five Thousand.” *Jesus Walk: Bible Study online Series*, accessed June 30, 2014, www.jesuswalk.org.

¹⁴ Luke 14:26-33.

Discipleship and Missions

Jesus taught his disciples that they must go to missions. This involved leaving the safety of their own environment to go into unknown territories in order to win lost souls and make disciples for the Kingdom of God.¹⁵

On one occasion, Jesus sent seventy-two of the disciples on missions, instructing them not to speak to any persons on their way to the mission fields. They had to greet the people who received them with the peace of the Lord. They were instructed to bless the houses whose inhabitants welcomed them. They had to heal the sick, preach repentance from sin, and declare the coming of the Kingdom of God.¹⁶ Jesus knew that the world is very hostile to his gospel. The devil hardens the heart of men so that they would not receive and submit themselves to the preaching of the message of the gospel. For this reason, Jesus equipped all his disciples with divine power and absolute authority over the devil and his kingdom.¹⁷ Jesus Christ wants all his followers to go to missions for several key reasons. Going to missions is an essential church ministry because it aims to advance the causes of the Kingdom of God. The Christian missionaries must teach sinners the principles of the Kingdom of God—a kingdom of joy, peace, happiness, humility, self-control, sanctification, and justification, among other things. Another important reason for missions is that they allow other people to hear the message of the gospel. Furthermore, going to missions is important because it is a command from Jesus Christ. All Christian believers must follow Jesus's commands. Through missions, many people are liberated

¹⁵ Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24: 47-50.

¹⁶ Luke 10: 1-24.

¹⁷ Luke 10:19.

from the influence of Satan due to interventions of Christian missionaries. Missionary work is important because it is a good method for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Missions and History

Jesus Christ was a missionary; he went from place to place, preaching the gospel and healing the sick. Historically, Jerusalem is widely accepted as one of the most important centers of Christian missions. On the day of the Pentecost, the apostles received the Holy Spirit that was promised by Christ. The Bible reports that about three thousand people accepted Jesus Christ, and were baptized on the same day.¹⁸ Further evidence of missionary activities is noted in the Gospel of Luke, where it is reported that Jesus sent seventy disciples on a mission to preach the gospel and to heal the sick.¹⁹ Additional evidence of Christian mission work is found in the Acts of the Apostles. One of the stories is about Phillip, a deacon of the Jerusalem church, who went to Gaza, as instructed by the Spirit of God. There, he met the Ethiopian eunuch, an official of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. Phillip evangelized the Ethiopian eunuch, who converted to Christianity and was baptized.²⁰

Subsequent evidence of historical missions in the Bible pertained to the preaching of the Apostle Peter, at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea. This event is aligned with Christian discipleship and mission.²¹ Furthermore, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Christianity opened new doors for the gospel. Saul of Tarsus was a zealous Pharisee and a persecutor of the

¹⁸ Acts 2:1-41.

¹⁹ Luke 10:1-16.

²⁰ Acts 8:26-28.

²¹ Acts 10:44-48.

Christians. While he was on a mission to arrest and kill the Christians, Paul was blinded by the power of God and was transformed into a useful instrument for the Kingdom of God. After spending time with the other apostles, Paul started his missionary journeys. This time, he did not carry letters that authorized him to arrest and kill the Christians. Instead, he was armed with the power and the love of God to bring the sinners to life in Jesus Christ. In other words, God transformed him from a murderer to a messenger of the gospel. This was a miraculous turning point in his life. Paul was called by Jesus Christ to carry the message of the gospel to queens and kings all over the world.²²

In order to fulfill his mission, the Apostle Paul organized at least three great missionary journeys, the first of which is reported in the Acts of the Apostles. As a part of this initiative, under the leadership of Barnabas, the group traveled from Antioch to Cyprus, then to Asia Minor, and back to Antioch.²³ This time, under the leadership of Paul, the crew traveled to Perga in Pamphylia. John Mark, who was travelling with them abandoned the group. Paul and Barnabas, continued the missions until Pisidia and Antioch.²⁴ The second missionary journey of Paul occurred after the council of Jerusalem. After the meeting of the council, Paul and his missionary group left via the Mediterranean Sea, stopping temporarily in Antioch. A dispute arose between Paul and Barnabas regarding the suitability of John Mark for missionary work. Paul decided not to take John Mark with them, whereas Barnabas insisted on taking him along. As a result, the group split in two branches. While Paul took Silas, Barnabas and John Mark

²² Acts 9:15.

²³ Acts 13 and 14.

²⁴ F. M. Gillman, "Paul, Missionary Journeys," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Vol. 11 (Detroit: Gale, 2003), 12-17, *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, accessed September 8, 2015, [www. Cengage.com](http://www.Cengage.com).

continued together.²⁵ This missionary journey took Paul and Silas to Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Philippi, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, and back to Antioch.²⁶ The third missionary journey Paul undertook began in Galatia and Phrygia, after which he travelled to Ephesus, where he spent three years. From Ephesus, Paul went to Macedonia, Achaea, and Syria. He later returned to Macedonia, and his missionary journeys took him to Corinth and to Illyricum, as well as Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Rhodes and Tire.²⁷

In addition to the biblical accounts of missions and discipleship, there is ample external evidence of Christian missions throughout the world. The missionary activities that were undertaken after the first century were mostly organized either by a single religious leader or by religious orders. For instance, Saint Patrick evangelized a significant part of Ireland,²⁸ whereas St David evangelized part of Wales.²⁹ Similarly, while Nestorian community evangelized much of Central Asia,³⁰ most of Northern Europe was evangelized by the Cistercians.³¹ During the Middle Ages, after Ramon Llull preached the gospel to the Muslims, many of them converted to Christianity. The historical evidence of missions and discipleship is well documented in the

²⁵ Acts 16-18.

²⁶ Acts 16.

²⁷ Acts 18-21.

²⁸ James Henthorn Todd, *St Patrick: Apostle of Ireland: A Memoire of his Life and Mission* (London: Dublin Hodges, Smith, and Co. Publisher, 1964), 31.

²⁹ Margaret Hebblethwaite, editor, *The Living Spirit: Prayers and Readings for the Christian Year* (Franklin, Wiscousin: Canterbury Press, 2000).

³⁰ Paul Everett Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History Through a Missiological Perspectives* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey University Press, 2009), 86.

³¹ Francis Rothery, *Missional: Impossible!: The Death of Institutional Christianity and the Rebirth of G-D* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publication, 2013), 43.

Bible. In addition, there is ample historical evidence of Christian leaders and religious groups that have devoted their time and assets to transmitting the message of the gospel all over the world. This further confirms that Christian mission and discipleship must be included in the ministry of every Christian church.

Methodological Approach

In this thesis project, several methods were used in order to reach a fair and unbiased conclusion, including employing a survey as a data collection instrument. During the study, the writer of this thesis surveyed several pastors, Christian leaders, and church members in the Haitian-American churches in several communities in the United States. The project included twenty-five Haitian-American churches, allowing ample data to be collected in order to reach a fair and unbiased conclusion. In addition to pastors of these churches, the deacons and the parishioners were also surveyed by the writer of the project. Each study participant answered eleven easy, non-personal questions, thus making the data gathered comprehensive and consistent. These questions were designed to test their knowledge about the Great Commission and the importance of going on missions. In addition, they allowed the author to ascertain how many times they have been on a mission trip, and how important the Great Commission is to them.³² They were also asked if they are satisfied with the way that their churches are handling missions.

In addition to the surveys, which served as the primary data source, the results from previous surveys were also included in the analysis. Finally, a review of pertinent books, newspaper articles, journal articles, and online reading materials was conducted, thus ensuring

³² Matthew 28:16-20.

that the reported findings are objective. Furthermore, the author consulted books and articles about Christian evangelistic missions and discipleship. Most importantly, the Bible served as an excellent source for reference, especially the verses about the Great Commission, Christian missions, and discipleship. In addition, the writer made many visits to the Haitian-American churches in the area of West Palm Beach and Miami to gather information about the way they handle their Christian missions. All these methods assisted in reaching the study goals, as usage of multiple sources ensures that results yielded are fair and objective.

Description of the Project

This is a thesis project for the Doctor of Ministry at Liberty University. In achieving its objectives, the writer of this thesis worked in close collaboration with his advisor, provided by the School of Divinity at Liberty University. In writing the thesis, the seminary guidelines were strictly followed. The writer of this thesis project utilized the help of librarians in order to find books, newspaper articles, journal articles, and survey results that can help him accomplish his project, while also consulting other online materials deemed relevant to his project. This particular project addresses the issue of lack of participation in Christian missions and missionary activities by the Haitian-American Christians living in the United States. Prior to commencing the study, it was posited that this group of Christians does not give much importance to Christian missions and discipleship. The study findings were also expected to demonstrate that the majority of the Haitian-American churches do not include missions in their yearly budget. This has resulted in failure of discipleship in the Haitian-American churches.

The author of this thesis believes that there is a great misunderstanding among this group of people about the role of missions and discipleship in the Christian church. Thus, the present study sets out to evaluate the understanding of the Haitian-American Christians living in the United States about the Great Commission mandate.³³

The relevant data was gathered through a survey in which members of twenty-five churches—including their pastors and deacons—took part.

Solutions to the Problem

The project aims to find solutions to the problem of inadequate participation in Christian missions that exists in the Haitian-Americans Christian community living in the United States, especially those living in South Florida. In order to address this problem, a few important steps must be considered. For instance, there must be adequate teaching on missions and discipleship, as well as an annual budget allocated to missionary activities. In addition, the pastors and the leaders of the churches must emphasize the importance of missions through the Great Commission mandate, and promote the notion that every Christian must go to missions. Lastly, the Christian believers must understand that it is a sin to disobey Jesus' command "to go to make disciples of all nations."

³³ Matthew 28:16-20.

Teaching Mission and Discipleship

As noted in the book of Hosea, God was concerned about the ignorance of his people. He states that when the people do not know what to do or do not have the appropriate knowledge they end up dying.³⁴ It is clear that ignorance is an enemy to mankind's progress. The cure to the disease of ignorance is good and sound knowledge. For this reason, the Haitian-American Christians living in the United States need to be informed about the obligation that the Lord Jesus Christ assigns to every Christian believer. One of the obligations is found in the Great Commission mandate. In this simple mandate, as Jesus Christ asks every Christian believer to leave his home and his safety net, in order to go to other places and evangelize and convert the non-believers to Christianity. The obligation to create disciples of all nations is a universal order that demands immediate attention from all Christian believers. All Christian believers must be taught about their responsibility to the kingdom of Christ. Thus, the churches must be led by knowledgeable and experienced pastors and leaders. The parishioners will benefit from leaders who are well prepared for the work of ministry, as those that are ill-equipped for the work of ministry constitute a danger and a stumbling block for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.³⁵ According to Micah Faulkner, "discipleship is at the same time an appointment, a fundamental assignment, and a mission."³⁶ Upon conversion, the church must teach the new converts the importance of mission and discipleship.

³⁴ Hosea 4:6.

³⁵ Micah Faulkner, *Discipleship*, accessed June 07, 2014, www.prezi.com.

³⁶ *Ibid*

Money for Missions

Every organized church must have an annual budget, as this helps the church to evaluate its economic well-being. If this budget can be maintained, the church will be able to execute its program. The writer of this thesis encourages the Haitian-American churches to balance their budget and dedicate money for missions and discipleship. This approach is very beneficial, as it obliges them to accomplish the programs that are included in their budget. It is important that the budget plans for more than one mission trip. Performing them more frequently would result in preparing and going to missions becoming a habit, which is an essential task of a Christian church. As an exceptional mandate from Jesus Christ, every Christian must participate in the Great Commission. According to Helen Irving, professor of accounting and finance, at the University of Wollongong in Australia, all churches need to face up the reality of money and accounting if they are to achieve success.³⁷ If the churches are not able to acquire or account for the assets they need for their mission, their ability to accomplish that mission is expected to be compromised.³⁸ A balanced budget is important for all organizations. The administration of the church is similar to those found in any big corporation. Like a corporation, the church must have money in its account in order to accomplish its goals. In addition, each department of the church must have a yearly budget. The department of mission and discipleship must present a yearly budget to the finance committee.

³⁷Helen Irving, "Balancing Money and Mission in a Local Church Budget," *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 18, no. 2 (2005): 211-237.

³⁸ Ibid.

Christians and Missions

There are many people claiming to be Christians, even though they have never been on a mission trip. A Christian will be busy about preaching or sharing the Word of God as much as possible depending on the circumstances. Jesus Christ had given the example of how a Christian is supposed to live. Jesus states that the son of man does not have a place to rest his head.³⁹ Jesus wants his disciples and anyone else who wants to follow him to know that there is a great price to pay—the abandon of personal choice and liberty in order to execute the will of Christ. The will of Christ is that no one should pass his or her responsibility of being a disciple of Christ to someone else. Every disciple of Christ is unique and is expected to work hard and tirelessly for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. The work of the disciple is designed by Christ. No disciple should do the work that Christ designs for another disciple to perform. This is why the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts that are unique to each disciple. Therefore, no disciple can completely and flawlessly fulfill the work that is designed for someone else to do. This means that no Christian should send someone else to fulfill his or her part of the Great Commission. Thus, at least once a year, every Christian believer must leave his or her home to go to another area to evangelize the unsaved world. The Great Commission requires the Christian believers to travel to other areas to preach the gospel. It is a huge mistake for the Christian believers to assume that by contributing money to send others to missions they are fulfilling the Great Commission. The Bible emphasizes the need to go, not to send; there is a big difference between going and sending. According to Howard, Baker, “the same way that Jesus was sent by the

³⁹ Luke 9:57-59.

Father to do the work of the Father, in the same way that Jesus sent his disciples to do his work.” Thus, failure to go on missions, as required by Jesus Christ, is a sin.⁴⁰

Sin Related to Missions

Jesus Christ was obedient to His Father in everything. He never failed to accomplish what the Father designed for him to do, even the death at the cross. Jesus Christ’s obedience to His Father is a sign of his humbleness. The Bible states Jesus humbled himself until his death at the cross. Consequently, God elevated Christ to the highest place with a name that is more excellent than that of everyone else.⁴¹ Hence, as imitators of Christ, all disciples must be obedient to the commands of Christ. The command to go and create disciples all over the world is given by Christ. According to James Thompson, “discipleship implies the abandon of oneself to follow Christ and carry the cross.”⁴² These tasks required complete obedience to the Word of Christ. For the sake of the gospel, the disciple must travel even to places where he or she would never have been if it were not for the purpose of evangelization. The prophet Jonah had to go to Nineveh, even though he hated the city and its inhabitants.⁴³

He had paid a great price and almost lost his life for being disobedient to God. A disciple must obey at all times to the Word of Christ.

⁴⁰ Howard Baker, “The place of mission in Johannine discipleship: perspectives from the motif of agency,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 1 (2013): 38-45 (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁴¹ Philippians 2:6-9.

⁴² James Thompson, “Authentic discipleship: an introduction to 2 Corinthians,” *Restoration Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1976): 1-6 (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁴³ See the book of Jonah.

Review of Literature

The literature reviewed as a part of this study contributed significantly to the quality of this project. For example, according to Chuck Lawless and Adam W. Greenway's book, *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Time*,⁴⁴ the Great Commission is not a thing of the past. There is a need for genuine evangelization because millions of people all over the world need Jesus Christ. It is estimated that several million people are still without Jesus. These lost people need someone to teach them the gospel, to talk to them about their sin so that they can turn their hearts to Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of the disciples of Christ to shine the light of the gospel to these people, so that they can turn away from sins and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Similarly, *The Cost of Discipleship*,⁴⁵ by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, emphasizes the fact that discipleship cannot be something without value because it requires tremendous sacrifice to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. True discipleship is costly. Jesus asks every Haitian-American Christian to abandon himself or herself for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Greg Ogden's work, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*,⁴⁶ is very beneficial to the thesis project. The book tells a story of a young, handsome man named Eric, who was a womanizer. Unfortunately, this young man became sick with testicular cancer.

⁴⁴ Chuck Lawless and Adam W. Greenway, *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in our Time* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2010), 25.

⁴⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York, NY: Published by Simon & Schuster, 2011.

⁴⁶ Greg Ogden. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2003. Pp 10-14.

However, Ogden was able to help him to become a disciple of Christ. Discipleship can transform people, even if focusing on a few at a time.⁴⁷

In their work, *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*,⁴⁸ Martin I. Klauber, Scott M. Manetsch, and Erwin W. Lutzer state that the “Great Commission mandate was neglected by many. However, in recent centuries, missionaries have taken the command to go make disciples all over the world very seriously.” According to the extant data, the number of people who have converted to Christianity has more than doubled. This has been a beneficial trend for the believers who take the call of discipleship seriously. According to available statistics, a record number of Haitians have also been converted to Christianity.

Edward R. Dayton and David R. Fraser praise the fact that, because of the work done by Christian missionaries, Christianity is now becoming the major religion of the world. The authors emphasize the need for “cross-cultural missions” because, in spite of the progress of missions being presently performed, there are many people that have not yet heard or received the message of the gospel.⁴⁹ Paul Everett Pierson encourages Haitian-American Christians to always look back at history to see what God has done in the past, and to place that knowledge in perspective in order to try to understand what God is doing today. The author also states in his

⁴⁷ Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 10-14.

⁴⁸ Klauber, Martin I., Scott M. Manetsch, and Erwin W. Lutzer. *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2008.

⁴⁹ Edward R. Dayton and David R. Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 1-9.

book that, in the study or practice of missions, history always teaches valuable lessons that can be applied to today's church ministry.⁵⁰

In addition, this project draws on many important ideas from pertinent journal and newspaper articles. For example, in the journal article “The Place of Missions in Johannine Discipleship,”⁵¹ Howard Baker establishes the connection between the need of spirituality of the devoted Christian disciple with the need to know what Christ expects from his disciples. The author based his conclusion on the gospel of John. More specifically, Baker believes that the Gospel of John places mission and discipleship at the center of activities of the Christian Church. The Haitian-American Christians must emphasize the importance of going and encouraging other believers to go to missions. Just as the Father sent Jesus on Earth to redeem the sinners, Jesus instructs his followers to go to make disciples throughout the world. Moreover, the writer of this thesis finds some inspiration in the article, “Learning From Luther on Christian Discipleship,”⁵² written by Allan Rudy-Froese, which focuses on the importance of a collaborative effort between different Christian organizations and denominations. In this work, Rudy-Froese exemplifies the work of the Lutherans and the Anabaptists, who were not getting along very well at a certain point. However, owing to the Holy Spirit, these two Christian groups started to see each other as brothers and co-laborers in Christ, not as enemies. This new, collaborative, attitude is very beneficial to the work of discipleship and mission. Therefore, this

⁵⁰ Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 86.

⁵¹ Baker, “The Place of Missions in Johannine Discipleship,” 38-45.

⁵² Allan Rudy-Froese, “Learning from Luther on Christian discipleship,” *Vision (Winnipeg, Man.)* 13, no. 2 (2012): 55-63 (accessed June 17, 2014).

thesis project strongly encourages the Haitian-American brothers and sisters to work in unison to carry out the good news of the gospel to Haiti and all over the world.

The contribution of the article, “For You Were Aliens: Discipleship in Loving the Other,”⁵³ written by Jessica Mast, is also noteworthy, as it addresses the issue of the relationship with the immigrants who are brothers and sisters in Christ. Even though Mast speaks from the point of view of the Anabaptists, this ethical issue is much more universal. Indeed, every genuine Christian must know how to deal in a loving manner with the foreigners or aliens who are living in their midst. In the Bible, God always instructs His covenant people about the way they have to treat the foreigners who are living in their land. Jesus also teaches his disciples about the way they must treat their neighbor. For example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus complimented the Samaritan for the assistance he provided to the dying fellow, whereas he chastised the bad Jew for not helping a dying person.⁵⁴ This account demonstrates that good discipleship is not confined to preaching the Word; it is also the manifestation of brotherly love to one’s fellow mankind. Any person that wants to follow Christ must love and care for his or her neighbors. Likewise, the article written by Jay Moon, “Holistic Discipleship: Integrating Community Development in the Discipleship Process,”⁵⁵ aptly demonstrates the importance of the work of the disciple within his community. True discipleship involves not only the spiritual,

⁵³ Jessica Mast, “For you were aliens: discipleship in loving the other,” *Vision (Winnipeg, Man.)* 13, no. 2 (2012): 20-28 (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁵⁴ Luke 10:25-37.

⁵⁵ Jay, Moon. “Holistic Discipleship: Integrating Community Development in the Discipleship Process.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (YEAR): 16-22. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (Accessed February 10, 2015).

but also the social well-being of other people. This means that caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, and visiting the homeless are essential aspects of good discipleship.

The article authored by Victor L. Austin, “The Christian Moral Life: Faithful Discipleship for a Global Society,”⁵⁶ also provided significant contribution to this thesis project, as it adds more substance to the moral aspect of discipleship. The author focuses on the fact that a disciple is called to live an exemplary life that reflects the ethics and morals of Christianity. The present study calls upon the Haitian-American Christian believers not only to engage in doing good deeds as missionaries, but also to behave in a Christ-like manner, as good citizens of their countries. In sum, they need to behave as changing agents of the society. The present study also benefits from Thompson’s article, “Authentic Discipleship: An Introduction to 2 Corinthians,”⁵⁷ where the author speculates on the fact that the Christian life is one of learning. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church to teach them about issues, such as the right way to administer the Lord’s Supper, as disciples of Christ, the Haitian-American Christians must constantly learn about the best way that Christ wants them to do their ministry. The article written by Volha Aleinik, “Evangelism as Authentic Discipleship,”⁵⁸ is also noteworthy, in particular the statement that her participation in evangelism and mission is a perfect way to demonstrate her faith in Jesus-Christ. Obedience to the call of mission and discipleship is

⁵⁶ Victor L. Austin, “The Christian moral life: faithful discipleship for a global society,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 33, no. 2 (2013): 201-203 (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁵⁷ Thompson, “Authentic discipleship,” 1-6.

⁵⁸ Volha, Aleinik “Evangelism as Authentic Discipleship.” *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 1 (2014): 116. *MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost* (Accessed February 04, 2015).

necessary for becoming an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. This article focuses on obedience to Christ and the mandate to preach the gospel as inherent to the true disciple's life.

Chris Shirley's article, "It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church,"⁵⁹ also made a significant contribution to the realization of this thesis project, as it encourages the participation of the entire local church in the formation of the disciples. All other institutions that are engaged in the formation of disciples need to work in collaboration with the local churches. Hence, the Haitian-American churches must work in collaboration with the local churches in Haiti in order to do an effective work. This thesis project supports the effort and the participation of the entire church in the preparation of authentic disciples. Authentic disciples know that participation in missions is compulsory and should never be neglected. In communities such as the Haitian-American one, there is an urgent need for the churches to initiate an effective discipleship program that will invigorate mission and evangelization.

Another important article for the execution of this study is "Christian Spirituality and Christian Mission: On-Not Trying to Be More Generous Than God,"⁶⁰ as it emphasizes the need for the spiritual formation of the believer. The believer needs to be spiritually matured before engaging in Christian missions. Similarly, in his article "Great Commission, Great Confusion, or Great Confession?"

⁵⁹ Chris Shirley, "It takes a church to make a disciple: an integrative model of discipleship for the local church," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 50, no. 2 (2008): 207-224, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶⁰ Steve L., Porter "Introduction to the Special Theme Issue: Christian Spirituality and Christian Mission: On Not Trying to be More Generous Than God." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 3-10. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

The Mission of the Holy Christian Church,”⁶¹ John T. Pless contributes meaningfully to the thesis project. The author states, “disciples are made through baptizing and teaching the Word of God.”⁶² He attempts to clarify some opposing viewpoints. The author rebukes the postmodern movement, based on the social science view of Christianity and emphasizes the need to confess to Christ first, before one can claim to be a disciple. The author encourages the preaching of the gospel according to the Bible, not according to the liberals’ point of view.

Likewise, the article written by Joseph W. Jr. Handley, “A Reflection on Contemplative Mission,”⁶³ contributes enormously to the thesis project, as it emphasizes the importance of a deep meditative relationship with Christ. This relationship is required for all disciples who want to engage seriously in a walk with Christ. It fosters spiritual growth and self-abandonment for the sake of the kingdom. It is also important to note the contribution that Craig Sorley’s article, “Christ, Creation Stewardship, and Missions: How Discipleship Into a Biblical Worldview on Environmental Stewardship Can Transform People and Their Land,”⁶⁴ brings to the realization of the thesis project. In this article, the author gives prominence to the problem of the environmental deforestation that destroyed parts of Africa. The same problem exists in other third world countries, most of which are home to mission projects. It is unacceptable that these missionaries are witnesses to the degradation and devastation of the environment, and yet do not

⁶¹ John T. Pless, “Great commission, great confusion, or great confession? The mission of the holy Christian church,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2013): 479-480, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Joseph W, Jr. Handley, “A reflection on contemplative mission,” *Journal Of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 1 (2013): 76-81, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 20, 2014).

⁶⁴ Craig Sorley, “Christ, creation stewardship, and missions: how discipleship into a biblical worldview on environmental stewardship can transform people and their land,” *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 137-140, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 20, 2014).

say anything about it. In this article, the author encourages Christian missionaries to be actively engaged in defending and protecting the environment. Haiti is a country that has been devastated by massive deforestation. The Haitian-Americans can thus make a positive impact by encouraging the reforestation of their homeland. The present study also greatly benefitted from the book *Renew Your Congregation: Healing the Sick, Raising the Dead*,⁶⁵ as it provides invaluable information about the mission-oriented activities that a church can do in order to be visible in its community and become more successful in terms of making disciples for the kingdom of Christ. In addition, *Echoing Nicodemus: Solving the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven*⁶⁶ contributes meaningfully to the completion of the thesis project by demonstrating that Jesus Christ is always vested in saving the souls of the sinners no matter what roles they play in society.

Available evidence demonstrates that the Haitian-American Christian community does not participate in Christian mission adequately. According to information obtained through the survey conducted as a part of this project, the rate of participation of this community in mission is very poor and insignificant. There is a lack of teaching in the church about missions, the Great Commission, and discipleship. Most of the churches in this community do not include mission and discipleship in their budget. The pastors and leaders of the churches do not give any particular importance to missions. This is evident by the fact that they rarely go on mission trips and most were not involved in any mission for the last five years. Others believe that, if they contribute money to a missionary organization or to the church, they do not have to go

⁶⁵ Bill T., McConnell, *Renew Your Congregation: Healing the Sick, Raising the Dead*. Denver, M Nav Press Publishing, 2013.

⁶⁶ David A. , James, *Echoing Nicodemus: Solving the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing and Enterprises, 2012.

themselves. This thesis project will awaken their understanding of the importance of mission in the Christian church. The Christian church has a mandate to form and prepare disciples for the Kingdom of God through its involvement in missionary work.

When the members of the Haitian-American churches are not participating in the Great Commission mandate, this indicates that their churches failed to fulfill their part of the command to go and make disciples of all nations.⁶⁷ It is important to note that the failure to carry out Christ's command is a terrible sin. A true disciple of Christ must follow his or her command unquestionably. Jesus Christ wants the gospel to be preached all over the world. He also wants a constant flow of disciples. Therefore, the failure of the Haitian-American Christians to carry out the Great Commission has a considerable adverse effect on the spreading of the gospel.

This thesis project aimed to reveal the major flaws and setbacks in the Haitian-American churches. Its findings will also help create the solutions to these problems. The survey revealed that the Haitian-American churches need to be more active in their community in order to influence it in a positive and meaningful way. If they want to be successful in their ministry, they need to follow the pattern of the first century Christian Church. The Haitian-American churches must model the mission-oriented churches and, to do so, they require better educated leaders. The more academic and theological education these leaders have, the more competent and effective they will be in educating their parishioners. The survey also revealed that lack of education is an obstacle to Christian ministry. This finding will hopefully encourage the Haitian-

⁶⁷ Alan Hirsch and Darryn Altclass, *The Forgotten Ways: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2009), 91. The church needs to go out and deep in the world in order to win lost souls for Christ.

American Christians to devote their time to prayer and fasting in order to be equipped for the work of ministry. It will also encourage the Haitian-American Christians to engage in missionary works in order to fulfill the Great Commission mandate, which is a universal command that every Christian must obey. The survey results will also encourage the Haitian-American Christians to place their trust in God because He will never abandon His servants. They need to be assured that the God who sends them in the mission field will also provide for their security. They must not be afraid of the devil's scare tactics. However, they need to be aware that, while they are in the mission fields, they will be attacked by demonic powers, but should not be afraid, for the God who sent them already assured their victory over the devil. They need to place their faith in God because He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

The survey findings presented in this work will also encourage the Haitian-American Christians to organize frequent mission trips to their homeland of Haiti. Christ wants them to evangelize their homeland. The people of Haiti need to hear vivid testimonies about the power of God from their own countrymen.

They need to tell them to abandon the voodoo and serve the only living God. The survey results will also emphasize on the importance for the Haitian-American pastors to exercise their ministry with faithfulness and honesty, in accordance with biblical principles. Above all, they need to stay away from corruption.

This study will also encourage them to establish true and effective discipleship programs in their church. They need to manage the churches well and not treat them as their personal business. They need to know that the churches belong to Christ, not to any human being.

The survey will reveal that the Haitian-American churches fail in their mission of making disciples for the Kingdom of God because they ignore the biblical model of church management and administration.

Furthermore, this thesis project focused on the lack of participation of the Haitian-American in evangelistic mission to their homeland of Haiti as one of the major drawbacks of this community. Thus, the study findings will encourage the Haitian Christians to increase their missionary activities in their homeland. The thesis will also discuss the importance of good theological teachings in these churches, for the lack of theological knowledge is at the center of their failure.

The importance of the Great Commission must be taught frequently in these churches. Further, this thesis will discuss the usefulness of unity among the Haitian-American churches. They need to form a central body, which will assume the responsibility for organizing evangelistic missions to their homeland on a monthly basis, and the churches must support this organization prayerfully and financially. This organization will allow the Haitian-American Christians to participate in short-term evangelistic missions in their homeland of Haiti and all over the world.

The thesis will also focus on the importance of the Great Commission mandate as a universal command from Christ that must be executed by all Christians. Lastly, in the thesis, the study findings will be complemented and supported by Biblical verses on this matter and other literary sources about the Great Commission.

The ultimate goal of this endeavor is to offer solutions to the problem of lack of participation of the Haitian-American churches in this important ministry. This is essential, as the survey results revealed that the Haitian-American Christians require effective biblical methods that can assist them in becoming genuine disciples for the kingdom of Christ.

Chapter 2

The Mission-oriented Church

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The study involved twenty-five Haitian-American Christian churches. Their members took part in an anonymous survey, which was conducted either over the phone or by visiting the churches in person. Although these churches are dispersed across the entire U.S. territory, the majority are located in Florida. This study approach resulted in four hundred study participants, including twenty-five pastors. The remaining survey respondents are active church members. In terms of gender, the study sample consisted of 150 women and 250 men. To preserve their anonymity, no specific names of the churches or persons will be revealed in this thesis or any publications that arise from this work. However, adequate information will be provided in order to help the readers of this project attain sufficient understanding about the study process, analyses and the outcomes.

The participating churches were founded between 1980 and 2005 and have from two to five hundred active members, with about twenty monthly visitors on average. Some of these churches are independent Baptist churches, while others are affiliated with larger Christian organizations, such as the Southern Baptist, the church of the Nazarene, and others. Most of the churches are very conservative.⁶⁸ The doctrine of these churches is essentially Christian. They

⁶⁸ Joseph B. Tamney, *The Resilience of Conservative Religion: The Case of Popular Conservative* (United Kingdom: University Press, Cambridge, 2002), 196.

believe in the Trinity, the divinity of Christ as the Son of God, and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. All churches in this study practice the ordinances of baptism and Holy Communion. They perform baptism at least twice a year, depending on the number of baptismal candidates, and hold a communion service on the first Sunday of every month.

While all churches included in this study hold services every Sunday morning and evening; seventy percent of the churches meet every Wednesday for prayer meeting, every Thursday for ladies' meetings, every Friday for Bible study, and Saturday for the youth and choir's meeting. The other thirty percent of the sample has services on Sunday morning only, along with one further meeting a week.

Twenty-five percent of the churches have committees and boards of at least 12 members of both genders, who assist the pastors in their pastoral duty. However, seventy-five percent of the churches do not have a formal board or committee. The pastors and the members of these churches were kind enough to allow the author to interview them, and the author is very grateful to them for their invaluable contribution to the thesis project. All individuals that took part in this study did so voluntarily. Their ages ranged from 18 to 72. All the participants have signed an informed consent after the methodology and purpose of the study, along with the nature of their involvement, was explained to them. Each participant answered the same eleven questions. As noted above, the surveys were individualized and were conducted in the churches, or by telephone.

Is this Church Mission-oriented?

As a part of the survey, each respondent was asked to classify his or her church as mission oriented or not.

In order to facilitate the participants' understanding, the surveyor defined the term "mission-oriented church" as one that focuses its activities on mission in order to evangelize the world by bringing the sinners into a harmonious relationship with Christ.

This is done by preaching the gospel, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and the orphans, being kind to the foreigners, clothing the naked ones, visiting the sick and the prisoners.⁶⁹ By doing so, they will become disciples by surrendering their hearts to Christ. A mission-oriented church must exert positive influence on the community in which it evolves; it must be a light-bearer to everyone, especially to those who are still living in darkness, without Christ, without hope.⁷⁰ In addition, it must be the salt that seasons their morality, so that they will not decay and become wasted materials.⁷¹ In addition, the mission-oriented church has developed several moral and ethical characteristics that are deeply embedded in the message of the Bible. This church demonstrates an infinite love for its community and for every human being. It is very engaged in community building and protection of the environment. Those who are foreigners must demonstrate an infinite and immeasurable love for the community where they live.⁷²

⁶⁹ Matthew 25:35-36.

⁷⁰ Matthew 5:14.

⁷¹ Matthew 5:13.

⁷² Jeremiah 29:5-6.

T. McConnell, in his book, *Renew Your Congregation: Healing the Sick, Raising the Dead*, encourages the Christian church to be more vital by becoming more mission-oriented. He also states that “even though becoming mission-oriented is not easily done because it is a spiritual characteristic of the church.” He strongly encourages the church to involve in missions and become spiritually mature. After all, the true Christian church must be mission-oriented, for it is the command that Christ gives.⁷³ By elucidating the above, the author verified that the participants could demonstrate a clear and satisfactory understanding of the term “mission-oriented.” This ensured that the active members of their churches were ready to answer the questions. The same format was followed for all churches to preserve consistency of the data gathered and the findings it yielded.

According to the pastors, their churches do have some of the characteristics of a mission-oriented church. However, they stated that even the few activities that they have are not conducted on a regular basis and in a systematic approach. More specifically, they attested that, occasionally, their churches organize some activities that could be viewed as mission-oriented or mission related, but they are not done consistently. They also revealed that they minister mostly within their own ethnicity. For instance, they visit the members who are sick or hospitalized, as well as help the members who are in financial difficulties, even though the assistance provided is insignificant, most of the time. In addition, on some special occasions, such as Christmas and Easter, they provide some food to the community members who are in need. In sum, they concentrate their outreach program within their own ethnicity. They also stated that, sometimes, some members of the churches go on their own to visit and minister to each other. When asked if

⁷³ Bill T McConnell, *Renew Your Congregation: Healing the Sick, Raising the Dead* (Danvers, MA: Copyright Clearing Center, 2007), 50.

they are satisfied with the way that their outreach programs are functioning, the respondents explicitly expressed their dissatisfaction with the way that their churches are conducting their outreach ministries. They also stated that their churches are working toward improving their presence in the community.

In addition to the pastors of these churches, 375 other members of these churches were surveyed separately. As noted above, all were given the definition of a mission-oriented church before responding to the question whether they believe that their churches are qualified as mission-oriented churches. In terms of gender, this group comprised of 37.5 percent women and 62.5 percent men. In responding to the question, fifty individuals were neutral, 100 believed that their churches are mission-oriented, and 250 were of the view that their churches are not mission-oriented, as depicted in figure 1.

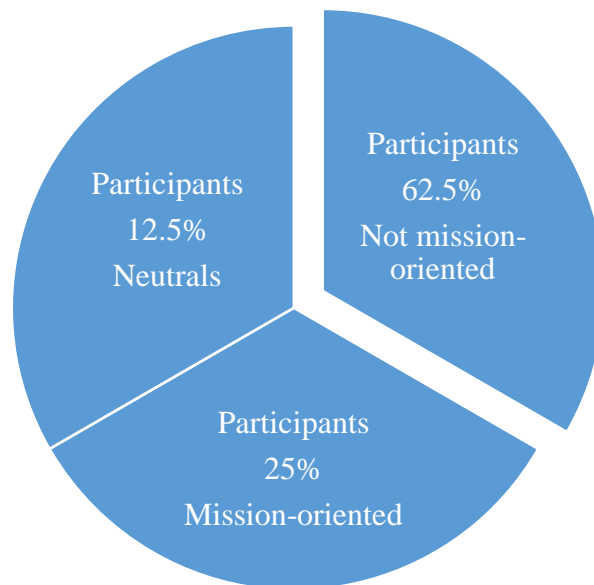


Figure 1

As noted above, the majority of the church members that were surveyed for the study shared the view that their churches are not mission-oriented.

A church that is mission-oriented reflects the will of God in the community where this church is located and is an agent of change. It is placed in the community as the light to shine in the darkest areas of human's physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. It is placed there by God to be the lighthouse of that particular community. The sinner who needs direction can come to God; he or she can seek this lighthouse, just as a sailor who is lost at sea can find direction to land by navigating in the direction of the lighthouse. The mission-oriented church is a powerful lighthouse for the lost soul. A church might be small in number, but if it carries its ministry faithfully, its impact in the community in which it functions can be outstanding.

Conversely, if the church cannot make a difference in the life of the sinners, then it does not reflect God's ultimate purpose for mankind, which is their redemption. The church must open its doors and welcome in those who are looking for direction to meet Christ, whether it is day or night. The Bible gives the account of the story of Nicodemus, an intellectual, member of the elite, and doctor of the law.⁷⁴ Nicodemus by all accounts was not an ordinary or needy person. Yet, he had an unmet need stemming from the spiritual dryness of his soul. How did such a powerful man, who was well respected in his community, in virtue of his social status, come to have such horrible spiritual need? He entangled himself with the cover of the night so that he will not be seen or perceived by other people, for he was a very dignified man in his community.

⁷⁴ John 3: 1-15.

He landed at the feet of Jesus, in the middle of the night, looking for the spiritual direction that his soul so badly needed. Jesus Christ, the ultimate missionary, the greatest of all times, did not allow his fatigued body or his tiredness to overcome his desire to save a lost soul by shining on him the light of the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus had some pertinent questions to ask the Lord about the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, Jesus used that opportunity to disciple him by teaching him the spiritual way to the Kingdom of God. This is what being a true disciple means. It transforms the lives of the sinners by pointing them directly to Jesus Christ. It is clear that Nicodemus was not aware of his spiritual blindness; it kept him in the dark for so long, denying him the opportunity to see the Kingdom of God, even though it was right in his mist.⁷⁵ A mission-oriented church takes pleasure in teaching and forming disciples for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus left Jesus' presence, renewed and transformed, knowing that God endeavors to give life, not to destroy it, and offers the gift of salvation to all.

According to David A. James, "the Word of God is a mystery to many people. Although they read it, but they could not understand the message contains therein." Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to look for these people and help them to understand the message of the Bible.⁷⁶ Likewise, all the Haitian-American churches must have an outreach ministry. From the beginning of the Church, outreach ministry was one of the essential components of a well-developed congregation. The first century church did have an outreach ministry. This was the reason that the deacon Philip was carried away by the Holy Spirit to an outreach mission, in the desert of Gaza. In this mission, Philip evangelized the Ethiopian Eunuch, treasurer of Candice,

⁷⁵ John 3:2-3.

⁷⁶ David A. James, *Echoing Nicodemus: Solving the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven* (Mustang, Oklahoma: Tate Publishing and Enterprise, 2012), 10.

Queen of Ethiopia.⁷⁷ God loves the whole world, even before they become part of the church. Jesus died for the redemption of every sinner. However, the devil keeps people away from understanding the love of God. He continues to cloud their minds with negative and sinful thoughts. Jesus places his church in Haiti so that it can serve as a constant reminder for all Haitians that there is a God who loves them unconditionally and who is looking for them constantly, seeking their reconciliation with Him.

Spiritual Gifts of the Church

The Haitian-American churches are equipped with the spiritual gifts necessary to carry out their mission, whether it is in their local community or on foreign lands. The universal eyes of God are constantly watching over them. In the letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul writes that the Lord, Jesus Christ, had given “gifts to men.”⁷⁸ Christ gives special gifts to the church so that it can fulfill its ministry efficiently and efficaciously. Hence, the Haitian-American churches must not be afraid to go out in the world, as ordered by the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who sits in heaven. Still, it must be acknowledged that there is an element of fear that keeps the Haitian-American Christians from fulfilling their ministerial duty. It is important for them to know that the God who commissioned the church to go is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. They need to develop that sense of safety and security that God offers to all His children. As sheep in a world of wolves, all Christ’s disciples must be prudent; however, their safety is well entrenched in God’s hands.

⁷⁷ Acts 8:27-37.

⁷⁸ Ephesians 4:8-12.

It does not require much intelligence to realize that God is fully responsible for the well-being of His disciples as long as they stay on His path. This is best exemplified in the word of Agur. In spite of his limited intelligence, he knows that God is omniscient. He eloquently asks, “Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Whose hands have gathered up the wind? Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is the name of his son? Surely you know!”⁷⁹ He refers here to the infinite power of the Almighty God. The Haitian-American churches, or Christians in general, must not be afraid of the obstacles and hardships they might encounter in their community or abroad while they perform their duty of evangelizing the lost world. However, before proceeding further with this thesis, it is important to analyze omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence as the three essential characteristics of God. They are pertinent to this study due to the roles they play in the formation of disciples and in evangelistic missions.

Omnipotence of God

The term “omnipotence” refers to the fact that Jehovah God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is capable of doing everything. Nothing escapes His sight, His knowledge, and His will. This is absolutely important in relation to missionary works. The Haitian-American Christian missionaries know that, wherever they are working in the vine of the Lord, God is capable of protecting them with His power and authority. The Apostle Paul testified that God had saved him in several difficult situations while he was doing the work of the Lord, even though at times he suffers at the hands of the enemies of God. On his journeys, he was beaten with rods,

⁷⁹ Proverbs 30:4.

and was even jailed for the predication of the gospel. Yet, he persevered, doing the work of evangelizing the sinners, as ordained by Christ.

God does not have to seek the approval of any natural or supernatural beings in order to act. His will is absolute; nothing and no one can stop Him from doing what He wants to accomplish. In fact, God states that He alone is God, there is no God but Him (Isaiah 44:6). This aspect of the nature of God is in fact a guarantee that none of His servants can be destroyed or defeated by the opposing power, which is Satan. This means that the mission field is controlled by God. God has a multitude of angels who serve Him constantly, day and night. God will send them anywhere in the visible or in the invisible world to rescue His servants. There are authentic stories where the servants of God have been rescued miraculously by angels. If an authentic missionary is in trouble and is not being rescued by God, rest assured that all the events are unfolding for the glory of God. The missionary is not saved, not because God cannot rescue him or her, but because God has other plans. God is so powerful that he can resuscitate even the dead. Remember the story of Lazarus,⁸⁰ when his sisters notified Jesus about his deadly sickness, and Jesus sent them a message stating that Lazarus' sickness was for the glory of God. Even though Jesus Christ could have proclaimed a word of healing for him, he did not do it. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die so that He could demonstrate not only the power of the Father, but also glorify Him in a higher dimension (John 11:1-45). The resurrection of Lazarus is an authentic testimony of the omnipotence of God.

Sometimes, God will allow things to happen to his servants in a very controlled manner. For example, God allowed Satan to hit Job with sickness and misfortune, but it was done in a

⁸⁰ S. Podmore, "Lazarus and the Sickness Unto Death: An Allegory of Despair," *Religion & Arts* 15, no. 4 (2011): 486-519, Academic Search Complete, Ipswich, MA (accessed September 12, 2015).

very structured way that was designed by God.⁸¹ Accordingly, the Christians must be assured that, as long as they allow God to be in control of their lives, nothing deadly can overcome their souls. The Bible states that Job was a faithful servant of God. He was a man who also received the blessings of God not only spiritually, but also by means of material wealth. He was the richest man of his generation. According to extant research, his wealth was worth several billions of dollars in today's money. In addition, he was also blessed with seven sons and three daughters. Because of his faithfulness to Jehovah, satan challenged God about the authenticity of Job's faith. Satan accused Job of being a materialist. He told God, Job serves Him because of the wealth that He supplies to him, but if God removed the wealth, satan stated that Job will deny God. God knows the heart of Job, as He knows everyone's heart. Satan did not know Job's heart. Yes, the devil has limited knowledge of man because he is not omniscient. God is infinitely superior to satan. In fact, God created the angel Lucifer, who became satan because of his lust and vain desire of becoming God. In sum, God allowed satan to attack Job recklessly, to destroy his wealth, to kill his children, to humiliate him, to touch everything he wanted except his soul. Eventually, satan destroyed everything that Job possessed, including his children and his material wealth. Job was so sick to the point that his flesh was rotten, infected and putrid. Yet, in spite of all the misfortune that befell him, Job did not abandon God. Job's suffering was controlled by God. At the end, God restored Job to his prior glory, doubling everything that the devil had stolen from him. God is omnipotent, He can do whatever He wants to do and no one can question his decision.⁸²

⁸¹ Job 1:12.

⁸² See the book of Job.

The omnipotence of God can further be seen in His works with the children of Israel. For example, God had promised Abraham that one day his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land. However, in the time preordained by God, God will reestablish them in the Promised Land. About five hundred years later, God executed His promise. He snatched the enslaved Israelites from Egypt to reestablish them in Palestine. There were several obstacles that stood in the way to keep the Israelites from taking possession of the Promised Land: Pharaoh refused to let them go; the dessert was a big problem; the neighboring armies refused to allow them a safe and peaceful passage; the Red Sea, and the Jordan River all stood in the way. Nevertheless, because Jehovah is God, He made a way for his people even where there is no way (see Exodus). God is able to achieve great and impossible feats. Those in the mission field must make sure that they are spiritually fit. God will always be with them in fact. The only impediment to His presence is sin. God's presence does not cohabit with sin. God led Job to victory. He led the Israelites to victory over their enemies and allowed them to take possession of the Promised Land. It is a fact that God will lead the Haitian-American missionaries to spiritual victories from land to land and from sea to sea. The things that appear unknown to them are not unknown to God. God knows everything from before its beginning to its end.

God demonstrated His omnipotence to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Babylonia. These servants of God refused to worship the statue of the King Nebuchadnezzar. Consequently, they were thrown in a fire pit that was seven times hotter than it was supposed to be. God saved them miraculously. They did not burn, whereas the soldiers who came to throw them into the pit died because the heat was too strong for them.⁸³ In another biblical story, the disciples had

⁸³ Daniel 3:15-23.

personal experiences of the omnipotence of God. Jesus was in a boat with some of the disciples, travelling to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly, a demonic attack was unleashed by satan on their boat. The sea became furious and deadly, attempting to overthrow the boat. Jesus pretended to be sleeping, and the disciples were panicking, fearing imminent death. Finally, Jesus Christ arose and commanded the sea and the storm to be stilled. The disciples were amazed by the fact that Jesus has absolute authority over all natural forces (see Matthew 8:22-26). If God is able to act and rescue His people, then why are the Haitian-American Christians afraid of the enemy? Those who are afraid are simply lacking the spiritual property of an authentic Christian. God loves the faithful servants, those who would not deny His name, even in the midst of greatest danger. Haiti is a challenging country when it comes to evangelism. God knows that. Therefore, He equips His servants with the spiritual tools necessary to live in this country and to accomplish His will. No matter what the devil is doing there at this time, be certain that God is in control. The people of God benefit from the safety net and the security of God. When He is walking alongside His people, no enemy can destroy them. "No weapons formed against them will prosper" (Isaiah 54:17). When Jesus is riding in the boat along His people, the furiousness and the raging of the sea cannot overcome them. When God is among His people, the furnace of life cannot incinerate them. God is too loving and too merciful to allow the devil to destroy His children. God equips His people to preach the gospel of the kingdom. The servants of God are under the obligation to preach the gospel in every corner of the Earth. They are to make disciples of every people group. This is a solemn mandate from the creator and maker of the universe, the God who can do everything. The Christians draw their spiritual power and energy from the only living God, Jehovah.

There must not be any fear among the Haitian-American Christians because God is with them. He is with them in the fire, in the desert, in the raging sea, and everywhere in the world. The Almighty God can do anything that He wishes to do. He takes advice from no one, and no one can question His decision. God always acts with justice. This is His nature. There is no evil in Him. He provides full security for all of His workers.

God in His omnipotence creates the whole world out of nothing, ex-nihilo. Everything He creates is always perfect. He created the night and the day, the moon and the sun. He created the Sun, the stars and the other planets and placed them in their orbits. He fixed the Sun in its orbit, neither too close to the Earth nor too far from it. He placed it in the perfect position, as mankind would not be able to live on Earth otherwise. He gave shape to a malformed mass of material so that it can become a living sanctuary for mankind. He did all that only by the power of His Word. He separated the heavens from the Earth and established stars in the sky. He supplies the Earth with rain and water for the sake of mankind. Moreover, He provides to mankind a pure environment with an infinite supply of pure oxygen. In addition, God provides the Earth with winds and air to allow His creation to be in a perfect harmony, the same way the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit exist, from eternity to eternity. God created the Earth with all its inhabitants, both animal and human. He supplies the Earth with all the nutrients necessary to grow food for men and the animals. He further provides mankind with knowledge and places them above everything else that He creates. Only the omnipotent God, Jehovah, has the power and authority to create. No false gods can create anything; they are only capable of destruction.

They spoil the thought process of man and direct them to destroy the good things that the omnipotent God created. God ordains the Earth to produce food. He provides water to the Earth. The omnipotent God is the God of love and mercy. He is the God who commands His disciples to make other disciples all over the world.

The omnipotent God knows in advance the heart of man and the kind of malice that resides in it. He empowers His servants to go to make disciples. Thus, not going on missions is a blatant disregard for God. The Haitian-American Christian missionaries who are able to understand these principles will embrace fearlessly the work of God, knowing that they are well protected by the power and the strength of the Almighty God of the universe.

In Psalm 65, the psalmist David praises God for His omnipotence. The psalmist summed up the way that God uses His omnipotence in favor of His creation. According to King David, only the omnipotent God can realize the great things for the well-being of mankind. God's omnipotence is manifest all over the universe. For this reason, the whole universe must render praise and glorify the omnipotent God. The Haitian-American Christian missionaries must praise and glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commission mandate, by going from town to town, from country to country, preaching the good news of the gospel of Christ. It is a sweet and rewarding experience to proclaim the name of God all over the world. It is more rewarding than any material wealth. The Haitian-American Christian missionaries will experience joy and happiness in doing the work of God. Even death and tribulation have different meanings when they come as the consequence of doing the work of God. Christians must pursue the call that is destined for them. They must persevere with a joyful heart in the work of Christ.

They must go to evangelize their homeland without the fear of being killed, rejected, or imprisoned. God already knows what is going to happen to them. They must not be afraid of losing their lives for the sake of the gospel. The Bible states that, if someone loses his or her life for the gospel, he or she will regain it in the world to come.

On the other hand, if someone is afraid to die for Christ in this life, he or she will lose his or her life in the world to come, that is in eternity (see Mark 8:35). Note that the name of God is glorified when His people do the right things. The right thing is to follow the commands that God gives to His people. One of the divine commands is that the Christian must go to all the nations and teach them to become true and faithful disciples of Christ.

The omnipotent God is not careless. God is very caring and merciful. He listens to the cries of His people. He listens carefully to every prayer. He knows exactly when His people are in trouble. He also knows when to rescue them. God always protects His servants. He puts His angels at the service of His people, and no harm can reach them without His consent. If a Christian is afraid to go on the mission field, he or she must analyze and review his or her relationship with God. Sins will accuse the mind of the Christian and will render a guilty verdict, which will cause fear and doubt in the believer's life. Sins will cause spiritual weakness in the life of the believer. No Christian should attempt to go on missions if he or she is not in good standing before God, which means not living a sinful life. Any attempts to go on missions without God's approval could be faced with challenges. Sin opens doors to the devil in the believer's life. The devil is constantly attacking the believers.

Thus, if the devil finds an open door, a stronghold in a believer's life, the devil will use that door to enter and control the believer.

The Haitian-American Christians must pray constantly, be in good spiritual relationship with God and deny all accesses to the devil in their lives. Once the devil occupies someone's life, it is not easy to chase him out. The Christian missionaries, and Christians in general, must not try to hide their sins or live a secret sinful life. A secret, sinful lifestyle is disastrous, for the devil loves and encourages it.

The Haitian-American Christians are encouraged to confess their sins to Christ, ask for forgiveness, and resolve to sin no more. Sins cause spiritual death and separation from God. Someone must not fool himself or herself. Sinful people cannot be connected with God. The omnipotent God is perfect. His eyes cannot see or look at sin (Habakkuk 1:13). This is why the sinners must come to Jesus for cleansing in His blood before they can be presented to the Father as members of God's family. The good thing is that the omnipotent God is always willing and ready to forgive the sinners. Forgiveness is part of God's eternal nature.

The Haitian-American churches must submerge themselves in prayer. Prayer is a form of communication between the omnipotent God and His servants. This is very important because the missionary needs approval from God before making his way to the mission field. Not every missionary is suited for every mission. Some missions required experienced missionaries, while other missions can be performed by any Christians. The God who answers all prayers of His servants will provide answers, whether positive or negative. If God does not approve a mission, it must not be done.

The omnipotent God who sends His servants knows exactly when and where to send them. Remember that Jesus told the disciples, “do not leave Jerusalem until you received the Holy Spirit.

Then, after you have received the Holy Spirit you can go, starting in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and in all the extremities of the earth (Acts 1:8). God’s approval is essential for every mission. This principle is true for every Christian who would like to be a successful missionary. In addition, no mission can be done without a meticulous planning. The Haitian-American Christians must always be informed of the degree of difficulty and challenges that they might encounter in the country or place of the mission.

After been informed of the common problems that might evolve, they need to pray to God specifically for these problems. The God who inclines to the prayer of His children would not leave the prayer of the missionary unanswered.

The God who sends His servants to all the extremities of the Earth to preach the gospel will accompany His servants and bless the missionary’s ministry. It is important that all Haitian-American Christians obey and participate in the command to go to preach because there is a source of blessing that is hidden in this promise. It does not matter how far away from home someone may go, as everyone needs to do missionary work for several reasons. Indeed, there are blessings in obeying the command of God and there is a source of unlimited blessings, hidden in this promise alone. God is good at all times and in all circumstances. He is the God who gives salvation to mankind. The Haitian-American Christian missionaries need God’s approval for every mission.

When God approves the mission, He will supply the power to perform miracles and other signs. These elements are very important and even indispensable for the success of the mission. God had empowered the Apostle Paul to perform great signs and miracles to the point that even his clothes were capable of healing the sick (Acts 19:12). Paul had great success in his missionary activities because he was faithful in his walk with God.

Faith is the key to the success of any mission. Christ states that, if the disciples have faith, they “will command a mountain to move and the mountain will do so” (Matthew 17:21). This context arose due to the difficulty of the disciples to chase an evil spirit. Jesus told his disciples that some evil spirits can be defeated only by prayer and fasting. Indeed, in the mission fields, encounters with people that are possessed by evil spirits are very common, especially in the third world countries.

In countries such as Haiti, for example, encounters with people who are possessed by demonic spirits occur daily. However, missionaries must be reassured that no demons can resist the power of God. The Bible states that, at the mention of the name of Jesus Christ, all knees must bow down, and all spirits must tremble and submit.⁸⁴

The omnipotent God sits in power and clothes with glory and majesty. He alone has the power and authority to control the mountains, the seas and the planets and maintain them in their positions. God alone is capable and powerful enough to silence roaring seas. He brings peace and joy to the nations of the world. God is infinitely capable of doing everything and anything He wants. He provides abundantly for the Earth. He blesses the land and the sea so that they can produce nutritious fruits for the well-being of mankind. God does not provide natural food only,

⁸⁴ Philippians 2:10.

but also spiritual food for the souls of mankind. He commands His Church to continue planting the seed of the gospel all over the world. The God who created the universe is sweet and merciful. However, He will judge those who rebelled against Him by refusing to follow His commands. No one can escape the wrath of His judgment. The mountains cannot hide the transgressors or any other places of the universe. The Haitian-American Christians need not fear the mission fields because God is in control of everything. Jesus Christ promises the disciples that he will be with them every day, in every place and everywhere.

This promise gives a firm assurance to all missionaries who leave their places of comfort to go to preach and produce disciples for the kingdom of Christ. Fear comes from the devil. It is one of the most common instruments he uses to deceive the Haitian-American believers. However, after reading this work, these believers will have an unshakeable confidence in the omnipotence of God. The God who can do everything will not forsake His missionaries in the spiritual battlefield against the devil.

Omniscience of God

Only the Christian God is omniscient. He possesses all sciences and wisdom, knowledge and intelligence that exists. This fact is a guarantee that those who are engaged in the activities that promote the Kingdom of God, by spreading the good news of the gospel in Haiti and all over the Earth, are securely protected by the power of the Almighty God. The omnipotent God always protects his servants, whether they are on missions or at home, at work, in their cars, or in the airplanes. In Psalm 121, the psalmist eloquently states that God watches over all the steps taken by His children, from the beginning to the end of the trip (8).

God knows all things; nothing can escape His knowledge.

This simple idea aptly surmises the principle of the omniscience of God. Since God knows everything, even before it happens, this is the fundamental reason that the Haitian-American Christians should not be afraid to go on the mission field, to preach the good news of the gospel of Christ. The psalmist David expresses the idea of the omniscience of God magnificently due to his close and faithful relationship with God. David says it very well in Psalm 139, where he noted that God knows exactly not only the physical action of every human being, but also every thought of every single human being even before that thought is formed. This is exactly what makes God the one and only God. He is the “Alpha and the Omega.” No enemy can triumph over His servants.

The prophet Isaiah states “no weapons manufactured against the Christian shall succeed.”⁸⁵ Whatever the nature of the arms that the enemy might be used against the servants of God, God has the science and knowledge to neutralize these weapons. God protects and provides for His people. The assurance that God provides for His servants is proven repeatedly, with documented evidence in the Bible. The Israelites are the living proof of the mighty power of the omniscient God. He took them from the unbearable misery of Egypt and transported them in the Land of Canaan. Along the way, God safeguarded them against countless attacks of the enemies. He led them in the safest ways that would bring them to the Promised Land. God fed them daily. As David rightly says, the Lord always knows the best pasture and the best way to lead His people, so that they will be safe throughout their journey on Earth. God knows the projects that

⁸⁵ Isaiah 54:17.

the enemy forms against His servants. No harm can come in the way of the Christians if God does not allow it.

The Bible contains numerous stories about some miraculous deliverances realized on behalf of the people of God, in particular the Israelites. One of the best-known deliverances is written in the book of Ester. A short résumé of this story is that a jealous man, Haman, the enemy of the people of God, plotted an evil scheme in order to eradicate the Jewish people from the face of the Earth. If the plan were successful, the entire Jewish people would have been exterminated. However, since God is omniscient, He knew the heart of men and the malice therein. God thus sabotaged the plan of Haman.

He gave victory to His people, and Haman and his collaborators received death.⁸⁶ In sum, Jehovah God had turned the evil plot around and gave a complete victory to the Jews. This is the protection that the Christians receive from God every day, even at times when they are not even aware of the danger that they are exposed to.

There are countless occasions when God directly intervened in order to save His servants. Most of the time, the Christians are not even aware of the danger God saved them from. Some of the occasions could be obvious, such as a car crash, an airplane accident, a gunshot, a house fire, a train accident, but the dangers are not always visible. Yet, God can always intervene and rescue His servants. In view of these facts, Christians must not be intimidated by the devil's tricks. He uses scare tactics to keep them from doing the work that God sent them to do, which is to preach the gospel and create disciples all over the world.

⁸⁶ Esther 7:6-8.

The first disciples were also initially afraid of doing their work of evangelism. They all stayed in Jerusalem even though they received the Holy Spirit that God promised them. As a result, God caused a severe persecution of the Christians to the point that some of them were put in jail, beaten, and killed. In order to escape the persecution, they fled from the area and started to go to other places to preach the gospel and make disciples. This is not to say that a persecution is needed in order for the disobedient Christians to go fulfill their part of the Great Commission. The point is that it could happen. God knows who is obedient to His command and who is not. Disobedience is a sin like all other sins. The sinners will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

God knows it all. No one, no sin, no thought, no action of mankind is unknown to God. As David states, “God knows altogether.”⁸⁷ The enemy cannot launch any surprise attack against the children of God because God knows all the plans of the enemy. On the other hand, satan does not know God’s plan. The Haitian-American Christian community can gain further understanding of the promise of God via the principle of the omnipresence of God.

Omnipresence of God

God is everywhere at the same time. Nothing can hide from Him. His eyes are able to see even the darkest spot in the universe or in man’s heart. The presence of God is in the heart of everyone who does His will. Wherever there is truth, true love, true peace, true happiness, and so on, God is there. However, for this project, it is more profitable to focus on the omnipotence and omniscience of God than His omnipresence. It is obvious that God is not limited by either time or space. The psalmist David explains this particularly well. He acknowledges that no one and

⁸⁷ Psalm 139:4.

nothing can hide from the presence of God.⁸⁸ According to Newton Clarke, “God is everywhere. He does not have to move to be anywhere. His energy, His love, His wisdom, and happiness are everywhere.”⁸⁹ God’s omnipresence is cognate with His omniscience and omnipotence. God is omnipotent because He is able to do all things. There is no limit to God’s power, capacity, and authority. The Bible is clear about the omnipotence of God, even though the actual connotation of the word “omnipotence” is not explicitly written in the Bible. Nonetheless, its cognate, the word “Almighty” is frequently used in the Bible.

They are several verses that someone can consider in order to understand this concept better. For example, Almighty implies the omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence of God. There are several verses that refer to God as the Almighty One, in a sense that He can do all things. For example, the Apostle Paul concludes his exhortation of the Corinthian church, regarding the new life that they found in Christ, whereby they are not to intermingle with those who have not yet received Christ. Paul uses the Greek term *kúrios pantokratōr*, which is literally translated as the Lord Almighty.⁹⁰ Thus, in the word Almighty, one can see the essence of the universal God, which compiles all the essential attributes that only the Supreme Being of the universe possesses.⁹¹ In addition, the Apostle John, in the opening book of Revelation, describes the person he saw as the “faithful witness, the one who was, who is, and who is coming,”⁹² as

⁸⁸ Psalm 139:8.

⁸⁹ William Newton Clarke, editor, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (New York: Published by Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1994).

⁹⁰ J.P. Louw, E.A. Nida. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (New York: United Bible Society ed. Of the 2nd edition, Vol. 1, 1996), 138.

⁹¹ 2 Corinthians 6:18.

⁹² Revelation 1:8.

the pantokrator. From these texts, someone can easily see that the one described by the apostle has unlimited and everlasting power.

These qualities cannot be attributed to any human being. It is true that many great leaders and kings have claimed to possess great power and authority; however, these attributes are limited only to their lifetime. Once they are dead or dethroned, they lose all power and authority. For example, someone may cite many great leaders of the past, such Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Babylon (605 BC–652 BC),⁹³ Antiochus III the Great, King of the Seleucid Empire (241–187 BC), Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, Greece, Persia, Egypt and all of Mesopotamia (356–323 BC), Afonso de Albuquerque, Portuguese general and statesman (1453–1515), Casimir III the Great, King of Poland (1310–1370), Charlemagne, King of the Franks and Emperor of the Romans (died in 814), Constantine, Roman Emperor (272–337), Cyrus the Great, King of Persia (600/576 BC–530),

Darius the Great (550 BC–486 BC), Gustavus Alfredus of Sweden, King of Sweden, founder of the Swedish Empire (1594–1632), Henry IV of France, King of France and King of Navarre (1553–1610), Herod the Great, King of Judea (73/74–4 BC),⁹⁴ Justinian I, Emperor of Byzantine (527–565), Ramesses II, the greatest Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt (1279 BC–1213 BC), Sargon, King of the Akkadian Empire (died in 2215 BC), Theodosius, Roman Emperor (347–395), and Xerxes, King of Kings of the Achaemenid Empire or Persia (519 BC–465

⁹³ B.A. Mastin, “The madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: the ancient Near Eastern origins and early history of interpretation of Daniel 4,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 53, no. 1(April 2002): 151-153, *ATLASerial*, Religion Collection, EBSCO host (accessed September 12, 2015). “The great Nebuchadnezzar states that he will serve the Most High God, because he realizes that only the God of Daniel is omnipotent.”

⁹⁴ Zora Hurston Neale, “From Herod the Great,” *Callaloo* 34, no. 1(2011): 121-125, accessed September 12, 2015, <https://muse.jhu.edu/>. Herod the Great belong to a very great century. He was an active participant in the decision making process. His actions are still influential in our time.

BC).⁹⁵ This list is very short relative to that providing the names of all those who claimed to be great. However, it is noteworthy that all these individuals have passed away, and their claim of having great power is nothing but a distant memory.

On the other hand, the Lord Jesus Christ claims and demonstrates that he possesses unlimited and eternal power. He proves himself by created the world and everything that is in it, out of nothing, *ex-nihilo*.⁹⁶ He performs miracles that no one else can perform. He turned water to wine, gave sight to the blind, healed the leprosy, made the lame whole, gave life to the dead, and fed a multitude with only a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish, among many other great deeds. Jesus is constantly performing miracles.

Before given the command to go to all nations to make disciples, Jesus assured his disciples that he had all power and authority, not only on Earth but also in heavens. The omnipotent Savior has and will always have unlimited power and authority from one generation to the next, and from eternity to eternity.

The omnipotent God created everything. Nothing can exist without him. Everything exists through him. He is the beginning and the end of all things. He knows the action of every single human being, well before it actually occurs. He can change the circumstances of one's life because He is powerful. He can stop the wind and the raging sea that intend to destroy someone's life and relationships. He can transform darkness to a pure and shiny light. He can form and transform the lives of those who love and obey his commands. He can change the bad

⁹⁵ Ronald Herbert Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Denver, MA: Rosemond Publishing Press, 2004), 47.

⁹⁶ From Latin, Out of nothing. See Genesis 1:1ff.

situation to a memorable and enjoyable event. His way of acting is far more superior to that of man; no human being can completely understand his ways.

The omnipotent God receives glory and is being worshipped in heavens constantly. Since the notion of time does not exist in heaven, the Almighty One, the omnipotent one, is the unique Being who knows the time and the age of the universe.⁹⁷ God is so powerful that no other beings can even come close to His throne. As noted in the book of Revelation, God allowed John to see what was happening in order to recount it to mankind; however, that does not mean that he was near the throne of God.

The Bible states that no one can physically go near God's throne.⁹⁸ For example, when John was on Earth, God allowed him to see things that are happening in heaven as a way of demonstrating His power. He is infinitely powerful. It is important for the Christians to master these principles, and fully appreciate that God's power is not like man's power. There must not be any doubts about the power and authority of God. God's power can serve as a supersonic vehicle to transport his children wherever He wants them to be. Jesus Christ was lifted to the heavens, so were Elijah and Enoch. The omnipotent God gave a heavenly tour to John, and far away of the throne of God, John saw powerful angels glorifying the eternal God of the universe.⁹⁹ Going on the mission field is a way of glorifying God. God is glorified whenever His servants execute His will. Executing the will of God is a way for someone to say to God that he or she belongs to Him and to His kingdom. John prophesies about a time when all the kingdoms

⁹⁷ Brink van den Gijsbert, *Almighty God: A Study of the Doctrine of Divine Omnipotence* (The Netherlands: Pharos Publishing House, 1993), 9. The divine omnipotence fits very neatly with the almightiness of God.

⁹⁸ I Timothy 6:16.

⁹⁹ Revelation 4:8.

of the Earth will be subjected to God's law. God will reward all of those who follow His commands. On the other hand, He will judge all of those who refused to follow Him and obey His commands. His angels are ready, and are waiting for the time that God Himself has set for the judgment of mankind.¹⁰⁰

It is not possible to fully describe the omniscience of God. Even the great and powerful angels of heavens give glory to God unceasingly. They shout without rest the glory of the omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient God of the universe (Isaiah 6: 2-4). This is the same great God that commands His servants to go all over the world to preach the gospel, to teach the sinners and allow them to become disciples. There is insurance and safe guarantee that only the great God of the universe can provide for His people. Such safety does not exist anywhere else in the universe, or in the invisible world. Therefore, Christians must not allow fear, one of the most powerful weapons of the enemy, to overtake and render them incapable of being a disciple of Christ, a messenger of the good news, and maker of authentic disciples for Christ.

It is important that the commands of God must be followed as prescribed by the Bible. All Christians and churches are under the obligation to make disciples for the Kingdom of God. This is best done when the Christian Church performs its duty as a mission-oriented church,¹⁰¹ because this is what Christ wants its Church to be. The first century disciples understood the concept of mission-oriented church very well. They were not afraid to reach out to the people because, basically, all of them belong to the common people. They were simple men, so simple

¹⁰⁰ Revelation 11:17.

¹⁰¹ Yang Taichoul Daniel, *Called Out for Witness: The Missionary Journey of Grace Korean Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 72. Yang writes about the duty of all Christians to be missionaries for Christ in the world.

that they were called *Galileans*¹⁰²—a word used to describe the poor, the common, the fool, and the illiterate, and terrible sinners. The upper society addressed them with contempt and disrespect.¹⁰³ Yet, Jesus chose them to be his disciples and disciple-makers. Hence, as foreigners, living in a foreign land, the disciples of Christ might experience some type of contempt and obstacle in trying to evangelize the dominant group. However, they must not allow contempt, cultural or ethnic epithets to disqualify them as authentic disciple makers.

All Christians must contribute in order for the local churches to become the mission-oriented churches that Jesus Christ ordained them to be. The church as a whole must leave its comfort zone and go inside its community, and beyond the border of its community to preach and disciple other people. Those who are foreigners, in particular, must always think about the evangelization of their homeland. They need to use their education, the skills acquired in the United States, and their wealth to evangelize their own countries. The local pastors have some very important roles to play in the process of disciple making in his own country. They need to have a well-defined church program that focuses on the formation of disciples, and establish their churches as mission-oriented ones. This must be taught to all members of the church, so that everyone will know that this particular church is focused on mission. There must not be any confusion in terms of whether or not a church is mission-oriented. According to the Bible, all Christian churches must be mission-oriented if they are to truly be Christian churches. The church's policy about mission must be well understood and continuously taught to the congregation.

¹⁰² Luke 22: 59; Acts 2:7.

¹⁰³ Acts 22:59.

A church is mission-oriented when it focuses its activities on preaching and teaching the gospel, helping the poor, visiting the prisoners, feeding the hungry, schooling the illiterate, sheltering the homeless, caring for the sick, comforting the afflicted, protecting the indigents and the orphans, and converting the sinners to Christ. The church of Christ is ordained to help, to support, to improve, and to protect God's creation. The true Christian church is a church that is focused on achieving Christ's will. The church is ordained not only to preach the gospel and reach out to the sinners, but also to do all good deeds that will advance the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁴ The Christian church is a mission-oriented church when it addresses all aspects of mankind's life—physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. The Haitian-American churches must focus on these aspects, and the pastors and the members of their churches must know clearly the orientation of their churches. The pastors must teach the church members about the importance of using the mission-oriented model because it is the model that fits the Great Commission mandate. It must be taught in the Sunday schools, as well as preached during the sermons, and at each opportunity that exists. The fact is that over sixty-two percent of church members cannot identify whether or not their church is mission-oriented or not. This is problematic. The Christian leaders of this community need to concentrate their efforts in order to overcome this dilemma. The quality of the teaching needs to be improved significantly in this regard. The teaching must not merely concentrate on theories alone; rather, the members need to be encouraged to participate in seminars and in practical activities. This means that they need to go out in the community with their mentors and practice their ministry as disciple makers.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 25:35-37.

The Haitian-American Christians need to know that God's plan for their church is to grow in quality and multiply in quantity.¹⁰⁵ However, this twofold progress will not be possible if the leaders and members of these churches do not take the right measures. When they take the correct and necessary action, they invite not only people from their own ethnicity, but also their neighbors from other cultures to join them. They need to see the manifestation of the Spirit of God, which has the power to change and transform every single life on Earth. Let the leaders and the churches empower themselves with the might and authority of the Holy Spirit. Note that the role of the Holy Spirit is to transform the lives of the sinners. Only when a particular church becomes actively engaged in community building and transforming, it can be viewed as a truly mission-oriented church.

When the church engages in the life of the community, the community in turn shows more interest to what is happening in that particular church. For example, members of the community will most likely visit a church that visits them, and will likely stay away from a church that never pays any attention to them. The lack of interest of the church in the people of the community significantly hinders the growth of the church. In many of these communities, there are elderly people who need help; there are sick people who need someone to assist them to bathe, to eat, and even to go to the next doctor's appointment. There are hungry people in these communities who will surely appreciate the visit of the church, and will welcome being given some food to eat. In the current challenging economy, in particular, many people are facing hard times.

¹⁰⁵ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing co., 1990), 53. The church cannot grow in number without a good understanding of mission. When evangelism through mission is done properly, growth is inevitable.

The Haitian-American churches need to be involved in the lives of these people. They need to go to the hospital to visit those who are sick and in need of help and reassurance. They also need to go to the jail and prison in order to visit and evangelize those who are incarcerated. When the church promotes and actively engages in these initiatives, every member will know that this church is mission-oriented. The mission-oriented church is the church that keeps Jesus alive in its midst. Jesus is alive in the church, not only by worship and praise, but by displaying love and caring for others. Many churches worship and praise God; yet, they fail to be Christians because they do not display a genuine love for their fellow human, in the church and outside of the church.

It was the story of the Good Samaritan whose behavior delighted Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus was disappointed by the behavior of the Jews, especially, the doctor of the Mosaic Law.

This religious leader was seemingly known God; he knew the law, and was aware that the Mosaic Law dignifies human's life a great deal. Yet, he did not pay any attention or even attempt to render basic care to another fellow human who was on the verge of losing his life.

This doctor of the law was a hypocrite.¹⁰⁶ He was a hypocrite because he knew exactly what to do, and did it well in the presence of other fellow religious leaders. However, when he was alone, he neglected to do what he have taught other people to do.

A Christian church must not behave like a hypocrite that teaches the sinners what to do to be saved, but fails to do what Jesus Christ asks the church to do. Christ places his church in the world so that its leaders and congregation can promote the advancement of the Kingdom of God. When the church does its work properly, the name of God is glorified. In the same vein, when the disciple of Christ does his will, the name of Christ is glorified.

In addition, a Christian church that is mission-oriented focuses its ministry on promoting peace in its community and throughout the world. The mission-oriented church is not an agent of false peace, similar to the peace that is offered by the political leaders of the world. More often, the world offers peace when they know they offer a bogus and deceiving version of the real peace. Only Christ can give the genuine peace to the world. It is the responsibility of the mission-oriented church to carry this good news to this disturbed world.

Jesus encourages and blesses those who work to promote peace in the world. He calls them the peacemakers, and children of God.¹⁰⁷ The church is the community of God people.¹⁰⁸ Let the churches voice the message of peace of the Lord in every corner, city, home, village, and nation of the world. The peace of the Lord can be achieved by promoting forgiveness among

¹⁰⁶ Luke 10:25-37.

¹⁰⁷ Matthew 5:9.

¹⁰⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 483. "The church is called to become the people in covenant with God who serve as the sign of the kingdom means the very character of God. It reflects God's character in that it lives as a genuine community."

each other. A mission-oriented church is a church that promotes peace in every home and in every heart.

The God who ordains the church and its members to be disciple-makers is the source of the genuine peace. He gives peace and tranquility to those who love Him. God wants His children to be a reflection of the true and sincere peace.¹⁰⁹

Another characteristic of a mission-oriented church is that it encourages its members to participate in missionary activities. The members are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and instructed by the pastors and leaders to develop their spiritual gifts. Each member of the church must be encouraged to exercise his own ministry for the glory of the Kingdom of God. The entire congregation must actively engaged in disciple-making activities, including evangelization, visiting the people in the community, visiting the prisoners, feeding the hungry, visiting the elderly and the widows, and going on mission trips to other countries, among others. The church must not be stagnant or in hibernation. When the whole church is engaged in mission-related activities, the members will not have any problems identifying their church as a mission-oriented church.

This is the type of church that Christ has built—a church that is powerful in its deeds and in its missionary activities. A church that is active in its community must engage in seeking the sinners, sharing the gospel, making disciples, and taking care of those who are in need. The Haitian-American churches that participated in this survey are not too small to engage both

¹⁰⁹ 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

locally and in their homeland of Haiti. A true Christian church cannot languish because the work that it is ordained to do is plentiful, and the time of the return of Christ is near.

Jesus even exhorts his disciples to pray the Father to send more skillful workers to the field because the work is so plentiful.¹¹⁰ The Haitian-American churches need to do better. They need to treat mission as one of the most important ministries of their churches. They need to be involved in their own community, as well as abroad. Although a few of the churches identify their ministry as mission-related, there is an evident lack of orientation when it comes to their engagement as disciple-makers. It takes the entire church community to make a real disciple. The Haitian-American churches do have the potential of becoming great disciple-makers for the Kingdom of God. However, their churches need to be more decentralized and the pastors need to teach, train, and engage the whole church in the process.

¹¹⁰ Luke 10:2.

Chapter 3

Haitian American Christians and Discipleship

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Luke 10:1-2

As a part of the survey, the Haitian-American Christians were asked to reflect on whether their church has an effective discipleship program. Their responses are discussed below.

Does this Church have an Effective Discipleship Program?

Before proceeding with the survey analysis, it is worth noting that the author defined any terms that he wanted the participants to speak about before asking them survey questions. This ensured that each respondent could fully contribute to this project with considered and meaningful responses that reflected his or her views. For example, in the survey, many Haitian-American pastors expressed that they have established an effective discipleship program in their churches. However, careful analysis of their programs revealed many discrepancies that are not compatible with a good discipleship program. A good discipleship program requires the sound teaching of the principles of the Kingdom of God. When Jesus tells the apostles to make disciples, he emphasizes on instructing these disciples in the sound doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The Greek word used here is *mathēteuō*, which means to make disciples, to teach, and to instruct.¹¹¹ One cannot become an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ without having the proper knowledge of the doctrine of Christ. The prospectus must be taught properly, and in return be

¹¹¹ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *mathēteuō* (Strong's 3100)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2015. 28 Nov 2015. < [http:// www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3100&t=NIV](http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3100&t=NIV) >

able to demonstrate that he or she has a perfect grasp of the instruction received. This is why a good disciple must be constantly learning and studying the Word of God. The disciple must imitate the way of his or her master. In the Christian church, Christ establishes the pastor as the teacher of His servants.¹¹² The pastor must be able to teach the Word of God to the church members. Jesus places a heavy emphasis on the formation and preparation of the disciples.

The disciple, in return, must be able to teach and make other disciples for the Kingdom of God. According to Lawless and Greenway, “Christians are mandated to preach the gospel and to make disciples of all people groups.”¹¹³ Each Christian church must have an effective discipleship program because Jesus counts on them to grow the membership of the kingdom of Christ. A discipleship program must also be systematic, in the sense that it is coherent and easy to follow and teach. Most importantly, the discipleship program must be centered on the word of God, not someone else’s ideology. There are too many false discipleship programs in the world, the Jehovah Witnesses being only one example. They deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. They state that “Jesus is actually the archangel Michael.”¹¹⁴ The Mormon Church teaches that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers.¹¹⁵ These false programs produce false disciples. Jesus chastised the Pharisees because they were forming disciples, not according to the word of God, but according

¹¹² Ephesians 4: 11-13.

¹¹³ Lawless and Greenway, *The Great Commission Resurgence*, p 15.

¹¹⁴ John Anker, John Weldon, and Dilon Burroughs, *The Facts on Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvet House Publisher, 1995), 30. The Jehovah Witnesses believe that Jesus is created by God. Therefore, Jesus had a beginning.

¹¹⁵ Stephen Mansfield, *The Mormonizing of America: How the Mormon Religion Became a Dominant Force* (Brentwood, Tennessee: Worthy Publishing, 2012), 1.

to their own ideology. Note that the disciple must be the reflection of his master and must transmit to others what he had learned from his master.

The local church is the most important instrument in the formation of a true disciple. The disciple must be faithful in all his dealings, whether with God or with his fellow men. He shall be taught not to be afraid to carry the cross of the gospel of Christ even if he is facing death. He must be a bearer of light and the salt of the Earth. He shall be taught to continue to preach the gospel of Christ as long as he has the capability to open his mouth for the sake of uttering the gospel. It is the responsibility of the local church to teach the disciple that it is formed to love his masters even at the feet of death. Even death cannot separate the disciple from his master. Remember that, at the cross, Jesus relied on his faithful disciple, John, to take care of his mother.¹¹⁶ A true disciple is a fruit bearer; he must reproduce the good qualities that he had learned from his teachers. He must multiply by making disciples for the Kingdom of God. A true disciple must not hesitate to preach and to teach the Word of God, so that the Word of God can change and transform the lives of other people. The true disciple must be taught to perform his ministry diligently, in good times and in bad times. The church must place emphasis on the fact that a true disciple must be willing to abandon himself and all his possessions for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Peter had demonstrated the quality of an authentic disciple when he said to Jesus, “we have left everything that we possess in order to follow you!”¹¹⁷ The authentic disciple experiences great joy in abandoning the world and its material wealth in order to pursue the

¹¹⁶ John 19: 26-27.

¹¹⁷ Luke 18:28.

wealth of the cross of Christ. The Apostle Paul writes the Philippian church in exclaiming that he “considers the things that he “lost” for the sake of Christ (such as his reputation and his social status) as nothing but skúbalon (“trash”)! As he becomes an authentic disciple of Christ, every worldly thing that he lost was considered as “rubbish” for the sake of knowing Jesus-Christ.¹¹⁸ However, as he becomes an authentic disciple of Christ, every worldly thing that he had, he perceives as waste products for the sake of Christ.¹¹⁹ In the article “Evangelism as Authentic Discipleship,”¹²⁰ Aleinik describes the ministry of preaching the Word of God as an essential duty of a true disciple of Christ.

The disciple who preaches the gospel obeys a natural command of Christ, who asks all his disciples to go to preach the gospel in order to make other disciples for the Kingdom of God. In other words, those who refuse to go to preach the gospel disobey a divine command from the master of all authentic disciples. In ancient Greece, a disciple would never disobey the order of his master and would do anything and everything in order to please him. A good discipleship program in the Haitian-American churches must focus on these essential aspects of discipleship. Voila emphasizes on the importance of the ministry of the Word as essential for the advancement of God’s kingdom on Earth. It is therefore important to all, and for every Christian church, to have a discipleship program because it is a catalyst for the growth of the church.

¹¹⁸ Philippians 3:8. See J.P. Lauw & E.A. Nida 1996.

¹¹⁹ Philippians 3:28.

¹²⁰ Aleinik Volha, “Evangelism as Authentic Discipleship.,” *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 1 (2014): 116, *MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost* (accessed February 04, 2015).

At this juncture, it is important to state that, from the writer's point of view, disciples exist in different categories, with the local church as the key factor in their success. Here, success does not imply monetary or other material wealth, but rather the ability of the disciple to carry out the gospel of the cross until the end. Such an individual is referred to as a committed disciple. A committed disciple has learned to be faithful to the cause of the gospel. Therefore, a disciple's engagement to the preaching of the gospel is a sign of his authenticity. A person cannot be a true disciple if he or she refuses to engage in the ministry of mission, which is aimed at promoting the spreading of the gospel. The local church must teach the disciple to be wholeheartedly obedient to the Word of God. A true disciple will not allow any material possession to get in the way of a strong relationship between him or her and the master.

In addition, he or she will not hesitate to go anywhere, or any place, in order to preach the gospel to the sinners. A disciple must commit in all things to the master even if death is imminent. A true disciple will not deny the name of Christ. When Peter became a true disciple, he was remorseful for denying the name of Christ.

In fact, when he became a mature disciple, fully formed and transformed by the Holy Spirit, he accepted death rather than abandoning the Christian faith. According to the article, "Authentic Discipleship: An introduction to 2 Corinthians," authored by James Thompson, "Christianity is the religion of the cross."¹²¹ In stating this, he implies that anyone who wants to follow Christ must be also willing to suffer and to die. He appreciates the fact the Apostle Paul took every opportunity to speak and to teach other disciples about the cross of Jesus Christ. Hence, an authentic disciple is called to suffer by carrying the cross of Christ. However, the local

¹²¹ Thompson, "Authentic Discipleship," 1-6.

church must play a fundamental role in transforming every true disciples' life as the bearer and carrier of the cross of Christ.¹²² They must be taught continuously in the love of Christ because the disciple's life is a life of learning. He or she needs to learn the behavior, the style, and the principles that the master taught him or her. The disciple must perfect this knowledge, to the point of living by it even better than the master does. This is why Jesus says to his disciples, "the things I did, and you will do even greater things than these."¹²³ In sum, all disciples must persevere in learning and in training for their ministry.

The message that Jesus conveyed to his disciples is also pertaining to the Haitian-American Christians. They must train their disciples to develop the characters of the disciples of the past and be willing to be trained passionately in the Word of God. Only then, they can be effective disciple-makers, according to the Great Commission mandate.¹²⁴ They must be taught that a true disciple of Christ is one who is willing to forsake himself in order to carry the cross of Christ. Abandoning oneself for the cause of Christ implies that the disciple must be willing to be humiliated, to be rejected, to be mistreated, to be marginalized, to suffer, to be jailed and imprisoned, to be thirsty and hungry, to lose all material wealth, reputation, and even to accept death for the cause of Christ.¹²⁵ Another important trait of a genuine disciple is that he or she happily carries his cross and steadfastly follows Christ until the end of the earthly journey. The local church is responsible for teaching these facts to the prospective disciples. It must convey

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ John 14:12.

¹²⁴ Matthew 28:19-20.

¹²⁵ Luke 14:33; 9:23.

the message that disciple must glorify and dignify the name of the Lord by all actions and reactions, in public or in private.

The local church, or in this case, the Haitian-American churches, can develop and implement a discipleship program, which should focus on at least one aspect of disciple making. It is clear that all the churches in this study do have Sunday school classes and Bible study programs through which they teach the Bible. Indeed, the main aspect of a discipleship program is the study of the Bible. Whether the discipleship program is basic or advanced is not relevant, as the key requirement is a strong emphasis on sound teaching of the Christian faith.

The local church must make it clear in its teaching that the act of following Jesus Christ requires a total and complete surrendering of oneself to Christ. The great German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, placed emphasis on the fact that discipleship is something valuable and costly because Jesus asks every disciple to abandon oneself for the sake of the kingdom.¹²⁶ The disciple that Christ desires is the one who abandons himself and everything he possesses for the sake of Christ. This disciple must hold to the highest standard the teaching of the gospel; he or she must teach others to become candid disciples of Christ, in good times or in bad times, in hardship or in abundance, in health or in sickness, every time, and all the times.

The local churches may have several dimensions of discipleship classes, depend on their financial situation.¹²⁷ It is widely acknowledged that some churches are wealthier than others, whereby the former can afford to establish a more structured setting to form their disciples. Some disciple-making courses could be relatively basic, such as those in the Sunday school classes,

¹²⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 17.

¹²⁷ When the author uses the term local churches, he primarily refers to the Haitian-American churches in the United States.

while others could be more advanced. No matter how small or how big a church is, it must institute some kind of training for its members so that they can learn the Word of God, and the way they can use it to make disciples for the kingdom of Christ. A person cannot be a disciple maker without possessing an adequate knowledge of the Word of God. The Bible clearly states, the Holy Spirit equips the saints so that they can be adequate and effective in doing the ministry that Christ bestows on them to do.¹²⁸

As previously noted, it was important that all the participants in this study were equipped with knowledge pertaining to their respective local churches before responding to the survey questions. The second question pertained to the notion of discipleship. Of the 400 participants, 375 stated that their church has some kind of discipleship program. However, only twenty-five indicated that their church has an effective discipleship program. This discrepancy in responses clearly indicates that not all the discipleship programs are adequate for generating growth in the membership of the churches. Even though the Holy Spirit alone is capable of convincing man's heart to come to the church, human beings are instrumental in sharing the Word with other humans. Thus, if a discipleship program is not aimed at bringing the sinners in a relationship with Christ, it is ineffective. An effective discipleship program must emphasize on the commitment of the disciple to Jesus Christ. The committed disciple must abandon himself or herself for the sake of Christ, placing him above all else. The disciple must be willing to carry the cross of Christ throughout his or her life and must not be afraid of suffering and dying for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A genuine discipleship program will produce genuine disciples. The local churches must point out these characteristics to the Christians. It is clear that

¹²⁸ Ephesian 4:8-13.

not everyone is suited to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus clearly states that anyone who loves himself, his family, his wealth, his parents or his children more than Jesus is not qualified to be his follower.

The survey responses revealed that all the Haitian-American churches included in this study have some type of discipleship formation program. In the simplest form, this discipleship program can be a regular Sunday school class. The program might not even be identified officially as a discipleship program.

However, the fact that it is focused on the formation and preparation of the Christian for the work of ministry is sufficient for it to be classified as a discipleship program. The study participants had no difficulty identifying that their churches do have programs that prepare them for sharing the gospel with other people. Hence, the Haitian-American churches take this aspect of church ministry very seriously. However, it is not possible to ascertain whether their objective is to grow their own church instead of the advancement of God's kingdom. Nevertheless, the fact that new disciples are formed and encouraged to go about preaching and sharing Christ with the sinners is encouraging.

All the churches have at least a weekly Bible study, where the Word of God is taught in order to prepare the Haitian-American Christians for the work of Christian ministry. Although some of the programs are very basic, as simple as a mere Sunday school, the results are very encouraging.

Clearly, some of the discipleship programs need to be more structured in order to be more effective in their objective. For example, the Sunday school is considered as something that has no significant value when it comes to disciple formation.¹²⁹ On the other hand, if the Sunday school classes were well structured, and were taught by pastors or Christian leaders who are well trained in the field of disciple formation, they would yield better results. If that were the case, these classes would have made a more positive impact in the ministry of the disciple-makers. Note that Jesus wants the disciple-makers to win souls. The disciple must be confident about his ministry and must be faithful in his relationship with Christ. The best disciple is the one who has faith and confidence in his master.

The participants in this study consider themselves as authentic disciples of Christ. The survey revealed that all members of the Haitian-American churches that took part in this study consider their churches as having some kind of discipleship formation program. However, only a fraction of these discipleship programs, roughly 10 to 12 percent, can be considered successful, as the remaining ones lack structure. One of the most serious problems encountered in this community is the lack of adequate Christian leaders, capable of organizing the Christians for the work of ministry. In some of the churches, the pastors do not have any formal seminary training, which is a considerable drawback, considering that a disciple must receive the proper training. The church must ensure that the theological training that the disciple is receiving is authentic and in conformity with the Word of God. The disciple must be taught the proper Christian doctrine. There are many false Bible teachers in the world that teach and believe in whatever makes them “feel good.” They distort the Bible in order to satisfy their own sinful desires. These false Bible

¹²⁹ Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 9. When the church is “well-structured, growth comes naturally and automatically.”

teachers are not new in the world. Even during the time of the apostles, there were false teachers that attempted to corrupt the gospel by preaching their own, unauthentic gospel.¹³⁰ Note that it takes the whole church to form a disciple. One remark that is worth noting here is that the Haitian-American churches are not trying to work together, as most pastors prefer to work independently. This approach is not good for them, especially because they have very limited financial resources. Adequate resources are essential for the formation of the disciples. Even though the Bible clearly states that God provides to the church all the gifts needed for ministry, a single local church may not have all the gifts needed for ministry within its own members. This is why it is important that the local churches combine their resources in order to tackle the different challenges that they might encounter in the formation of disciples.

Not all the Haitian-American churches have the same financial capabilities and resources. They can pool their resources together for the purpose of mission and evangelization. These churches do not have the same opportunities that the mainstream American churches enjoy. However, this limitation does not give them the license to be mediocre. A genuine disciple requires genuine Christian literature to study and use in his or her ministry. Due to their inadequate financial resources, some of the Haitian-American churches ally themselves with other religious organizations, which are sometimes not qualified as authentic Christian organizations. These organizations teach a polluted gospel, aiming to lead the people to other gods.

It is clear that discipleship in the Haitian-American churches in the United States has many shortcomings. Without any doubt, these churches do have better financial and economic

¹³⁰ 1 Timothy 4:1-7.

resources at their disposal than those of their homeland of Haiti. However, failure to combine those resources has resulted in ineffective ministries of these churches. These churches fail to be mission-oriented; they also fail in the formation of authentic Christian disciples for the Kingdom of God. This study highly recommends that these churches combine their assets and efforts so that they could do a better job for the sake of Christ. It will be more profitable for them if each church of similar faith forms a central organization that would be financed by all these local churches.

This single organization would be responsible for the formation of the disciples, organizing mission trips, promoting them in the community, and among other American Christian organizations.

As of the time of this study, the disciple formation programs offered by these churches are limited to the Sunday school and the Bible study, which is not enough. The formation of an authentic disciple requires a much more organized approach. An authentic discipleship program must be responsible not only for the spiritual formation and preparation of the disciples, but also must have an organization that is responsible for helping them financially with their ministry. These disciples must also have a network of Christian supporters that they can rely on to assist their families while they are away on the mission field.

An effective discipleship program engages the entire church in the formation and the preparation of the disciples.¹³¹ Discipleship requires more than the study of the Word of God. It requires spiritual support through prayers and fasting. The church must pray and establish prayer

¹³¹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Pres, 2009), 63.

warrior groups that would be responsible to pray constantly for the spiritual well-being of the disciples and the missionaries. They must dedicate some groups and leaders who would be responsible for visiting the families of those who are away on missions. The local church must establish a reliable way for those who are in the mission fields to communicate with their loved ones and friends and family members they left at home. The local church must stay in constant communication with those who are in the mission fields and must provide reports about the missionaries' or disciples' activities to the congregation on at least monthly basis. These steps are not exhaustive; however, they would prove that the ministry of the disciple is taken very seriously by the local churches and that this initiative is well structured.

In addition, the Haitian-American churches must upgrade the quality of teaching that they provide to their members.¹³² As was previously noted, the devil is constantly trying to destroy the Church of Christ. The best way for the devil to destroy the church is through false teaching. This is why the Apostle Paul warned the young pastor Timothy about the scheme that the devil will use in the last days in order to corrupt the church. Paul warned him that the devil would bring forth false teachers with the sole agenda of causing apostasy in the church. According to the Apostle Paul, people will no longer take pleasure in the authentic doctrine of the Bible; rather, they will enjoy listening to fables and discourses that have nothing to do with the salvation of their souls. These false teachers will certainly form false disciples, who will be overzealous in their attempt to lead the churches astray from its Christian's root. The devil will saturate the church with false doctors, who are not hesitant to teach anything that would satisfy the sinful nature of mankind. They will attempt to prove that the Bible, the Word of God, is

¹³² Louis Jr M. Bertin, "Touloutoutou and Tet Mare Churches, Language, Class and Protestantism in Haitian Diaspora of the Bahamas," *University of Tennessee* 41, no. 2 (2012):218-219.

false.¹³³ Therefore, the Haitian-American churches must be very careful about the nature of the teaching that is conveyed through their discipleship program. The study recommends that only qualified theologians be authorized to form the disciples of Christ.

The next question in the survey pertained to mission trips. The participants were asked to comment on their church involvement in the activity of mission as mandated by the Great Commission.¹³⁴

Did This Church Organize a Mission Trip in the Past Six Months?

Every Christian must be aware that one of the commands that the Lord of the church had given to his followers is the order to go to make disciples all over the world.¹³⁵ This order cannot be forgotten or ignored. It must always be remembered and executed by all Christian believers. Thus, the participants had the opportunity to comment on whether their churches participate effectively in the activity of missions. The activity of mission is integral and essential to the Christian church. No church can claim to be Christian if it does not participate in the activity of mission. In fact, failure to do so is a sin.

The Christian church is a missionary church.¹³⁶ This is the nature of the Church that Jesus Christ has built. He states that he will build his church that even the gate of hell will not prevail against it. This statement of the Lord Jesus Christ introduces His church as a victorious one—a church that no evil power, no supernatural force can triumph over. This is a guarantee that no

¹³³ I Timothy 4:1-8.

¹³⁴ Matthew 28: 19-20.

¹³⁵ Matthew 28:19-20.

¹³⁶ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 173.

other institution's founder can make because no institution that is established by men is impregnable. The Church and its members benefit from this status as long as they stay faithful to God. Being faithful to God means that the church must follow all rules and commands given by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ commands his Church to be on missions and act in this capacity all over the world. It should also make disciples by teaching the sinners the instructions that they received from Him. This command is universal and pertains to all members of the Christian family without exception. Every Christian is obliged to carry out this noble mandate. The Kingdom of God grows and multiplies by the act of preaching and the conversion of the sinners. It is essential that the preaching of the gospel be done by all Christians, so that the sinners can have faith in Christ and hopefully reconcile with him. This is a mission of all Christians, and all missions must have a purpose. The purpose of all Christian missions is to share the gospel with the world so that others can accept Christ as their personal savior. When the people hear the word of God, they will have faith. The Bible says that “faith comes by hearing the word of God.”¹³⁷ Jesus wants the sinners to hear his word. Yet, the sinners will not be able to hear the Word of God, if no one goes to preach and teach it to them. This is why Jesus ordered his followers to go. “Go” is an action verb; it requires someone to move, to displace from one location to another location. No one deserves to be called an authentic Christian if he or she does not participate in the activity of Christian mission. The entire church is ordered to go to preach, to evangelize, to convert, and baptize the repentant sinners.

¹³⁷ Romans 10:17.

Both individual Christians and the churches are equally responsible for the preaching of the gospel through missionary activities. In some Christian denominations, the leaders of the church are responsible for sending people on missions. On the other hand, some other Christian denominations allow their members to organize their own missions independently. Whether the mission is organized by a central body, a church for example, or by an individual Christian, it still has the same value in God's eyes. The key point is that no Christian is excused from participating in the ministry of missions. Mission is the church's ministry through which the gospel is preached to the sinners of different ethnicity. For example, the deacon Philip left Jerusalem and went to Samaria to preach the gospel to this different ethnic group, the Samaritans.

This original approach proves that evangelization is meant to break ethnic barriers that would otherwise not have been broken. The Jews and the Samaritans were two different ethnic groups among which no social relationship existed. However, the preaching of the gospel brought some unity among them. The church's ministry of mission is both a qualitative and quantitative activity of the Christian church. It is qualitative because it does for nations what any other activities could not do. For example, evangelization change life, and brings peace and unity among mankind. Most importantly, the evangelization of the sinners brings hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.¹³⁸ Further, the evangelization of the nation is an activity of the church that is designed to increase membership in the Christian family. The greater the number of people that convert to Christianity, the greater the Christian family becomes.

¹³⁸ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 27-40. Many gays, lesbians, and drug users were attracted to his missional church.

In order to correctly perform Christian mission, Jesus expects his disciples to leave their place of comfort and to go to unknown places for the sole purpose of sharing the gospel with others. First, the disciples were ordered to start preaching the gospel in their own homeland, which was Jerusalem, which was the center of all Christian activities. Jerusalem was the most important city of Israel. The most important people, the temple, the priests, the Romans army, the rich and the famous lived in this city. The preaching of the gospel is essential to change the heart of man. People may have different ranks or different social status, but their sinful hearts are the same. The Bible says that man's heart is full of tricks and malice.¹³⁹ Most importantly, there is no medicine that can cure the spiritual malformation of a man's heart; the only sure cure for this disease is the Word of God. Thus, preaching the gospel in Jerusalem will give an opportunity to the rich and famous of this country to find a spiritual medicine for their defective heart. Moreover, preaching the gospel in Jerusalem meant that Jesus truly cares for the souls of the disciples' family. Jesus wants them to hear the gospel so that they can receive forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation with God for their sins.

The disciples of Christ must constantly try to bring their own immediate family to a close spiritual relationship with God, which is not an easy task. Therefore, this task must be conferred on the gracious love of the Holy Spirit of God, which has the power and authority to bring all men to a spiritual relationship with God. Jesus struggled to bring his immediate family into a spiritual relationship with God, for they did not believe in his ministry. However, he did not stop praying for them. Every disciple has the mandate to pray for his or her own family until all of them come to know God. In the same vein, the Haitian-American Christians must not abandon

¹³⁹ Jeremiah 17:9-11.

the task of praying for the salvation of their own families. Therefore, it is important for them to organize missions to their homeland.

Barriers

Mission trips from the United States to Haiti are very costly, even though Haiti is geographically very close to the United States. Haiti can be reached from the United States by sea or by air. The travel by sea is mostly reserved for the shipping of goods and commercial products between the two countries, whereas tourists and other travelers tend to travel by air.¹⁴⁰ Even though the two countries are not too far away from each other, the cost of flying in and from Haiti is very exorbitant. Thus, a Haitian-American who is going on a Christian mission trip to his or her homeland has to spend a significant amount of money. This will include the cost of the flight, money to spend while in Haiti, food and medicine for the poor, the cost of transportation, and money for lodging, at the very least. No one can ignore the fact that it is very costly to organize a mission trip to Haiti. In addition, the Haitian-American Christians need to leave their work in the United States and request at least a two-week vacation in order to go on that mission trip. It is not easy since the majority of these Christians are low wage workers. Yet, some of them, a small number, do make the sacrifice of going to Haiti regularly to preach the gospel. Most of the trips to Haiti are not initiated by a church, but rather by individual Christians that take their own initiative to accomplish the Great Commission mandate.

According to the survey, the Haitian-American churches included in this study have failed to fulfill their Great Commission mandate, as the majority do not organize mission trips to

¹⁴⁰ William G. Schucany, "Joy shines more brightly engulfed in chaos: reflections on a mission trip to Haiti," *Bayl University* 23, no.4 (2010): 371-376.

Haiti or encourage their members to go. This kind of attitude explains why discipleship is a failure in the Haitian-American churches in the United States.

The Great Commission mandate is neglected by the Christian leaders in the Haitian-American churches. While this negative trend is very common in the Haitian-American churches, identifying reasons behind it is not easy. Nonetheless, many suggestions could be considered. Maybe there is not enough money in the churches and in the community to spend on missions, or maybe the leaders are too comfortable living the American dream, or simply these Christian leaders are ignorant of the Great Commission mandate. This study offers findings indicating that the Haitian-American Christian leaders are not interested in the activity of missions. However, further studies are encouraged in this matter so that this situation can be improved. There is evident reluctance to partake in the activity of Christian missions among the members of this community.

More specifically, eighty percent of the study participants stated that their churches did not organize a mission trip during the last six months. They did not go on mission in Haiti or anywhere else. Only eight percent of the participants stated that their churches went on a mission during the last six months, which is equivalent to only two churches out twenty-five.¹⁴¹ The Haitian-American leaders need to understand that evangelization through missions is the most significant way that the gospel is being preached to the lost world. When the apostles refused to leave Jerusalem to go to preach the gospel to the pagans, God activated a great persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem. Due to that persecution, many of the disciples fled the city to go to the

¹⁴¹ Although there is no specific number, a few Haitian-American Christians go on mission trips very often to Haiti. They brought medicines, clothes, and other donations to the poor Haitians. These missions are not well-structured and tend to occur randomly. In addition, they are mostly undertaken at the initiative of church members, rather than church leaders.

nearby cities in order to avoid being jailed, beaten and even killed. Some of the apostles went to Antioch, to Corinth, Samaria, Greece, Africa, and so on. As a result of that persecution, the mandate of the Great Commission was put in motion. This study does not condone a religious persecution of the Haitian-American churches; rather, its aim is to remind the leaders that God can punish people that refuse to follow His command. Moreover, they need to be reminded that it is dangerous to disobey God's command. It is fair to say that the Christian leaders are not aware of the lack of participation of Haitian-American Christians in the Great Commission mandate.

Thus, this study will serve as a catalyst that will help them fulfill their Great Commission mandate. The Great Commission requires every Christian to be constantly on the journey that leads to the conversion of sinners. It is not an isolated event; mission is a constant endeavor that the Church gladly receives from Christ. The true disciple feels joy and happiness when sharing the gospel with the sinners.¹⁴² The Bible states "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"¹⁴³ The Apostle Paul was well aware of the blessings that are bestowed on those who engage in carrying through the command of the Great Commission. He was engaged restlessly in the evangelization of the pagan world. He certainly experienced a great joy in spite of the difficulty he endured. Every Christian must follow the missionary path of the apostles in order to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ all over the world.¹⁴⁴

The Haitian-American churches must increase significantly the rate by which they are sending Christian missionaries to their homeland. They are responsible for the evangelization of

¹⁴² Isaiah 52:7.

¹⁴³ Romans 10:15.

¹⁴⁴ The Baptist Haiti Mission is one of the Christian organizations that replicates the work of the Apostle Paul. The work of the Mission is established in eight of the ten departments of Haiti. With over 350 churches and 354 primary schools, educational projects currently serve over 68,000 Haitian children.

their own “Jerusalem.” They must send Haitian missionaries to every village and city of Haiti to bring the gospel to the lost ones. Jesus Christ counts on them as his servants and disciples. Jesus wants everyone to be saved by hearing the message of salvation through the preaching of the gospel. Nevertheless, the Haitian sinners will not be saved if they do not hear the gospel. They will not hear the gospel if no one goes in the villages and in the mountainsides where they live. The farmers, the poor, and the mountain men will not hear the message of love and reconciliation that Christ offers to the sinners. The Apostle Paul encourages the Christians to go to preach the gospel to the sinners so that they can repent of their sins and accept Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁵ There are Christians in the churches who would like to go on missions in their homeland, but they do not have the financial means to do so. The Haitian-American churches need to be more proactive in providing support to these people, so that they could go to preach the gospel. Research indicates that the Haitian-American churches rely on other American Christians for the evangelization of Haiti.¹⁴⁶ This should not be the case. The Haitian-American churches are responsible for the evangelization of their homeland. Even though it is a costly enterprise, God has provided greatly to this community. In turn, they must contribute richly to the advancement of the Kingdom of God, in Haiti, and all over the world.

During the survey, none of the participants could confirm that their church organizes missions on a regular basis. Apparently, the Haitian-American churches do not consider mission as an essential ministry. This approach is counterproductive to the growth of the Church of Christ on Earth. It is also in opposition to the will of God. This prompts the question—can a true

¹⁴⁵ Romans 10:15.

¹⁴⁶ 1964 saw the birth of a new indigenous organization within the part of the Baptist movement with which American Baptists are most deeply involved, the Haitian Baptist Convention (Convention Baptiste d’Haiti or CBH). Today, the CBH has some 110 churches, hundreds of preaching stations, and over 90,000 baptized believers.

Christian be opposed to the will of God? The answer is obvious. No true Christian, no true disciple, will oppose his or her master. After all, one of the *sine qua non*¹⁴⁷ conditions for becoming a disciple is the complete abandonment of oneself in order to carry Christ's cross. In order to carry the cross, one must follow a process. First, one must be able to see the cross, be near the cross, and be able to touch it. This means that an individual that is able to carry the cross must be a motivated Christian because, in order for this person to come near the cross, he or she has to overcome many dilemmas. For example, he or she must overcome the dilemma of self-pride, doubts, and of societal pressure. Simon of Cyrene became a true disciple because he was able to see the cross, to be near the cross, and was able to carry it.¹⁴⁸ Seeing the cross requires a spiritual intervention of the Holy Spirit, whereas touching the cross is a sign of commitment to Christ. The notion of carrying the cross of Christ involved self-sacrifice and the abandon of oneself. The fact that the Haitian-American churches in the United States are not participating enough in the ministry of missions is indicative of their lack of commitment to Christ. They are not carrying their cross. The one who carries the cross cannot be too comfortable because carrying the cross of Christ involves the delivery of sweats both physically and spiritually.

A true disciple of Christ must overcome the problem of self-pride, of fame, and of superiority. Nicodemus could not become a serious disciple of Christ until he overcame the dilemma of self-pride and of superiority in order to carry the cross of Christ.¹⁴⁹ The carrying of the cross is a Christian activity that causes someone to become sweaty and dirty with mud, and subjected to mockery. This is why Jesus Christ asked Nicodemus to be born again. The notion of

¹⁴⁷ Without which, nothing.

¹⁴⁸ Mark 15:21.

¹⁴⁹ John 3:1ff.

being born again requires the spiritual rebirth of the whole being—body, soul, and spirit. Nicodemus could not grasp the concept of being born again, until the Holy Spirit had miraculously conferred on him a spiritual mindset. A spiritual mindset is required in order for someone to understand the divine principles. The Bible is the book of the divine principles.

Any principle found in the Bible is a spiritual concept that has a real and concrete application. This means that they can be applied in one's daily life, in order to change and transform it. Thus, the Great Commission is a divine concept that can be understood only by those who have been immersed in the power of the Holy Spirit. If that knowledge is not fully communicated by the Holy Spirit, the only perfect interpreter of the mind of God, the will of God would not be understood. This line of reasoning, when applied to the Haitian-American churches, clearly indicated that they demonstrate a cloudy and murky understanding of the command to go to make disciples.

All God's commands have a universal implication because the universe is under his rules. God wants the Christians to know that the Church that He built is not a localized church, but rather the universal one that must affect mankind positively wherever they are. Hence, when a disciple performs a good deed, he or she makes a universal mark on the church, not on its nature and quality, but on its mission. The Bible clearly states that, when someone does a good deed to the least of his servants, this action will have a kingdom wide repercussion.¹⁵⁰ The church of Christ has a certain way of behaving. Participation in mission cannot affect the nature or the quality of the church, but can certainly have an impact on its mission. The Haitian-American churches do not demonstrate a complete understanding of the Great Commission

¹⁵⁰ Matthew 25:40-41.

mandate, and this severely impedes their progress both qualitatively and quantitatively. In sum, the survey responses unequivocally demonstrated that these churches fail in all the major and essential ministries of the Christian church: they fail to be a mission-oriented church; they fail in establishing an effective discipleship program, and they also fail to be a united church.

God Wants His Church to be Joyful, Active, and Transforming

A church that is subservient to Jesus Christ must be joyful; therefore, joy is one of the most important qualities of a Christian church.¹⁵¹ Jesus Christ wants his church to be joyful even in the midst of the direst calamity. Jesus recommends joy because joy is therapeutic. It brings a refreshing and soothing aroma and sensation to the soul. A joyful soul is undefeatable. It will endure even when everything else fails. The Christian that performs his or her ministry with joy will surely succeed. He or she will not be ashamed of sharing the joy that he or she finds in the Word of God. A joyful person is usually very active in his environment. His presence is indispensable to others. He is a comforter to those who are experiencing hardship. His presence and advice transform the lives of those who are in despair. A joyful Christian offers hope to the sick and dying. He or she is a light bearer that illuminates the dark path of the sinner's heart. A joyful Christian is trustworthy, and he is a faithful counselor that others can rely on. He constantly points the sinners to Christ, and those who are enchained by the devil will experience the spiritual freedom that the presence of Christ provides. The Bible says, where God's presence is there is liberty.¹⁵² The liberty that Christ provides has a threefold effect: it liberates the flesh,

¹⁵¹ George Henry Hamilton, "Letter: Dedication of Church a Joyful Experience," *Journal*, Sep 18, 2008, 10.

¹⁵² 2 Corinthians 3:17.

the soul, and the spirit from the slavery of sin. The devil invented stressful and painful situations in order to control the sinners with drugs, sex, money, and all kinds of lustful pleasures.¹⁵³ The joy of Christ is there to break these bonds. A true Christian has no real relationship with the world. His sorrow and his hurts are being replaced with the joy of Christ. A joyful Christian is an authentic ambassador of Christ. He or she gladly represents Christ and his kingdom, locally and internationally. These characteristics portray the image of a true Christian church, which is joyful and eager to share its joy with the rest of the world. There is no true peace and joy outside of Christ and his church.

The church must go into the world, and be among those who are hurting, in order to share this joy and peace with them. The Haitian-American churches must demonstrate that they harness the joy and the peace that God offers only through Jesus Christ. They need to preach that peace to their co-citizens in their own homeland in a consistent and fruitful manner. The churches need to organize mission trips more often, preferably on a monthly basis. They need to go to fulfill the Great Commission mandate by starting in their own homeland. In addition, these churches need to instruct their members to individually engage in the ministry of mission, as required by the Great Commission.

Does this Church Organize at Least One Mission Trip per Year?

The next survey question probed further into missionary work of the Haitian-American churches and asked the participants if their churches organize a yearly mission. The responses to this question revealed that only three churches have an annual mission program to Haiti, as indicated by sixteen respondents that were their members. This number represents only twelve

¹⁵³ See 1 John 2:16

percent (12%) of the churches, while ideally all Haitian-American churches should organize mission trips to their homeland. Haiti symbolically represents the Jerusalem for all the Haitian Christians who are living abroad.

All Haitian Christians must pray for its peace, its prosperity, its evangelization, and its salvation. Through the spiritual provision, which is implicit in the Great Commission, Christ can bring redemption to Haiti.

Redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ is the main purpose of the Great Commission. The Haitian-American churches must send more missionaries to Haiti in order to redeem its population from the slavery of sin. The devil has a stronghold on this country through the practice of voodoo, which is a sin and an abomination before God. The merciful God of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac wants to deliver and bless Haiti.

This double act of mercy would not be useful unless the Haitian people abandon the horrible and insidious practice of voodoo.¹⁵⁴ The devil uses the voodoo to enslave the thought process of the Haitian people; it uses its deceitful skills to entrap their whole being—body, soul, and spirit. Satan pretends to be a friend of the Haitian people when in reality he is a foe to all mankind. This beautiful country that was once rich in glory, mighty in deed, and prosperous by its natural resources, stands now desolate and full of shame. Its beauty is evaporated, its dignity is vanished, and its self-esteem is obliterated. This country lies hopelessly in the humid and dark valley of antiquity, shamed and abandoned. It is exposed to all negative elements. It is paying the

¹⁵⁴ The amended constitution of 2011 revoked the status of voodoo as an official religion in Haiti. “But just recently, the head of the National Confederation of Haitian Voodoo, Priestess Euvonie Auguste recently stated that the newly amended constitution revoked the 1987 abolition of the 1935 anti-voodoo law. This leaves voodoo practitioners vulnerable to legal prosecution once more where they will have to protect themselves from any attacks or discrimination directed to them as voodoo would be no longer protected by the new constitution”(Haitiobserver.com).

price of an unconventional alliance that its founders have made with Satan. Yes, the Bible is always right. No alliance forged between light and darkness or good and evil will endure. The devil promised them a kind of liberty that turned to be slavery; he promised them a kind of wealth that was nothing but poverty. Satan is not only a liar, but he is actually the father of lies and the killer of the souls.¹⁵⁵ Yes, the devil is a murderer. He uses lies to destroy the soul. Whoever obeys to the devil's voice is already dead spiritually. Adam and Eve died spiritually after they obeyed the devil's voice. A dead soul cannot tolerate truth, for it perceives it as a poison. A person whose soul is dead finds pleasure only in sinful and lascivious activities.

When the founders of Haiti entered into that alliance with the devil, they died spiritually; they brought curses on them and on their land, and they brought the judgment of God on themselves. The Bible says, if the father worship another God, Jehovah will punish the children for the sin of their fathers until the third and fourth generation.¹⁵⁶ The punishment of Haiti has spanned more than five generations. Yet, the punishment that Haiti is experiencing now does not come from God, but from the devil. The devil has multiple faces. He incites the sinner to sin, then turns around accusing them for the sins. Satan is the accuser of the children of God.¹⁵⁷ Remember, he accused the high priest, Joshua.¹⁵⁸ He is now accusing the Haitian people, bringing calamities on them, pretending that God is the one who brings them. The Haitian people must revoke their relationship with the devil and remove the stronghold by becoming warriors in

¹⁵⁵ John 8:44.

¹⁵⁶ Exodus 20:5

¹⁵⁷ Revelation 12:10.

¹⁵⁸ Zechariah 3:1.

the army of God.¹⁵⁹ God soldiers are well trained and adequately armed. God's spiritual warriors are armed with spiritual arms that are powerful and deadly. They are powerful enough to destroy the strongholds of the devil.¹⁶⁰

The Haitian-American churches have an instrumental role to play in the spiritual liberation of their homeland. It is clear that their homeland is besieged in all parts by the devil. The devil builds strongholds after strongholds, destroying the natural and spiritual beauty of this paradisiacal oasis. Its inhabitants are both spiritually weak and feeble, due to the effects that the devil had on them. The Haitian-American churches must bring an army of well-armed spiritual warriors in order to defeat the enemy, destroy his strongholds, and finally proclaim the spiritual deliverance of Haiti.

At only three percent (12%), the number of Haitian-American churches that organize a yearly mission trip to Haiti is insignificant and must increase considerably. The presence of the Haitian missionaries is important for Haiti. There is a spiritual thirst and hunger that only the Word of God can cure. This is not to say that the gospel is not being preached in Haiti. The gospel is preached day and night, by Haitian Christians and other Christian missionaries. Yet, the Haitian-American Christians must go to their homeland because this is an order from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Haitian-American churches must contribute in the formation of Christian disciples not only in Haiti, but everywhere in the world. The missionary activities of the Haitian-American churches must increase at least tenfold. In addition, each Haitian-American Christian

¹⁵⁹ Kate Ramsey, *The Spirit and the Law: Vodoo and Power in Haiti* (Chicago; London: University Press of Chicago Press, 2011), 1. Although Ramsey attempt to defend the legitimacy of the Haitian voodoo, he acknowledges that "between 1835 and 1987, many popular ritual practices in Haiti were officially prohibited, first as spells, later as superstitious practices."

¹⁶⁰ 2 Corinthians 10:4.

must engage in missionary activities to their homeland. Those who never went need to go because it is compulsory. Every Christian must engage in missionary activities in order to spread the message of the gospel all over the world. Many Christians feel that contributing monetarily for missions is enough, which is not the case. The order that Jesus Christ gives is that every Christian must leave their home, their comfort zone to go preach the gospel to the lost ones. This is a universal command from the creator of the universe.

The Haitian-American Christians must follow the path of the apostles. Once the apostles understood that they had to leave Jerusalem to go to other areas to spread the good news, they did not hesitate to leave their home in order to fulfill their Christian duty. For example, the apostle Paul left his home to undertake several missionary journeys. On some of these missionary trips, the apostle Paul met several dire challenges.

He suffered pain, humiliation, hunger, and sickness, and was beaten and jailed for the sake of the gospel. Yet, he refused to give up. He wanted to do all that he could for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Some of the Haitian Christians are afraid to go back to preach in their homeland, knowing that this country is the stronghold of the devil. They are afraid of being attacked mystically by those who practice voodoo. However, there are Christians who would like to go, but they do not have the money to do so. Thus, the next section of this thesis will consider the financial aspect of missions to Haiti.

Does This Church Have a Yearly Budget for Mission Work and Discipleship?

The churches that took part in this survey do not have a budget for either mission or disciple formation.

As stated earlier, missions are not something that is done haphazardly; it requires careful planning. In the churches that are well-managed and well-organized, mission and disciple formation are integral parts of the yearly planning and budgeting. The churches that are financially sound must have a budget dedicated solely to missionary activities and discipleship formation. However, given that missions are always a costly endeavor, not all churches can dedicate them the required resources. Whether mission work is done in Haiti or somewhere else, there is always a financial cost to endure.

Still, evidence shows that the cost of missions can be minimized with good and careful planning. This is why it is important for the churches that share the same belief to group together in order to form leagues that can coordinate their missionary activities to their homeland. This will enable each church to participate in missions while contributing just a minimal amount of money to maintain the league.

These leagues will be responsible for the formation, preparation, and organization of mission to the homeland. A different group of Christian missionaries would be sent every six months. Thus, at the beginning of each year, the churches will know exactly how many mission trips they are going to have in their homeland, and how much money they would spend in order to realize these missions. If the Haitian-American churches adopted this strategy, they would have official bodies responsible for organizing the missions and the formation of the disciples. Each church would be required to make a financial contribution for the purpose of mission. These organizations would also be responsible for the collection of goods and other articles (including medicines) that would be donated to the poor and needy.

It is important to note that the creation of official leagues will not preclude individual Christians from going on mission trips to their homeland. In fact, the league and the churches will still have to encourage each Christian to go on missions in order to fulfill their Great Commission mandate. This will substantially increase missionary activities to their homeland. In order to partake in this endeavor, each Christian must be encouraged to save some money on a monthly basis in order to be ready to go on a mission trip at least once a year. It is strongly recommended that every Christian participate in the activity of mission since it is one of the essential ministries of the Christian church.

God pours his blessings on the Haitian-American churches tremendously and they need to give back some of their money for the cause of the gospel. The Haitian-American churches must include a budget for mission and discipleship in their yearly planning.

The individual Haitian-American Christian also must save some money every month in order to go on missions, at least once every year.¹⁶¹ The refusal to go on missions or neglecting God's command will not be unpunished. The Christians must not disobey God's command. They must obey all God's command at all times. The God who commands His church to go to the mission fields to preach his gospel is the God of good planning. God wants his disciples to plan in advance, so that they can do His work with perfection. For this reason, budgeting for the ministry of mission is in God's plan for His Church. The leaders of the Haitian-American

¹⁶¹ Elmer L. Towns, *What's Right with the Church: A Manifesto of Hope* (Ventura, California: Regal Publishing), 182. "Unlike other religions, Christianity is not about simply learning doctrine and rules, then passing what is learned from generation to generation. Each follower of Christ is obligated to become vitally involved in carrying out the Great Commission directly or indirectly to everyone in the entire world."

churches need to come together in order to plan the best way to tackle the problem of their inadequate participation in missions and disciple formation. They also need to encourage and instruct the members of their churches to establish a budget, even if it is very small. Every effort will contribute to the realization of mission trips to Haiti.

The Apostle Paul had planned his mission to Jerusalem well in advance. In fact, none of his evangelical missions was undertaken without meticulous planning. This reaffirms the need for the churches and the individual Christians to plan and budget, so that they can save enough money and materials to go on their mission trips.

Should a Christian Go on a Mission Trip Every Year?

As a part of the survey, the participants were also asked if they thought that a Christian should go on a mission trip each year. While this is a very simple question, many Christians struggle to find the right answer. As with each question, this one was also explained to the respondents, in order to make sure that they fully understood its implications. Firstly, it is evident that it implies obedience to the Lord. Knowing that going to missions is a direct order from Christ, however, makes many Christians hesitant to answer this question truthfully. In addition, the verb to “go,” implies a direct order, as noted by, they must go therefore to make disciples of all nations of the world by preaching them everything that he taught them. After they have been taught, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.¹⁶² Clearly, the order to go is a universal order that relates and pertains to the entire Christian family. It confirms that all Christians must engage in the ministry of missions. There is no exception or excuse to this

¹⁶² See Matthew 28:19-20.

rule. Every Christian must go to the mission fields—men and women, young and old, rich and poor, intellectuals and illiterate—all capable Christians must go. Furthermore, mission is a constant activity for all Christians. As long as a Christian is breathing, he or she must be ready at all times to go on missions in order to evangelize the world. They must constantly preach, teach, and baptize those who receive the message of the gospel, so that they can become authentic disciples of Christ. When responding to this survey question, 240 participants (60 per cent) stated that a Christian must go on a mission trip at least once a year, further 120 stated that they are not sure (30 per cent), and the remaining forty (10 per cent) stated that, if they give money for mission work, they do not have to go. Clearly, not all participants fully understand their Christian obligation. However, this study will clear any doubts concerning whether or not a Christian must go on missions. It is biblically mandated that every disciple must go, without exception. Giving a monetary donation to the church for mission purpose is a good deed; all Christians need to continue to donate financially for the purpose of missions. However, donating money does not preclude a Christian from physically going on the mission field. On the contrary, any Christian who neglects this essential Christian activity commits a sin because he or she disobeys Christ's command. One cannot be an authentic disciple if he or she willfully disobeys Christ. The requirement for being an authentic disciple is clear and simple. Jesus Christ states, if anyone wants to be his disciple, he or she must renounce himself, take his cross and follow him.¹⁶³ The Greek word *apotassō*¹⁶⁴ employed by Jesus signifies the complete abandonment of self to fully surrender the whole being to Christ—body, soul, and spirit. Christ implies that true disciples must not overburden themselves with the things of this world. They must be ready at all times to

¹⁶³ Matthew 16:24.95

¹⁶⁴ Strong's G657 - *apotassō*

do the work of the kingdom. They must spend time learning the principles of the Kingdom of God and studying the Bible. It is through the Bible that God reveals His will to His servants. This is for this reason that God places His unction on His servants, so that they could have the ability to discern His word and teach it to the rest of his servants. It is unfortunate that so many Christians think that they are serving God faithfully, when in reality they are enemies of God because they are working as enemies of the cross.¹⁶⁵ Some of them are just too wealthy and too comfortable, so they refuse to leave their comfort zone to go on the mission field to share the gospel with the sinners. Even those that give generously to the church are disobedient to the Word of God. All Christians without exception must follow the command of God; they must go on to fulfill the Great Commission mandate.

The Haitian-American churches do not teach their members about the importance of mission. Mission is important because it is one of the means through which the Kingdom of God grows and multiplies on Earth.¹⁶⁶ Jesus Christ gives several parables that explain the interest that God places in the salvation of the whole world. The Bible states that God wants to see the whole world saved. For this reason, He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to give His life as a ransom for the salvation of mankind. The whole world is aware of the humiliation that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for the sake of mankind, including his shameful and agonizing death on the cross, even though Jesus Christ had never committed any sins. He had lived a perfect life on Earth, through which he gave a perfect example to mankind about living piously. He was a tireless missionary who traveled from place to place to preach the gospel. He states that he was

¹⁶⁵ Philippians 3:18.

¹⁶⁶ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 236-237. Hirsch states that by “planting the flag of the gospel outside of the inner circle of the church, the church discover itself by rallying to the flag of the gospel.”

sent by His Father as an apostle, a missionary, and an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven.¹⁶⁷ He further states that, just as the Father sent him, he also sent his disciples. His disciples must continue to do the work that he has begun on Earth. He empowers them with the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit so that they could continue to preach and teach the gospel to everyone. Jesus promised that he would be with his disciples, every day until the end of the world. He confidently states, the good news of the gospel must be preached all over the world, to all creatures, before the end comes.¹⁶⁸ Christ says that he will put an end to this dreadful world; however, before he exercises his judgment on mankind, he allows them enough time to repent of their sin. Jesus asks his disciples to partake in this great responsibility. It is a wonderful honor that the creator of the world, the Lord of the universe, the one and only God, allows sinful men to be His coworkers. This is a privilege that is reserved only to the authentic disciples of Christ. An authentic disciple obeys the instructions of his masters. He is always at the feet of the master, learning, obeying and executing his master's will. If the master leaves for a long trip or passes away, the authentic disciple knows that he has to continue his master's works.¹⁶⁹

This is the characteristics of an authentic disciple; he is loyal and faithful to his master. An authentic disciple will never disobey his master. He will execute his master's command even if has to die. Jesus Christ himself gives a perfect and practical example of loyalty and faithfulness. He never disobeyed His Father. He accepted suffering, humiliation, and death in order to accomplish the will of His Father. The Apostle Paul states that Jesus is equal to His

¹⁶⁷ John 20:21.

¹⁶⁸ Mark 13:10.

¹⁶⁹ John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago, Illinois: Zondervan Publishing, 2003), 40. "Jesus taught that those who were genuinely interested in being His disciples would follow His example."

Father. Nevertheless, he did not allow that equality derailed his purpose on earth.¹⁷⁰ He accomplished his mission; at the end, he was enthroned as King of kings. The original disciples must have experienced an elated state of exuberance when they heard their master say “all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.”¹⁷¹ Yes, there is no greater authority than the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven and all over the world. No power or authority can measure up to his power and authority! Now is the time for everyone to examine his life and soul. The Haitian-American Christians need to find out whether or not they are authentic disciples of Jesus Christ or not. One’s actions determine the nature of his or her relationship with Christ. Authentic disciples obey Christ’s command. They go on the mission field to spread the good news of the gospel. They invite the sinners to make peace with God through Jesus Christ, and they are blindly committed to the work of the kingdom of Christ.

Discipleship in the Haitian-American churches is a failure. The ways that some of these churches function is awkwardly problematic. These churches violate all the rules and principles of the New Testament Church, which is the paradigm of the Church of Christ. Christ establishes his church when he states, he will build his Church that even hell cannot defeat.¹⁷² The Lord of the Church establishes principles and rules for his church. However, Christ left the opportunity to his disciples so that they can make rules and principles that are based on his rules and principles for the good functioning of the church. One of the important principles of the kingdom of Christ is the principle of multiplication. This principle is anchored in the idea that God desires to save

¹⁷⁰ Philippians 2:8.

¹⁷¹ Matthew 28:18.

¹⁷² Matthew 16:18.

all. In order to save all, everything He gives to His church must serve all. For this reason, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die in the place of all mankind, so that all men will have eternal life through Jesus Christ. The gift that God provides for one must be multiplied so that it can serve all. God creates the world for all. After the fall of man in Eden, which has corrupted all men, God fashioned the plan of salvation for all. Jesus died on the cross for all. He built his Church that he left for all. The sacrifice of Golgotha was for the sake of all. In the parable of the talents, the one who failed did not want to multiply, whereas those that multiplied received a double portion so that they could share with all. It is the law of the kingdom that everyone must multiply. The disciples must multiply. The Church must plant other churches. God wants a multitude, not a few. In the harvest of the souls, the Haitian-American churches are losing many souls. However, they must understand that human beings are not to touch the feeble and must keep both the weeds and the fruits. The master alone knows the heart of man. The harvest is plenty. Each Christian must praise the master for a plentiful harvest. In the gospel of John, Jesus pressed his disciples to go to reap the harvest. The harvest is not a material one, but rather spiritual. The world is the field, and the people within are the products that need to be reaped.¹⁷³ Those who partake in the harvest of the souls of men will earn an eternal wage from Christ. Therefore, the Haitian-American Christians must jump in the field and start to reap.

The survey of the Haitian-American churches revealed that the majority of Haitian-American Christians believe that all Christians must engage in missions, in order to make disciples for Christ.¹⁷⁴ While this is an encouraging result, it is also troublesome. In reality, all

¹⁷³ John 4:35.

¹⁷⁴ Towns, *What's Right with the Church*, 79. "The believer is not an orphan left to himself to struggle in this Christian life."

Christians must be aware of the fact that Jesus wants all of them to be missionaries. The Haitian-American churches need to be aware of their deficiency in the work of the ministry of mission. They need to move fast, and plan meticulously and in a systematic manner, in order to solve this problem. The survey results suggest that there is a lack of quality theological teaching in the churches. Most of the pastors and leaders of these churches did not go to qualified theological seminaries in order to prepare themselves for the work of the church. Christ never intended for the churches to be led by unqualified pastors. The Christian pastors must be qualified for the work of ministry, both theologically and academically. The Apostle Paul gave a clear directive to the young preacher Timothy in regards of the qualifications of the pastor. His instructions focus on the moral, spiritual, theological, and academic capacity of the pastor. No one should try to be the pastor of a Christian church if he fails to satisfy the instructions that the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy.¹⁷⁵

Jesus Christ did not build a mediocre church. The church that Jesus built is of the highest quality. This is why the Apostle Paul warns those who want to do the work of ministry carelessly and haphazardly to think twice because, at some point, each builder's work will be revealed. The work of each and every one will be tested by fire and only the work that is done with perfection will survive.¹⁷⁶ As noted above, the survey results revealed that the quality of the teaching in the Haitian-American churches is very poor and inadequate, as many are run by unqualified pastors. The majority of the pastors do not have a seminary degree from an approved seminary. They

¹⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 3:2-4.

¹⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 3: 9-12.

received no formal training in leadership or church administration. Some of these churches are run like small family businesses and many of the pastors are corrupt. They are more interested in financial gains than in the spiritual formation and growth of the parishioners. As a result, mission and discipleship are not their priority.

In sum, the survey revealed that the Haitian-American Christians and churches are not participating adequately in the activity of mission. They fail to evangelize their homeland, and they fail to fulfill the Great Commission's mandate. The majority of them do not go on missions, even on a yearly basis. Furthermore, they do not believe that the call to missions is universal. Thus, the Haitian-American churches fail to adequately participate in the Great Commission mandate.

Chapter 4 The Haitian American Christian and Mission

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.” Luke 10:5-8

The survey question number six focused on each participant’s personal response to the Great Commission mandate.

By this stage of the survey, all participants were well aware that the Great Commission is a universal order that Christ gives to all of his disciples. Whether someone is being referred to as a disciple or servant does not matter, as these terms have the same meaning. However, there are many that think that the term “disciple” was reserved only for those who were walking with Christ while he was on Earth. In fact, from a biblical point of view, the term disciple refers to anyone who is serving Christ.¹⁷⁷ Note that in the Great Commission, Jesus specifically mentioned the word “disciples,” as he stated, go to make disciples all over the world.¹⁷⁸ Thus, in the biblical context, a disciple is anyone who hears the message of the gospel and willingly surrenders his life to Jesus Christ. In this context, every Christian is a disciple of Christ. In the sacerdotal prayer, Jesus prayed to His Father not only for those who were present with Him, but also for all those who will accept Him through the messages of the apostles.¹⁷⁹ In this case, there is no doubt that all Christians are disciples of Christ. Therefore, the command to go to make disciples of all nations does not only pertain to the original disciples, it applies to all Christians.

¹⁷⁷ Koessler, *True Discipleship*, 156. “Discipleship begins with a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.”

¹⁷⁸ Matthew 28:19-20.

¹⁷⁹ John 17:26.

All Christians are called by Christ to go to the mission fields to make disciples. The survey conducted as a part of this study aimed to establish whether the Haitian-American Christians understand that Christ asks them to be on the mission fields to share the good news of the gospel with the sinners. It is understandable that not every Christian has the same financial capability that will allow him or her to afford the cost of a mission. Even though someone might not have the means to go far, each Christian can still preach the gospel in his or her own neighborhood.¹⁸⁰ Even though a Christian cannot afford to go to a foreign country to do mission work, he or she can fulfill the Great Commission by simply “making” disciples when he or she “goes” into one’s neighborhood.

Going on a mission with the objective of evangelizing does not have to be an elaborate trip. When Jesus sent the first disciples on the mission fields, he did not even allow them to bring a second set of clothes, so that they could change if needed. They had to carry nothing with them.¹⁸¹ They did not carry any money with them, no extra pair of shoes, no purse, and no water. In today’s world, one might say that this was a suicide mission because there was no sustenance and no place to sleep. In addition, the disciples had to walk from one city to another. There were no airplanes or cars, making these early missions extremely difficult. Yet, the disciples did not make any objections; they did not claim that this was an impossible mission. They blindly followed their master’s instructions and left for the mission, as ordered by Christ.

¹⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that the command imperative in Matthew 28:19 is “to make” (from the Greek verb, *mathēteúō*), not “to go.” All Christians can keep the Great Commission by reflecting the Gospel in their daily lives, even if they are not “called” to serve in a foreign country. See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 486

¹⁸¹ Luke 10:4.

According to Christ, the disciples were to be fed and taken care of by the people to whom they preached the gospel.¹⁸² Such missions are still possible, as most disciples are still ordinary people with very limited financial capability. In the early days, most disciples had already abandoned their livelihood to join Jesus. For example, Peter and his brother Andrew abandoned their fishing profession, whereas Matthew abandoned his job as a tax collector. James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John also abandoned their fishing profession in order to become Jesus' disciples.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, they still went on the mission even though they had no money. These examples confirm that, even today, a disciple does not have to fly or to drive in order to go on a mission. Missions can be done on foot. This is a good way for those who do not have the financial means to fulfill their duty. For example, the Haitian-American Christians who do not have the money to fly on missions to their homeland can still perform missionary works in their own neighborhood, in the city where they live in the United States.

Does the Participant Go on a Mission Trip Every Year?

The next survey question asked the participants to state if they go on mission trips every year. Only five of the four hundred respondents (about 0.01%) stated that they go on a mission trip every year. This is unacceptable, given that Jesus instructs all of his disciples to go on missions. He did not send only a fraction of them. Although it is not known for sure how many Haitian-American Christians live in the United States, the number is certainly substantial. The survey clearly indicates that the Haitian-American Christians must be more proactive in organizing monthly missionary trips to Haiti. There are many people in Haiti who are not yet

¹⁸² Luke 10:17.

¹⁸³ Matthew 4:18-22.

disciples of Christ. The Haitian-American Christian community in the United States fails to reach these unrepentant sinners who are being consumed by the practice of voodoo. It is important for the readers of this thesis to know that the Haitian's Constitution does not recognize the voodoo as a religion. In fact, the practice of voodoo has been banned in Haiti since 1935. The voodoo is alive because of the state of lawlessness and impunity. In addition, those who are supposed to judge those who practice the voodoo are themselves members of this criminal organization. The voodoo is a criminal and demonic cult that has held Haiti hostage for many centuries.

This organization uses magic, curses, spells and other criminal tactics to subdue the Haitian people and keep them under the devil's control. The practice of voodoo includes many criminal activities, such as eating of human flesh, zombification of human being, use of poisons to kill people, human sacrifice, abuse of children and women, use of illegal drugs and sexual abuse. These crimes are rarely reported, and the criminals are seldom persecuted because those who are in charge of persecuting these crimes are themselves voodoo practitioners, while others are afraid of reprisal by the voodoo priests. The practice of voodoo destroys Haiti. Jesus Christ is the only solution. This is why it is important for the Haitian-American Christians to intervene with the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to change the lives of those who are engaged in this criminal activity. The Haitian-American Christians need to go on missions and support the ministry of the Christians in Haiti.

It is not acceptable that only less than one percent of the Haitian-American Christians participate in missionary activities. This is a clear indication that the Haitian-American churches fail to prepare and send missionaries to Haiti.

By not creating enough disciples for Christ, these churches completely ignore the Great Commission mandate. It is even more troubling to note that the few Haitian-American missionaries who perform missionary activities in Haiti do so on their own. They are not instructed to do so by their churches. Thus, in order to finance their missions, these individuals save money and their vacation time every year so that they can go to preach the gospel. Many more Haitian-American Christians could follow the paths of these few missionaries. Most importantly, more Haitian-American Christians could go on mission if they received some encouragement from their pastors. They simply need their pastors to support them and instruct them about the best way to perform their ministry of mission.

Those who went on missions did not receive any financial support from their churches, even though missionary work is an integral and essential activity of the Christian Church. Jesus sends every capable member of the Church in the mission fields in order to preach the gospel to the sinners. It is understood that some categories, such as the blind, the sick and the disabled, are exempt. No other Christians are exempt from the great Commission. No Christian should disobey Christ's command. Disobedience is a sin. It is the same sin that Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden when they ate the forbidden fruit. The consequence of their disobedience caused their spiritual death. The Haitian-American churches disobey God's command by failing to be missionaries for Christ. They do not pray and fast enough.¹⁸⁴ Prayer and fasting are integral aspects of Christian life. Jesus Christ instructs his disciples to pray so that "the Lord of the harvest can send workers to reap the harvest." It is clear that Jesus wants those who are able to reap, to reap the maximum possible. Thus, knowing that there is always a

¹⁸⁴ In Haiti, some churches are open every day for prayer and fasting. This is very good because it keeps the Christians spiritually connected to God.

spiritual harvest in the world, every genuine disciple must engage continuously in doing missionary works, following the instructions of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, the disciples must throw off anything that hinders them to do the work of Christ and must work with perseverance in the work of the Lord.¹⁸⁵

The Haitian-American Christians must work tirelessly in doing missionary works in their homeland. The harvest is great at home, and the good workers are needed to reap the harvest. These churches must prepare good disciples in the sound doctrine of the Bible so that they can pursue diligently their ministries. They need to convey the message that every Christian must go on missions with his/her church or in the company of other Christians. It is noted in the Bible that Christ always sent his disciples two by two, suggesting that Christians can form missionary partners so that they can go on the mission field together. It is not advisable that someone goes on the mission field alone, as this could be unsafe. Ideally, they should go in groups, the same way that Christ sent the disciples.¹⁸⁶ This approach will surely increase the level of participation of the Haitian-American Christians in missionary works. Note that Christ requests that every Christian execute the Great Commission mandate. This mandate requires Christians to make disciples all over the world by preaching the sinners and baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁷ The next survey question probed into the mission history of each member.

¹⁸⁵ Hebrews 12:1-4.

¹⁸⁶ Luke 10:1.

¹⁸⁷ Matthew 28:19-20.

Has the Participant Been on a Christian Mission Since Conversion?

Each Christian might meet with Christ in different circumstances; yet, everyone who accepts Christ recognizes that every human being has a need that only the presence of God can satisfy. This is called the spiritual need of every human being. Jesus calls this state, “poor in spirit.”¹⁸⁸ Those that are poor in spirit rely constantly on God in order to fulfill their spiritual need. The way to Christ is wide open, and Christ wants every human to come to a genuine relationship with the Father through Him. The Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ alone is the way to salvation, as there is no salvation in any other name.¹⁸⁹ When someone accepts Jesus Christ as his or her personal savior, he or she receives the gift of eternal salvation that is offered to humanity in Jesus Christ. The believer enters into a spiritual relationship with God.

This relationship has its own lifestyle, as there are rules and principles that need to be followed. After all, human beings are finite and mortal; being in a spiritual relationship with the infinite and immortal God of the universe requires a distinct way of living. The Christians must follow the rules of the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ came down to Earth and took the human form in order to teach and show the world the way to the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a true spiritual kingdom where the will of God is executed unquestionably. Jesus Christ requires that every Christian is to become a disciple-maker and a missionary in the world. These requirements are not negotiable; no one could legitimately be called a Christian if he or she does not follow Christ’s command.

¹⁸⁸ Matthew 5:3.

¹⁸⁹ Acts 4:12.

The survey probed into the level of Christianity that exists in the Haitian-American Churches and specifically the percentage of those that have, at some point in their lives, been on a missionary trip. According to the responses provided by the participants, only nineteen out of the four hundred had been on a mission trip since their conversion. Note that the participants are not new Christians, as they had been converted some five, ten, or even 40 years ago. Yet, many of them stated that they had never been taught that it is their duty to go on missions. While this could be taken as an excuse, the pattern that the survey revealed clearly demonstrated that many Haitian-American Christians would not go on a mission on their own initiative. For example, in Haiti, the most active churches organize missions on a monthly basis.

They consistently go from one area to another. This kind of practice is good for the church because it gives the opportunity to every member of the church to participate in missionary activities. Hence, if someone belongs to a church that does not take mission seriously, he or she might need to voice his or concern to the leaders of the church.

If they refuse to change their position, it might be advisable to look for another church, as everyone needs to be the member of a genuine Christian church. A genuine Christian church cannot function without missions. In fact, the leaders of these churches will feel guilty if they are not going on missions. The survey, however, demonstrated that the Haitian-American Christians are failing to learn from the history of the Christian church. A retrospective look at history would allow them to fully appreciate what God did in the past, and this could help them place history in perspective.¹⁹⁰ Such knowledge will help them better understand what God is doing today.

¹⁹⁰ Towns, *What's Right with the Church*, 186. "But it is not enough only to become a follower of Jesus; they had to be baptized by a Trinitarian formula—'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' It was not enough just to add them to a church role; each new convert had to obey what Jesus had taught them."

In the practice or study of Christian missions, history always teaches valuable lessons that can be applied to present day's church ministry.¹⁹¹ The evangelistic mission was a very important ministry for the first Christians. The Haitian-American Christians need to follow the footsteps of the first century Christians if they want to do a good job when it comes to mission and discipleship.

Jesus wants a constant flow of workers in the fields. The more sinful men become, the more important the ministry of missions is. Jesus sent the first missionaries and asked them not to carry anything with them. However, mission is a very dynamic ministry. Just before His arrest, Jesus told the disciples that they have to carry bags, their swords, and everything that they are going to need while they are in the mission fields. This proves that the ministry of missions can change with times and circumstances. Hence, it is important that, when the Christians are going on missions, they carry everything that they are going to need with them.¹⁹² Knowing that they are going to preach the Word of God, and the world is generally hostile to the Word of God. They must prepare for every eventuality. Travelling two by two, the Lord wants his disciples to face the challenges of missions. No one should be a lonely missionary to the world, but rather be with other missionaries who have the same objective and the same vision with them. The Christian missionary wants to see the sinners come to make peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Every Christian is a missionary to the world. It is important to teach the sinners the mystery of the love of Jesus Christ for the world. The message does not have to be complicated.

¹⁹¹ Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 86.

¹⁹² Luke 22:36-38.

Jesus did not send his disciples to preach a complicated message to the sinners of the world. The message that the Christians need to deliver is to tell the sinners that Jesus loves them to the point that he died for their sins on the cross. He wants to save them. All they have to do is to accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Jesus wants them to abandon their sinful way of living and to live a life that conforms to the Word of God. This message must be preached in all cities and countries all over the world. This is the will of the Lord. The world is a huge field of spiritually dead souls. Jesus wants these souls to come alive by allowing the Holy Spirit to penetrate their inner being. It is a free gift from God. This is a great responsibility that the Lord of the harvest entrusted to all Christians.

The Christians in the Haitian-American community have not been faithful to Christ's command of making disciples of all nations. They are procrastinating, while the devil is working days and nights in order to destroy these souls. The result of his relentless work is a world that has no shame of committing immoralities. The world is plunged in sins, and only the Word of God can cure this disease. Sin is so widespread that even the church is not exempt from the sin of the world.

Sexual sin and greed are destroying the world. Some preachers are compelled not to preach against these sins because of financial interests, while others try to justify the homosexual lifestyle. In the face of all these constraints, Jesus Christ calls on all his authentic disciples to stand strong and firm in the presence of these challenges to preach the authentic Word of God. The sinners will not inherit eternal life.

The judgment will soon come upon the people of the world, and the time of repentance is now.¹⁹³ God loves the world. Jesus Christ offered himself as the ultimate sacrifice at Calvary for the sin of the world. Jesus offers them salvation by faith. The time to repent is now. The sinners must abandon all sinful lifestyles in order to make peace with God. The Haitian-American Christians must go to every city, to every corner of Haiti, to preach the gospel. The number of Haitian-American Christians who partake in missionary works is too small and this issue must be urgently addressed.

God Gave Them Power and Authority

Missionary work is not possible if the missionaries are unable to demonstrate clearly that they have a superior power and authority than that of satan. The power and authority that are in the world are originated from the devil. It is the power and authority to do evil things. In contrast, power and authority that are from God are there to do good deeds. All evils originate from satan. However, Jesus Christ promised his disciples a new form of power and authority, which would be brought by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples. This power came down on the day of the Pentecost.¹⁹⁴ On that historic day, the Spirit of God came down on the apostles, and anointed them with the power to speak different foreign languages.

¹⁹³ Robert R. Gonzales, *Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Genesis with Special Focus on the Patriarchal Narratives* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishing, 2009), 105. The Sodomites quarreled with Lot so that he could bring the two visitors out of the house in order for them to satisfy their sexual lust.

¹⁹⁴ Stormie Omartian, *Lead Me Holy Spirit: Longing to Hear the Voice of God* (Eugene, Oregon, 2011), 12. "When we receive Jesus, we then have the Spirit of the Creator of the universe with us at every moment, leading us through above, and beyond all that is imperfect in our lives."

The Bible states that, all the people, from different regions of the world, who went to Jerusalem to worship, could hear the disciples preach in their own language.¹⁹⁵

This demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit that was bestowed on the disciples amazed the entire population that was present at Jerusalem. The coming of the Holy Spirit was the most important event in relation to the missionary work of the disciples. First, the disciples were not learned people. They were peasants, fishermen, and from the poorest of the poor. Thus, their ability to speak in foreign languages cannot be attributed to anything else other than a divine miracle. From that point on, they received the power known as *dynamism*.¹⁹⁶ It is important to note that the Greek word, *dynamis*, used here has a very rich application. In this context, it denotes someone's ability to perform miracles. Thus, God gave to the disciples the ability to perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. Remember that when Jesus had sent the disciples in mission, he gave them "authority over all the powers of the enemy."¹⁹⁷

There is a theological nuance here. In the first mission, Jesus was with them, but he allowed them to have the full control of their mission. While Jesus was with them, he allowed them to perform any miracles as they were pleased. Now, with the ascent of Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the authority to do things belongs only to the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit has total authority over the church in terms of what the church can or cannot do. All Christ's disciples are now working under the order of the Holy Spirit. Both the church and the disciples of Christ must obey this hierarchy if they want to be successful in their

¹⁹⁵ Acts 2:1-6.

¹⁹⁶ See Strong's G1411 – *dynamis*.

¹⁹⁷ Luke 10:19.

missions. No Christians should attempt to surpass the authority of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will guide and lead the church as He pleases. The church cannot function properly without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The power that the church actually has is provided by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁸ This is why it is important that the church and the Christians must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Christ does not want either the church or the disciples to abuse their power. The Holy Spirit determines the amount of power that every Christian deserves and can handle, and will provide it appropriately.

The Christian Church is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Once the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples, their fear vanished. The Holy Spirit illuminated their knowledge regarding the Kingdom of God, marking the start of their missionary journey. The Bible states that the Apostle Peter preached to the people who were there at the feast, and three thousand of them accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Jesus Christ won three thousand souls, which were thus lost to satan. Each time that someone is added to the Kingdom of God by way of conversion, satan loses one soul. This is why it is important for the gospel to continue to be preached all over the world. The Great Commission is a means to transform the world for Christ by making a few disciples at a time.¹⁹⁹ Jesus did not state how many disciples someone must make. The important thing is to go and make disciples. The enemy will try to intimidate the Christians while they are doing their ministry. There is no need to fear the enemy, as God provides the missionary with the power to dominate the power of the enemy.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 12. "If the Holy Spirit is restricted by unbelief, disbelief, or a lack of receptivity, His presence will not manifest itself in power."

¹⁹⁹ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 10-14.

The Bible states that Jesus gives power to his disciples so that they can heal the sick and defeat the power of satan. Satan will always attack Christian missionaries and will always cause persecutions, and will even have some of the disciples put in jail. It is important to know that the church that Jesus built can never be defeated by the devil. No evil power will triumph over the church of Christ.²⁰⁰ The Holy Spirit of God gives power and authority to every Christian. This power and authority are spiritual weapons that God gives to His disciples. These weapons are real and effective. It is the responsibility of every Christian to persevere in prayers and fasting so that the Holy Spirit can give them more weapons to fight and defeat the enemy. The devil cannot stand in the presence of the disciple of Christ. At the mention of the name of Christ, the devil shall fall face down. The Bible states that, at the mention of the name of Christ, all enemies shall bow down.²⁰¹ When the Christians go on missions, Jesus will make sure that all the power of the enemy is nullified. Satan will fall down and his throne will be overthrown. The Christian missionaries have power and authority that are superior to those of the devil. The Lord of the harvest is victorious over the devil.

Christian missionaries must not be afraid. The Haitian-American Christians must take authority over the devil, in the name of Christ. They need to command him. God gives them the authority to resist the devil. Jesus knew that the Christians would encounter many challenges in the mission fields. This is why he instructed them to be careful. Thus far, the Haitian-American Christians have been careful on the mission fields, where they are dealing with the power of the devil. Missionaries in Haiti sometimes met with strong resistance from demonic power.

²⁰⁰ Matthew 18:20.

²⁰¹ Romans 14:11.

Fortunately for the Haitian-American Christians, Haiti is a generally friendly and hospitable country. The population is very receptive to the gospel. Yet, the missionaries still have to be careful because devil will always attempt to coerce someone to use violence against Christian missionaries. As the Bible states it, every Christian must go on missions in order to fulfill the Great Commission's mandate.

Should Every Christian Go on Missions?

The next survey question probed into the participants' views on whether it is a requirement for every Christian to go on missions. Of the four hundred participants, two hundred and twenty five responded positively. They believe that every Christian needs to go on the mission fields to preach the gospel to all the nations of the world. The remaining respondents stated that they were not sure. Thus, this result clearly demonstrates that the Haitian-American churches did not do a good job teaching the church members about the Great Commission mandate. According to the Bible, every Christian must partake of the Great Commission. Even with the participation of every Christian, there will still be a lack of workers because the harvest is too plentiful. The majority of the people of the world are living a sinful lifestyle. They refuse to accept Christ as their personal savior.

This statement is also true for Haiti, where the majority of the population does not know God. They prefer to live in sin. The Christian missionaries need to evangelize these people and make them disciples of Christ. According to the paradigm provided by Christ, Christian mission is a serious endeavor.

The time of mission is not a time that can be wasted in greeting other people, or in attempting to make new friends. Jesus emphasized the urgency of the moment and the little time that is available.

He instructed His disciples not to speak to anyone on the way to the mission, in order to demonstrate the value of good time management. The time lost cannot be recovered, yet it could have been used to save a desperate sinner.²⁰² Jesus wants his disciples to use their time wisely. They need to practice the principle of good time management. This is why Jesus specifically instructed them not to stay or stand in the way to the mission field.²⁰³ In addition, in the way to the mission field, the missionary should not carry with them anything that will attract the attention of robbers and criminals. The Christians are peaceful people who are functioning in a world that is very violent and hostile to them. The world is hostile to the Christians because of their sinful lifestyle. The Christians, as the salt and the light of the world, are not well regarded by those who prefer to carry on their sinful lifestyle. God is in charge of the security of all His children. The psalmist states that God will watch over every step of His servants, from the beginning to the end.²⁰⁴

As long as the disciples of Christ follow the path that is set in front of them by Christ, the enemy cannot harm them. Christ wants every one of his disciples to go on missions in order to preach the gospel to those who are in danger of losing their souls due to their sins. God greatly values every single human soul. For this reason, Jesus asks the Haitian-American Christians to

²⁰² Luke 10:3.

²⁰³ Luke 10: 4.

²⁰⁴ Psalm 121:8.

go and evangelize their homeland. He wants them to do it with efficacy and dedication, so that they could say, “Lord, I have done perfectly the work that you have entrusted to me.” Jesus pronounced the exact same words to His Father, in his prayer for the Church.²⁰⁵ Jesus had finished the work that His Father entrusted him to do. Every Christian must follow the path of the Lord Jesus Christ in every way. All Christians must be proud of the fact that God allows them to work as missionaries and disciple-makers.

Does the Great Commission Relate to all Christians?

The survey revealed that all four hundred participants believe the Great Commission relates to all Christians. The Great Commission is given, so that every Christian can have the opportunity to participate in the work of the Lord. Everyone who receives the Holy Spirit also receives at least one gift, which allows him or her to be a productive Christian.²⁰⁶ Every Christian has the responsibility to develop the gift or gifts that he or she receives. Those who understand this concept become very productive workers in the vine of the Lord. As a result, they will receive a double portion in the Kingdom of God.

However, those who fail to develop the gift that they receive will lose their portion.²⁰⁷ Jesus would not send his disciples in the world to evangelize it without the proper gifts and tools. Note that Jesus did not want them to leave Jerusalem until the time was right, which was the day

²⁰⁵ John 17:4.

²⁰⁶ Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 24. “All believers have been received ministry gifts from the Holy Spirit so that they can contribute equally to the well-being of the Church.”

²⁰⁷ Matthew 13:12.

of the Pentecost. On that day, the promised Holy Spirit came down on them like “tongue of fire.” This vivid manifestation of the descent of the Holy Spirit was necessary to validate and consummate the promise that Jesus had made to the disciples. The Holy Spirit is now available to all Christians and to the Church. This also authenticates the claim that Jesus Christ was resuscitated. He had conquered death and hell in order to build a Church that cannot be defeated by either death or hell. This is a sure and an unquestionable assurance that Jesus Christ is the Lord and creator of all.

He will give eternal life and security to anyone who believes in him. He does not care about color, race, or nationality. In this respect, this survey revealed that the Haitian-American churches and Christians fail to engage faithfully and fearlessly in the work of the Lord. The Great Commission relates to all Christians everywhere and anywhere in the world. No one should assume that he or she is a Christian while neglecting or refusing to do the work of the Lord. Some people think that they can be just a socialized Christian; a socialized Christian is someone who just goes to church and claim to be a Christian. He or she might pay his offering and tithe and might enjoy the company of other Christians, but never engages in the work of the kingdom or commits to do the work of God. These people can be very generous to the church, but they never do any serious work to promote Christ or the gospel. These kinds of people are in reality fake Christians.²⁰⁸ There is no place for such people in the Kingdom of God. The Bible states that there is a great harvest out there; thus, every single member of the church must be engaged in the process of reaping the harvest. Many people think that all they have to do is to donate money to the church and contribute for mission purposes. They are not interested in going

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 35. According to Ogden, “the Scriptures picture all believers as those who share the story of their faith in Christ with others; in reality we are an intimidated people who shrink from personal witness.”

on the mission fields to share the gospel with the sinners. These so-called Christians are wrong, as money cannot take place of their physical presence in the mission fields. Jesus Christ will hold them accountable for the souls of the sinners.

Money is a necessary tool that can contribute enormously to the progress of the Kingdom of God. It can be used to do good things in the church or on the mission fields. However, it cannot replace the disciples' presence on the mission field. Therefore, it is extremely important for the Haitian-American Christians to know that they will be judged by Christ for not participating in the Great Commission mandate.²⁰⁹

In the Haitian-American churches, many Christians think that if they provide financial support to missionary work of others, who go to preach the gospel, they do not have to be personally involved. This view about missionary work is not biblical. The Bible teaches clearly that the harvest is plentiful, and there is not enough worker.²¹⁰ Thus, it is important for every Christian to jump in the field and start reaping for the glory of God.

However, when reaping, they have to be very careful not to throw away any souls because this prerogative belongs to God only. Some people have the tendency to throw away things that they do not like, while others throw away good and useful souls due to bias and prejudice. In the parable of the weeds,²¹¹ Jesus advises the Christians not to throw away any crops. He would allow the good and the bad to grow together. At the appropriate time, he will

²⁰⁹ Klauber, Manetsch, and Lutzer, *The Great Commission*, 1-5.

²¹⁰ Luke 10:2.

²¹¹ Matthew 13:24-29.

instruct the harvesters about which ones to uproot and burn and which ones to bring to the barn. This is why the message of the Kingdom of God must be preached in Haiti, and must reach every individual, regardless of whether he or she lives in the city or in the rural area.

The majority of Haitian-American churches fail to heed to Christ's command. They do not preach the gospel to all without prejudice. They must understand that Jesus Christ had paid the price of the redemption of the world. He had paid with his own precious blood on the cross at Calvary.

The Great Commission relates to all Christians. It is a way to keep the Christian family growing and succeeding in its mission. No one should be exempt from fulfilling this duty. Failing to do so indicates that the person is not a true Christian. The majority of Haitian-American Christians refuse to go to the mission fields because they are just too busy doing worldly things, as was confirmed in this survey. The majority of the Christians in the community in question do not perform their Christian duty. They are too busy working, and some even hold two jobs, so that they can accumulate wealth on this Earth. Yet, Jesus instructs his disciples not to overburden their minds, trying to find out what tomorrow will bring, as every day has its own requirement, and its own burden.

The Great Commission is a test that all Christ's disciples must pass. Jesus clearly states, one cannot be his disciple if he or she does not follow my commands.²¹² This is a fair statement. No master will tolerate disciples who are not obedient to him. Jesus Christ is the master of the church and of every Christian.²¹³ He is the one who gave his life as a ransom for the sin of

²¹² See John 8:31.

²¹³ Towns, *What's Right with the Church*, 187. "The first century church understood the importance of the Great Commission. They teach the good news of the gospel every day in the temple."

humanity. It is time for the Haitian-American Christians to stop pretending that they are not obligated to execute the mandate of the Great Commission, as this is wrong. Jesus Christ charges every single Christian to accomplish his part.

Some wealthy Christians never go on missions because they are too busy managing their money. These Christians pretend that donating money for mission purposes is enough. These Christians are wrong; they cannot substitute their roles as disciples with mere financial contribution. All Christians must go on missions in order to pass the test. If someone loves Jesus Christ, he or she must follow his commands.

The Great Commission relates to all Christians because Jesus wants his disciples to be engaged actively in all aspects of societal life. Jesus does not want his disciples to isolate themselves, but rather engage in cross-cultural missions. According to Dayton and Fraser, “cross cultural mission is necessary because, in spite of the progress of missions, a lot of people have not yet heard nor received the message of the gospel.”²¹⁴ The Haitian-American Christians must not avoid or shy away from the opportunity to evangelize other cultures. Jesus Christ wants them to be involved in everything that can improve the life of mankind on Earth. Jesus wants his disciples to be the light and the salt of the world. This means that they need to engage in a manner that can bring change in the world, most particularly in Haiti. Christians are mandated not only to preach the gospel, but also to perform good deeds, to protect the environment, to promote social justice, to feed the hungry, to visit the sick and to provide for the orphans and the indigents. They are also called to build schools to educate the poor, and build hospitals to care

²¹⁴ Dayton and Fraser, *Planning Strategies*, 1-9.

for the sick. While the disciples are doing their missionary work, they need to promote peace among mankind, and they need to protect the Judeo-Christian values. For example, they must valorize the life of a human being because man is created by God, according to his image and resemblance.

Equally, they need to promote the sanctity of marriage because God initiated marriage in Eden, and marriage must always be between two people of the opposite sex, which means one man and one woman. Christians are called to stand against abortion because God creates life, and man must not destroy what God creates. They are also called to promote family values and to engage in the political process of their countries, so that they can be elected and elect people that share their faith and honor God's creation. Christians need to know that the Great Commission is not only preaching the gospel, but it is also the preaching and teaching of everything that Jesus Christ taught his disciples. The Haitian-American Christians must put emphasis on the importance of being a missionary in the world. Christians are responsible for shining the light of the gospel on all humanity.²¹⁵ The Haitian-American churches have failed to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission. Therefore, discipleship is a failure in the Haitian-American churches. This study will help them to get back on track and fulfill their duty as disciples of Christ.

The Haitian-American churches also failed to engage in the life and well-being of the community in which they are functioning. They did make the maximum effort possible for the evangelization of that community.²¹⁶ They depend on the American churches to come to

²¹⁵ Matthew 28:19-20.

²¹⁶ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern, and Move into the Future* (Ventura, California: Regal Publishing, 2007), 137. "The mere presence of Christians in a community does not transform the culture, however. Cultural transformation only takes place when Christians consistently practice their faith in their personal lives and allow their values to be shaped by biblical principles."

evangelize their community. They do not encourage others Christians to come in ministry in order to promote the Kingdom of God.

They manage their churches as if they are privately own family businesses, rather than as instruments for promoting the Kingdom of God. Most of the pastors ignore the fact that the church belongs to Christ alone. For, Jesus says to Peter, “I will build my Church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”²¹⁷

The leaders and officers of the Christian Church are those who are being chosen by the Holy Spirit, not by family members or friends. The study reveals that most of the leaders in the Haitian-American churches are not the ones chosen by the Holy Spirit. They need to follow the steps of the first century church. In the first century church, when they need a leader or an officer, they prayed God, and God always answered their prayers.²¹⁸ In this example, God has given a clear paradigm about how to choose the leaders in the churches. They need to follow this model because the Holy Spirit knows all. He is God and knows man’s heart very well. They need to allow the person with the unction to do the function. In doing so, they will become more effective and efficient in their ministry, and their churches will reflect the Kingdom of God on Earth. They need to teach, train, and encourage others to become authentic disciples of Christ. They must always encourage individualized participation in the Great Commission mandate.

The Great Commission mandate requires all Christians to teach the sinners the way of the Kingdom of God. In addition, the Great Commission is a way for Christians to engage in the things of the world, not to disengage. Indeed, the Bible says, Christians are not part of the world,

²¹⁷ Matthew 16:18.

²¹⁸ Acts 13:2.

the hateful one. However, they are part of the world, the lovely one, the Christian one.²¹⁹ While doing missionary work and discipleship through the Great Commission mandate, everything that Jesus himself taught must be conveyed.

It is believed that Christians are the most important persons who inhabit the earth because they represent the Holy God. They are the salt of the earth.²²⁰ This means, without the presence of the people of God on Earth, it would be a lifeless, sinful, tasteless, and full of immorality. This is why it is important to warn the scientific world about their search for life on other planets. It is possible for life to exist somewhere else in other planets. However, this life is neither human nor divine, but rather a creation of demonic beings. It is a danger for human being to communicate with these beings, the extra-terrestrial beings. These beings are satan's disciples. The Bible clearly states, "satan conspired to overtake God's throne, and to take over His place. God threw satan and his disciples out of the heaven." Satan and his disciples are evil because they were cursed by God, the Almighty. Therefore, any out of space communication that exists, comes from demonic beings.

As the salt of the world, Christians are taught not be influenced by those sinful beings. While making disciples all over the world, the Haitian-American Christians are reminded to warn the world in general, and the Haitian people in particular, to stay away from these devilish beings. It is reported that satan was a very powerful angel of light in heaven.²²¹

²¹⁹ 1John 2:15-16; John 17:4.

²²⁰ Matthews 5:13.

²²¹ Isaiah 14:12.

When God dispersed him and his disciples, He did not remove his power. Satan has power over everything in nature. However, he does not have power over the true Christians. When it comes to the Christians, God gives them the authority over all the power of the enemy.²²² While teaching the sinners to become disciples of Christ, they must also be instructed to always stay connected with the source of power, Jesus Christ. The salt loses its saltiness if it does not stay connected with its source. The light bulb does not give out light if it does not connect to a power source. Most of the Haitian-American Christians do not perform ministerial works. A true disciple is a person who is constantly learning, as this is the only way to function effectively. The Great Commission allows the Christians to perform the role of an ambassador for Christ. As ambassadors, they are privy to the secret of the kingdom, as it is revealed to them. Jesus Christ gives them the understanding of the gospel. Jesus talked about two kinds of people—those who are inside, and those who are outside of the perimeter of the kingdom.²²³ The Christians are inside of the Kingdom of God, where God provides to them comfort and safety.²²⁴ This is why Christ places them as his ambassadors on Earth. They represent the Kingdom of God on Earth. In order to fulfill their task effectively, they are commanded to stay in constant communication with Christ through prayer and fasting. They are taught to teach the sinners that Christ wants them to become his ambassadors.

While making disciples for Christ, the Haitian-American Christian missionaries are required to teach the poor that there is no prejudice or discrimination in the Kingdom of God.

²²² Luke 10:19.

²²³ Mark 4:11.

²²⁴ Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, 2004), 11.

The kingdom is offered to all, poor and rich. In fact, there is a prophetic consolation in the Word of God for those who are poor in their spirit, those who experience the need for the Word of God. It is required to teach them that Jesus loves them and has died for them at the cross on Calvary. Missionaries must let them know that Jesus Christ was humiliated, beaten, and crucified for their sins. He did that in order to pay the price of the sin of humanity. Disciples going on missions must teach the sinners that the Kingdom of God is plainly and freely offered to them. All they have to do is to accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

The Great Commission obligates the Christians to be involved as comforters and bearers of the good news of the gospel, especially in the time of pain and affliction. Those who are hurting due to the difficulties of life, such as sickness, stress, and emotional distress, will find comfort, rest, and peace in Jesus Christ. Those who are being rejected by the world will find a sure refuge in the Lord.²²⁵ Jesus Christ is the refuge that will not crack or strike even when the Earth rolls because God is the foundation of the Earth. He is the rock of the ages, the stumbling stone and the rock of offense. Anyone who believes in Christ will never be ashamed or perish.²²⁶ Jesus wants his disciples to be sensitive to the needs of others, to feed those who are hungry and provide for the needy. He also wants them to stand up for justice and social equality, to protect the defenseless and preach forgiveness to mankind. He wants them to emphasize the fact that the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of peace and reconciliation.

²²⁵ Psalm 142:5.

²²⁶ Romans 9:33.

The Haitian-American churches have failed in their mission to be effective disciple-makers by neglecting essential elements of the Great Commission.²²⁷ Jesus wants his disciples to teach the new converts to maintain a holy life, a life apart from that of the world. Their heart must be completely dedicated to serving God. They need to maintain a pure heart—a heart that is purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit and that is ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. Their heart must be intelligent enough to discern the tricks of the devil and to be sincere and ready to confess their sin. They need to act in accordance to the Word of God, and always strive to please God. God states that He found in David a man according to His heart,²²⁸ because David recognized his sin and was always willing to ask God for forgiveness. This is the kind of servant that will see the presence of God. If a Christian accidentally commits a sin, he or she must confess it immediately, renounce it and try not to repeat it. If someone continues to sin willfully after being exposed to the truth, he cannot expect forgiveness and does not deserve to be called a Christian.²²⁹ For example, if someone continues to practice a homosexual lifestyle or lesbianism after meeting Christ, he or she cannot truly and genuinely be called a Christian. Homosexuality is a sinful lifestyle. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of this sin. It is repugnant in the eyes of God. There are many people who are living a homosexual lifestyle while claiming to be Christians. These people will find forgiveness if they repent of their sin and abandon this vice; otherwise, they will face the judgment and the wrath of God. The Haitian-American churches are

²²⁷ Bertin, “*Touloutoutou and Tet Mare*,” 220.

²²⁸ Acts 13:22.

²²⁹ Hebrews 10:6.

required to teach the disciples to preach the truth in good time and in dangerous time and to stand for truth and morality at all times.

God commands the Haitian-American churches to teach the disciples of Christ to preach and promote peace wherever they go. Every nation of the world where the gospel is preached must be told that Jesus Christ is the peace of the world. Jesus Christ wants his disciples to look for peace and to make peace with others whenever possible. God is the God of peace and his children must also be peaceful. They must not be hypocritical about the peace that God provides for the Earth.²³⁰ Unfortunately, the world rejects the prince of the true peace as many prefer promoting a fake peace—a peace that is not feasible and obtainable. The world has formed great and powerful organization in order to promote a fake peace. Nevertheless, there is no peace. For many years, the United Nations have been attempting to establish peace between the Palestinians and the Israelites, but all their efforts have been in vain.

The agreements that they reached are fake because the Bible states they could be no true peace without Christ.²³¹ The disciples of Christ are taught to evoke peace and to bless the world with the peace of God.

Jesus instructed the first missionaries to pronounce peace in every house and city they entered.²³² There is no genuine peace in this world. The only peace therein is in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ conveyed his peace to his disciples. This peace is completely different from that offered by the world. The disciples of Christ are taught to promote peace between them, as there

²³⁰ “Churches Uneasy Over Haitian Accord,” *Anglican Journal*, 11 (1994), 5,
<http://ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/196683233?accountid=12085>.

²³¹ 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

²³² Luke 10:5.

is no progress without peace. Christians must promote peace in their own home, in their workplace, in their community, in their church, and wherever there are human beings. They also need to preach peace between the nations of the world. Those who promote peace are called sons of God. They are aware that the devil is the instigator of wars. At times, disciples of Christ will be persecuted for promoting peace. However, Christians must not be afraid because Christ will always be with them.

Finally, Jesus wants his disciples to be taught about the grace of God. The grace of God is the provision by which God grants salvation to all mankind for their sin. Humanity as a whole is under the condemnation of sin and is destined for eternal death. The Godhead, which is God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, decided to offer forgiveness to all sinners by the shading of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary. The grace of God is now available to all sinners. This is a window that God opens to the gentile nations so that they can receive the message of the gospel and reconcile with God. Nevertheless, there will be a time when the opportunity to repent will cease. Hence, Jesus wants his disciples to preach to the world that the time for repentance is now. They must try not to procrastinate. They need to know that salvation cannot be bought or obtain by works.²³³

No human being can work his way to salvation, even though many false denominations (including Jehovah Witnesses) out there claim that salvation can be obtained without Christ. However, the Bible teaches that there is no salvation outside of Christ. Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.²³⁴

²³³ Romans 8:6.

²³⁴ John 14:6.

The Bible further teaches that it is by grace and by having faith in Jesus Christ that the sinners are being saved.²³⁵ Note that the word “grace” came from the Greek word *charis*,²³⁶ which means love, joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, and loveliness. If someone wonders why God chose to save them, they must know that God is grace. God is also love—a love that never fails to act in behalf of humanity. God’s love is unconditional. He is always willing to forgive the sinners if they come to Him. This is the message that the Haitian-American churches are instructed to convey while increasing their missionary activities in their homeland and abroad.

The next survey question asked the participants to state if they believed that not going to mission is a sin. The responses revealed that one hundred participants (25% of the full sample) believe that, if a Christian never goes on any evangelistic missions, he or she commits a sin. However, the remaining respondents were of view that it is not a sin if a Christian never goes on missions. They are clearly wrong, as the Bible is the best guide that the Christians have that can help them identify what is sin and what is not. Even though there is not a directory in the Bible that lists the sins that one can commit, by following its principles, it is easy to understand that disobedience is a sin. If a Christian knows what to do and do not do it, then he or she commits a sin.²³⁷ According to the Bible, sin is a complete disregard to the law of God.²³⁸ Thus, as a general rule, whenever one breaks God’s command, he or she commits an act of sin. In the same vein, the Great Commission is a direct order from God to go to make disciples of all nations. Any

²³⁵ Ephesians 2:8.

²³⁶ Strong's G5485 – *charis*.

²³⁷ James 4:17.

²³⁸ 1 John 3:4.

Christian who refuses to follow this command commits a sin. This also proves that the Christian who refuses to go on missions is not an authentic disciple of Christ. All authentic disciples follow God's command. Therefore, more than seventy-five percent of the Haitian-American Christians sin against God because they do not fulfill the Great Commission mandate. There is no excuse for continuing this practice. Every Christian is ordered by Christ to be a missionary. The Church that Christ built is a missionary church and Christians cannot continue to violate God's law. They must start going on missions in order to spread the gospel and encourage the sinners to repent from their sins. No sin will be left unpunished. No one should assume that his or her sin is too small to deserve punishment. There is no such thing as a small sin. All sins must be confessed and renounced. It is important to know that the refusal to go on missions to make disciples for Christ is a sin that will lead to condemnation like all other sins.

Finally, the survey ended by asking the participants to indicate the age of their churches.

The Haitian-American churches that participated in the survey varied in terms of the time since their establishment. More specifically, three churches are eight years old, five are nine years old, four have been established ten years ago, two have been operating for eleven years, four are twelve years old, one is fifteen years old, three have been established twenty years ago, two have been in operation for twenty five years, and one is thirty five years old.

Irrespective of their age, all these churches are well established in their communities. The age of the churches was important for this study because it allows the progress and the discipleship programs of these churches to be evaluated.

In spite of the failure of these churches to produce effective programs that could lead to the formation of authentic disciples, it is important to recognize their effort and the contribution that they make in the lives of Haitian-American Christians living in the United States. This is not to say that their work has not made any positive contribution elsewhere. The present study aims to encourage the leaders of the Haitian-American churches to be active and visible in their community and in the work of the Lord. It is important to note that the work of ministry is not easy. This is why the Bible instructs Christians to pray constantly and to fast regularly, as this helps these churches fulfill their mandate. Even the mainstream churches in the United States sometimes experience great financial challenges and difficulties.

In the Haitian-American churches, the challenges are even greater because most of these people are low wage workers who struggle to make a living. Yet, they contribute as much as they can in order for the work of the Lord to be done. It is the responsibility of the leaders to make good use of the church's money.

The Haitian-American Christians are being encouraged to perform their ministry faithfully. The good Lord who calls them into His family will always provide the gifts needed, so that the work of ministry can be done with efficacy. They need to perform the Great Commission mandate as commanded by Christ. They need to go on missions more frequently in order to make disciples for Christ in their homeland and all over the world. The leaders of these churches need to teach and encourage their parishioners to engage wholeheartedly in the ministry of missions and disciple-making.

Chapter 5

Haitian American Christians as Missionaries to Haiti

“And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”
Acts 8:1

The failure of discipleship in the Haitian-American churches can be attributed to the lack of organizational and administrative skills among the leaders of these churches. Another important factor that contributes to the failure of any church or individual in the fulfillment of the Great Commission mandate is the lack of faith in Jesus Christ. This lack of faith is manifested by a general feeling of fear and apprehension. There is a sense of fear about the bad things that could possibly happen to them if they go on the mission fields to preach the gospel. For example, some of them are apprehended with the feeling of being rejected, persecuted, beaten, or even killed on the mission fields. Many disciples and apostles of the first century church were victimized by such acts of brutality. However, they did not relinquish their mission as missionaries of the gospel to the sinful world. In the same vein, the Haitian-American churches in the United States must not become overwhelmed by the danger that might await them while doing the work of the Lord. They must not allow these kinds of apprehension undermine their roles as witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost world. They must not permit the devil to keep them captive in their mind to the point that they abandon or neglect the mandate of the Great Commission. Jesus Christ already knew what would happen to those he sends to evangelize the lost world.

This is why he equipped them with the power of the Holy Spirit in order to strengthen them in the time of difficulties.²³⁹ He did not send the first disciples until they had received the Holy Spirit, which occurred on the day of the feast of the Pentecost.

Fear is one of the components that are at the basis of the failure of the Haitian-American churches; their leaders failed to pray and fast, so that God could remove the spirit of fear from them and arm them with the spirit of strength, power, and liberty in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul had reminded the young pastor Timothy that God does not provide His servants with the spirit of fear, but rather the spirit of strength, love, and power.²⁴⁰ Jesus Christ equips his church with all the weapons necessary in order to continue the spiritual fight on Earth; a fight that Christ had already won at the cross on Calvary. There is no need to fear an enemy who has already been defeated. Note that Christ surrendered himself to his enemies in order to be beaten severely, humiliated publicly, and die shamefully, but was resurrected triumphantly for the sake of the redemption of mankind. For this reason, no Christian should be afraid of what the enemy can do or will do to them. Christians must be aware that the enemy can still fight, even though he was defeated at the cross by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although satan was publicly scandalized,²⁴¹ he still has the power and the audacity to fight. He has the power to influence people to do the wrong things. Even in the church, the devil can influence those who have not completely surrendered themselves to Christ. This is the reason that the Christians must live a life of prayer and fasting, and of consecration to Jesus Christ. The devil can influence people to

²³⁹ Brad R. Long, Cindy Strickler, and Paul Stokes, *Growing Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: Seven Principles of Dynamic Cooperation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), 85. "Producing unity within the church is first, of all a fundamental function of the Holy Spirit."

²⁴⁰ 2 Timothy 1:7.

²⁴¹ Colossians 2:15.

disobey God. He can influence them to neglect the work of God, and can instruct them to walk as “enemies of the cross of Christ.”²⁴²

These enemies of the cross pay no attention to what Christ asks them to do. They are more interested in accumulating earthly wealth. They will do anything for money, even leading the members of their churches in the wrong direction. In the Haitian-American churches, there are many pastors who have already gone astray. They are not interested in the Great Commission or in making authentic disciples for Christ. All they are focused on is making money in any way they can. These false leaders refuse to come back to Christ, the true and real shepherd, the guarantor of all souls. They need to know that the love of money is a hindrance to effective Christian ministries.

The impediment to the Great Commission mandate in the Haitian-American churches is also characterized by a lack of theological knowledge among many of the pastors. It is widely acknowledged that a lack of knowledge can cause self-destruction of any entity or organization. Even the Almighty God of heavens declares that the people are dying because of a lack of knowledge.²⁴³ God is knowledge; all good and useful knowledge comes from God. Whenever someone rejects good knowledge, he or she also rejects God. This explains why the Haitian-American churches fail in their mission of making authentic disciples for Christ. As was revealed in the survey, this community rejects good knowledge, as the pastors will not take time to learn and to educate themselves. Most of them did not go to universities or seminaries. Most of the pastors fail to apply the knowledge of the Word of God to their ministry. They understand the

²⁴² Philippians 3:18.

²⁴³ Hosea 4:6.

mechanical aspects of the Word of God, but they do not appreciate its philosophical aspects. In order for a Christian leader to succeed in the ministry, he or she must understand all aspects of the Word of God. When there is inadequate knowledge, people are doomed to fail.

Where education fails, progress is stagnant. No people or organization can succeed without adequate education. This is a general principle. In this context, the Haitian-American churches are not immune to this principle. They have failed and will continue to fail if there is no change in the way they perform church ministries. This survey revealed that the Great Commission mandate is not being taught adequately in the churches. As a result, mission and disciple formation are not considered as important ministries of the churches. Missions are rarely performed by these churches. They fail to go preach the gospel in their neighborhood, as well as evangelize their homeland. The Christians must not overlook the importance of evangelizing their homeland. Christ commands them to start preaching at “Jerusalem,” which refers to every Christian’s home, community, and homeland.

The Haitian-American Christians who are living in foreign countries have the responsibility to evangelize their homeland. They are adjured to be the primary missionaries of their homeland. For this reason, this study aims to encourage them, so that they can recognize their failure to make genuine disciples of Christ. It also aims to promote the understanding of the need to organize more evangelistic missions primarily to their homeland and all over the world. The Christians are aware that, when Jesus calls someone to follow him, he calls that person not just for the sake of walking behind him.

The truth of every call is to make that person a disciple, a fisher of souls. For example, Jesus called Peter and his brother Andrew, by explicitly telling them, “I will make you fishers of men.”²⁴⁴ Hence, the main objective of this study is to help and encourage the Haitian-American Christians to become genuine fishers of men. The Haitian-American Christians are required to be productive in this matter because there is a great harvest of souls that they need to reap. Jesus Christ informs his followers that the field is ready to be harvested.

Unfortunately, the majority of Haitian-American Christians just stand immobile and look at the field as if there is nothing that needs to be done. They do not display any sense of urgency at all. In truth, Jesus told them to get to work with diligence because the field is ready and there are not enough workers. This implies that the harvest could be spoiled or rotten if no diligence is displayed from the harvesters.²⁴⁵ God as the owner of the harvest would not be satisfied with the output of the workers if the harvest spoils. The Bible implies that the workers that allow the harvest to rot will not be rewarded. Every Christian is a worker in the field of the Lord. They are commanded to reap the harvest with care and due diligence so that nothing is wasted. The field is the world and the crops that need to be harvested are the sinners’ souls. Christ died on the cross in order to have ownership of these souls. Christ ordains every Christian to share this good news with the sinners through missionary work.

The Haitian-American Christians are delegated to tell the sinners that Jesus Christ had paid the price of their redemption.

²⁴⁴ Matthew 4:19.

²⁴⁵ John 4:35.

All they have to do is confess their sins to Jesus and invite him in their lives. Jesus will make them a new creation.²⁴⁶ He will forgive their sins. He will welcome them in the presence of His Father, and give them eternal life. Jesus Christ asks all Christians to be carriers of this great news to the sinners through the mandate of the Great Commission.

The Great Commission is a call of engagement for every Christian.²⁴⁷ Jesus asks his followers to go and seek the lost souls of the world and preach them the love of God. This demonstrates the love of God for the world that He created. Jesus died on the cross and sent his followers to help those that are lost. The Christians could do that by going on evangelistic missions all over the world. The Christians are asked to display the love of God and good understanding to all mankind. They are instructed to feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless, take care of the sick, and defend the rights of the orphans and widows. The love of Christ must be at the center of all their missions. Every genuine Christian is required to deal in a loving manner with the foreigners who are living among them. In the Bible, God instructs His covenant people, the Israelites, about the way they have to treat the foreigners who are living in their land. Furthermore, Jesus teaches his disciples about the way they have to treat their neighbors. For example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus complimented the Samaritan for the assistance he provided to the dying fellow. On the other hand, he chastised the Jew for not helping a dying person.²⁴⁸ This demonstrates that effective discipleship is not only

²⁴⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

²⁴⁷ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 69. “We begin with engaging the Word of God as a core discipline. In many ways this is a no-brainer, but a discipline that all too often gets left on the shelf, literally! And it is possible to study the Bible and miss the central theme of discipleship and disciple making. The emphasis, therefore, should not simply be on right thinking but on right action.”

²⁴⁸ Mast, “For you were aliens,” 20-28

the preaching of the Word of God; it also includes the manifestation of brotherly love toward all mankind. Each person that wants to follow Jesus must love and care for his neighbors.

True discipleship involves not only the spiritual, but also the social well-being of other people, which includes caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, and sheltering the homeless, as these are aspects of effective discipleship.²⁴⁹ This is very important for the Haitian-American Christians who would go to their homeland in order to evangelize the Haitians. They need to display the unconditional love of Christ to them. This is important because these people need the love and support of others, as they have been through too many misfortunes in life. Their ancestors were victimized by slavery. Most of these people are poor and lack the basic necessities for their daily living. They find comfort only in the inspired Word of God, which teaches them to abandon the practice of voodoo and magic.²⁵⁰ However, they must be told that these practices can only lead to eternal damnation because they are abominations before God. They need to know that, in spite of their miserable state, the love of God for them is infinite. They must understand that the best thing for them to do is to embrace the love of God. There is no love that can compare with the love of God.

²⁴⁹ Moon, "Holistic discipleship," 16-22.

²⁵⁰ Elizabeth McAlister, "From Slave Revolt to Blood Pact with Satan: The Evangelical Rewriting of Haitian History," *Sage Journal, Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 41 no. 2 (2012): 188. "The impulse to reach back and undo the past, release the country from its magical trap and dedicate the nation to the Christian God is part of a longing for justice, for an end to suffering, and for an orderly and plentiful world. Yet in another of the many painful ironies to be considered here, the present-day evangelicals seek to exorcize from history their own ancestors, the enslaved Africans and Creoles in the colony (and their ancestral spirits in turn) whose own longing for justice and the end of suffering gave rise to the Revolution, ended legal slavery, and brought forth the new nation."

For this reason, the Haitian-American Christians are encouraged to go back to their homeland as missionaries in order to share the good news of the gospel with the Haitian people. By doing that, they will follow the footsteps of the first century disciples, such as Phillip who went to evangelize the Samaritan people.

They will also follow the footsteps of Barnabas, Marc, Timothy, Paul, and many others. The Apostle Paul spent most of his life doing missionary works. He built churches and evangelized the sinners wherever he went. This is exactly the mandate of the Great Commission. Every Christian must go to make as many disciples as he or she can at a time. The mandate to evangelize the world must never be taken lightly. God could have sent His angels to preach the gospel to the world. However, He loves His disciples so much that He wants them to be partakers of this great enterprise. Every Christian is called to be part of the Great Commission.²⁵¹ Jesus wants them to execute their ministerial work with the utmost care, the same way that he had done his work. In the Gospel of John, Jesus states that he finished the work that His Father had entrusted him to do.²⁵² The Greek word *teleioō*²⁵³ used in this verse conveys the idea of perfection. Jesus had done his work with perfection and His Father was well pleased with his work. In the same vein, everyone who engages in doing the work of the Lord is obligated to do it with perfection. This means that no negligence or blame should be found in the disciple.

²⁵¹ Towns, *What's Right with the Church*, 192. "The Great Commission has an obligation upon two recipients: First, the church must carry out the Great Commission to all the world, using all of its personnel, resources and energies. Second, each believer has a responsibility to do his or her part to help reach the world with the gospel."

²⁵² John 17:4.

²⁵³ See Strong's G5048 – *teleioō*.

The survey revealed that, in the Haitian-American churches, most of the leaders or pastors are guilty of negligence. They do not take time to learn the skills needed in order to properly manage a church. As a result, the work of ministry is done carelessly and ineffectively. They do not teach the parishioners about the importance of the Great Commission and do not participate enough in evangelistic missions. The survey further revealed that the majority of the churches are not mission-oriented. As noted earlier, the aim of this study was not to condemn or blame the American-Haitian Christians, but rather to help them become authentic disciple makers by following and doing everything that Christ asks them to do in the Bible. This is the essence of a true disciple. A true disciple always obeys his master. All true authentic Christians obey Christ and follow the instructions contained in the word of God.

When Christ commands the Christians to make disciples of all nations on Earth, to teach them, and then to baptize them, this is a direct order from Christ. It is contradictory for someone to state that he or she is a Christian, while failing to obey and follow the Bible. It is important to know that, when someone disobeys God, he or she commits a sin. All unconfessed sin, no matter how small, leads to death. Some Christians believe that, if they give money to the church for missionary works, they do not need to leave their business to go on missions. This is clearly wrong, as the Great Commission requires that all Christians leave their comfort zone and go on the mission field to evangelize the sinners. The evangelization of the sinners must be done at home, in the neighborhood, in the city, at the street corner, in hospitals, in prisons, in jails, and wherever there are sinners who need to be saved.²⁵⁴ The Haitian-American churches are still

²⁵⁴ Ibid. 193. "The local church will fulfill the Great Commission by praying for lost people, giving money to support missionaries, being involved in missionary project, sending its young people as missionaries and focusing its attention on reaching the world for Jesus Christ before He returns."

failing to make authentic disciples for the Kingdom of God because the concept of disciple-makers is not well understood and practiced by them. These issues arise because most of the pastors do not have adequate education and skills for practicing their ministry. In addition, they refuse to allocate enough time to learning so that they can grow intellectually and spiritually. As a result of their lack of knowledge, they are failing to form authentic disciples for the kingdom of Christ.

The findings yielded by this study are highly beneficial to the Haitian-American churches, as they will help them see more clearly their weaknesses in relation to the Great Commission mandate. The sample that was included in the survey was representative of the general Haitian-American Christian population in the United States. The participants were drawn from several Christian denominations, including Baptist, the church of the Nazarene, the Pentecostal Church, the Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and some other non-denominational churches. They will all benefit from the information and findings presented in this thesis. It is hoped that the Haitian-American churches will pay attention to the survey results and see them as the call for change in their practices. When interpreting the study findings, it is important to note that none of the participants is newly converted Christians and all are adults with more than five years since conversion. Some of them were converted even thirty years ago. The participating churches are also not newly formed or built and some are forty years old. Hence, they had plenty of time to form their practices. While the findings of this study are disappointing, it is noteworthy that all the respondents were very happy to participate in the survey because they know that the information they shared voluntarily and anonymously will help improve the way that church ministry has been practicing in their community.

The survey also revealed a lack of administrative and managerial skills among the leaders of the Haitian-American churches. Some of the churches have a committee or a board that assists the pastor in the management of the church. However, many of the churches are managed by the pastor alone, as these pastors reject the help of others. They prefer to work alone, as this facilitates corruption. There are many types of abuses in these churches, with financial abuse being particularly prevalent.

The survey revealed that extortion and money laundering are very common in these churches. Clearly, if these churches were run faithfully, they could have made a much greater spiritual contribution to the Kingdom of God. Most of the Haitian-American churches are not cognizant of the fact that God is aware of the way that these churches are being managed. They fail to remember that Jesus was very upset when he went to the temple of Jerusalem and witnessed the corruption that was going on there. The Bible states that Jesus overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and chased them out of the temple, for the temple is a place of prayer, not a cavern for thieves.²⁵⁵ Church leaders need to know that God will bless them if they are faithful in their ministry. There is a lack of ethic and morality among these leaders.²⁵⁶ The Haitian-American pastors are not focusing enough on learning, disciple making, and on doing mission work. They do not spend enough time in prayer and fasting so that God could direct their ministry and guide them on the right path. If they do that, they would overcome their failure as disciples makers and missionaries of Christ in the world. The Haitian-American churches are not oriented toward mission. The Church that Jesus builds is a missionary one.

²⁵⁵ Matthew 13:21.

²⁵⁶ Austin, "The Christian moral life," 201-203.

The mission-oriented church overcomes the world and the gate of hell. This is the kind of church that Jesus calls his bride—a church that cares about the souls of men, engages in mission works, cares for the orphans and the widows, visits the sick and the prisoner, feeds the hungry, defends the defenseless, and protects the rights of the weak and feeble. This is the kind of church that is an ambassador for Christ and preaches the gospel in all times. Furthermore, the mission-oriented church is faithful to Christ; it executes Christ’s command without asking question. This is the model of church that Christ wants in the Haitian-American community.

Christ wants his Church to be a mission-oriented Church. However, this is not the case in the Haitian-American community. The survey revealed that the churches in the Haitian-American community are not focused on mission, as their leaders do not see evangelistic mission as an important part of ministry. The majority of the participants (about 62.2%) stated that the Haitian-American churches do not give evangelistic mission the importance that it deserves. Jesus builds his Church as a missionary evangelistic church. He demonstrated his intention by introducing the disciples to missions. In the Gospel of Luke, the Bible states that Jesus sent his disciples two by two to several places in order to evangelize their inhabitants.²⁵⁷ This testimony proves that, among the ministries of the church, Jesus gives the highest priority to mission. Baker believes that the Gospel of John places mission and discipleship at the center of activities of the Christian Church. He believes that every Christian must emphasize on the importance of missions and must encourage other Christians to do the same thing.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Luke 10:1.

²⁵⁸ Baker, “The Place of Missions,” 38.

A mission-oriented church is the church that goes out to find the sinners in their bastions and is highly engaged in its community. It works toward improving the spiritual and the physical conditions of mankind. A mission-oriented church must be easy to identify, as its main purpose is the harvesting of human souls for the kingdom of Christ. A mission-oriented church does not focus on accumulating earthly wealth. It accumulates heavenly treasures “where rust and moths cannot destroy and thieves do not break in and steal.”²⁵⁹ Every church member must be able to easily identify his or her church as a mission-oriented one. This knowledge must be communicated to them by their leaders. However, the present study revealed a very problematic finding, as the majority of the church members (62.5%) could not identify their churches as mission-oriented ones.

It is important to know that all Christian churches are gifted with all the necessary spiritual gifts so that they can function in accordance with God’s will. They are expected to use these gifts for the advancement of the Kingdom of God on Earth. These gifts must only be used with holiness and humility; otherwise, they will be useless. The Bible states that everyone must use the gift that he or she receives from God faithfully.²⁶⁰ The spiritual gifts are not to be used with the intention to distorting money from others. In fact, Jesus Christ forbids his followers to engage in sinful and illegal activities. Those who use their spiritual gifts to earn a shameful gain will be judged and punished by God. All true Christians are encouraged to stay away from anyone suspected of using his or her spiritual gifts in a gainful way. In the Acts of the Apostles, Simon the magician, who pretended to be converted to Christianity with the intention of buying

²⁵⁹ Matthew 6:20.

²⁶⁰ 1 Peter 4:10.

some spiritual gifts in order to use them to distort money, was severely rebuked by the apostles.²⁶¹

Many people speak on radio and television trying to obtain a sinful gain, using the name of Christ. They are pretending to be God's prophets, healers, and spiritual advisors. The Haitian-American Christians are being victimized by those false leaders. These false leaders are encouraged to reverse their course by becoming true and authentic Christians; otherwise, their fate will be the fire of hell. This is the reason that the Haitian-American churches have been failing in their mission to send authentic Christian missionaries for Christ to Haiti. Many leaders of this community are too materialistic and lack the spiritual qualities of authentic Christian leaders. They fail to follow the instructions that the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy regarding the office of the overseer.²⁶²

The Haitian American Christians fail to preach to the world that the Christian God is omnipotent. This means that the Christian God is the only living God, and He alone can do whatever He wills. He has the control of everything that is in the universe. He controls every star, planet, and galaxy. Nothing in the universe can be moved without His will. The Christian God controls everything on Earth and in heavens. He is the God who has created the Earth from nothing. He only needed to voice His intention and His will would be materialized. The Bible states that, when God wanted to create the world, He simply ordered the world to come into existence, and the world did. He alone has the power and knowledge to create.

²⁶¹ Acts 8:17-20.

²⁶² 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

He knows everything, everywhere, in every place. He is aware of all events even before they take place. Nothing escapes His knowledge. Whether something is bad or good, it cannot happen without the will of God. The will of God can be permissive. This means that God can allow things to happen without stopping them. The will of God can also be absolute, in the sense that nothing could happen if He does not allow it to happen. Therefore, it is in the best interest of mankind to seek their refuge in the true God of the universe. Moses understood this concept very well when he wrote, God is a dwelling place, a mountain of refuge.²⁶³ The sinners will find a place of security in the Lord if they are willing to confess their sins and live in newness of life in Jesus Christ. It is an imperative that those who accept the gift of life through Jesus Christ and who reconcile with God to persevere in newness of life. The sinners must serve God in newness of the Spirit and must be transformed in the newness of the mind. God knows the entire content of man's heart. God is not far away. He hears every whisper that comes from the mouth of his servants, and He is willing and available to come in someone's life at any time. In fact, God is already knocking on the door of the sinner's heart. If the sinner opens his or her heart, God will enter and bring joy to that person's life.²⁶⁴

God is not limited by time or circumstances. He is Spirit, and those who serve him must do so in spirit and in truth. This means the sinner who wants to serve Him must know that God is not a physical being, and those who want to serve Him must be truthful. Although God resides in the heaven, He also lives in every believer's heart. The notion of a spiritual God echoes the fact that Jehovah is not a physical Being.

²⁶³ See Psalm 90.

²⁶⁴ Revelation 3:20.

He does not require any physical elements as an intermediary between Him and His servants. This is in contrast to the false gods; they always require a specific, physical place for their adherents to worship them. The relationship that men have with God is purely spiritual.²⁶⁵ Someone just has to believe in his heart in order to establish this relationship. God resides in the heart of every believer. This means that everything that the believer does must focus on God. The believer must always question himself or herself to find out whether or not God is pleased with his or her actions or decisions. If there is any doubt with respect to the correctness of the believer's action, he is encouraged to consult his Bible, his pastor, his elder, and his fellow believers. The life of the believer must be a reflection of God's grace and love. The believer is called to be truthful and trustworthy. God sees and knows everything that everyone is doing. There are no gods like the Christian God. He alone is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

The Haitian-American Christians are appointed to make disciples for the Kingdom of Christ. They are instituted to educate and instruct these disciples in the compassion of Christ. It is important to know that this is the time of the harvest and that Christ wants his Church to harvest the maximum number of souls possible. The time of the harvest is a special time in God's plan. This is the time that God allows the sinners to come and to make peace with Him, regardless of the nature of their sins. God is willing to forgive and forget every kind of sin at this moment of redemption. Both the churches and the sinners must take advantage of this great spiritual opportunity. The Haitian-American churches are required to make disciples in great numbers; they are also instructed to focus on the quality of the disciples.

²⁶⁵ Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 93. "We affirm that human nature is not sufficient in any way to seek God and find him with purity unless it is helped by the one who is the object of the search."

This is not a time for the church to stand by and watch. Every authentic Christian is commanded to go out there in the field that is already full of crops and ready to be harvested.

The Haitian-American churches recognize that this is an important time in the history of the Christian church, as God gives to the Christians the opportunity to repair their wrongdoing by allowing Jesus Christ, their redeemer to redeem them and restore their failure by bringing new enlightenment and the knowledge of the Holy Spirit in their churches.

The Haitian-American churches must increase in a significant way the number of evangelistic missions that they organize to their homeland and all over the world. Now is the time for them to focus on winning the maximum number of souls for the Kingdom of God. The Haitian-American Christians are commissioned by God to work relentlessly in order to achieve success in that great endeavor, as God is very concerned about every living soul that He creates. He does not want any of them to perish. This is why he gives to mankind enough time so that they could come to repentance.²⁶⁶

As Christian missionaries to the world, all disciples of Christ have the overarching goal, which is the harvest of every soul for the Kingdom of God. There are always plenty of souls to be harvested. Note that, when Jesus Christ called Peter and his brother Andrew to make them fishers of men, they had spent all night and could not catch any fish. Thus, they started to think that there were no fish to be caught. However, Jesus proved to them that there is always fish to be caught. All they have to do is to throw the net in the right place. When they stopped arguing with Jesus, they threw their net as told. As a result, they caught so much fish that they could not

²⁶⁶ 2 Peter 3:9.

even count it. This is why resisting or arguing with God is always wrong, no matter what He asks His servant to do.

Christ loves his servants so much that he will never allow or ask them to do something that would jeopardize their well-being. Furthermore, God knows well in advance what the future holds. Hence, instead of continuing to question the will of God, it is recommended to all Haitian-American Christians to engage blindly and unquestionably in the work of the Lord. The love of God for humanity is unconditional. God proved His love to mankind well before He decided to call them to His kingdom. Jesus Christ died for the sinners on the cross. He was beaten, humiliated, and died on the cross for all mankind. Yet despite all these sacrifices, many people still fail to fully grasp the concept of the infinite love of God. They believe that a just man like Jesus could not have died for an unjust world, and that an infinite being could not suffer for a finite world. They believe that the God, creator of the universe, could not come down and suffer a shameful death in the hands of mortal men. They must come to understand that Jesus Christ did indeed come to Earth and died for the redemption of all. At the behest of Christ, the Haitian-American churches have the responsibility to reverberate the good news of the gospel all over their homeland of Haiti.

Yet, the Haitian-American churches continue to fail to distribute the essential message of the gospel to the sinners. As a result, these churches are not growing at the rate experienced by other churches that belong to other ethnic groups. The root cause of their failure is that there is a lack of effective discipleship programs in their churches. Discipleship is a roadmap for transforming a sinner to an authentic disciple.

As noted previously, a disciple always needs a mentor, who should be another Christian ready to take him or her under his wing in order to train, advise, and support his ministry.

This kind of disciple is very rare to find in the Haitian-American churches. In reality, in most of the churches, anyone who attempts to become a true disciple of the kingdom of Christ is considered as an opponent of the pastor of the church.

The reason behind this unjust treatment of true disciples is corruption that is so prevalent in these churches. In most of the churches, the pastor surrounds himself with a small circle of friends, or family members that he can trust not to expose his corruption. In fact, everyone in the group is corrupt, as he or she would otherwise not be part of the group. These people are not there to serve Christ faithfully, but rather to support and protect the pastor. In this type of environment, there is no room for true discipleship.²⁶⁷ This is very unfortunate, as it allows the church that Christ died for to become the private property of ungodly people. The survey revealed that the majority of the churches do not have an effective discipleship program. In a true discipleship program, the pastor and other leaders of the church will serve as mentors to nurture the future disciples. The Bible gives some very good examples of discipleship training. Jesus took his disciples under his wings. He trained them, nurtured them, and prepared them for the work of ministry. In addition, the Apostle Paul took the young Timothy, and treated him in the same way, so that he was ready for the work of ministry. Barnabas did the same for the young John Mark. Barnabas was also the first mentor of the Apostle Paul. He did not see him as an

²⁶⁷ Koessler, *True Discipleship*, 154. "Paul took other disciples like Timothy and Titus under his wing and served as their mentor. They travel with him, listened to his teaching, and were sent out on various ministry assignments as Paul's representatives."

opponent, but rather as an instrument for the Kingdom of God. Moreover, Pricilla and Aquila took Apollos, trained him and nurtured him, so that he could become a more effective preacher.

The majority of Haitian-American pastors do not consider the church as the property of Christ and do not prepare disciples to replace them. The only people they would mentor are their children or people from their circle of friends, even though, most of the time, these people are not qualified to lead the church. According to the survey findings, the manner that they approach the Great Commission mandate is very problematic. Jesus orders the disciples to go make disciples all over the world. However, before they go, they must receive the Holy Spirit as the gift of God to the church. Until then, they must not leave Jerusalem. Thus, according to Christ, the Holy Spirit is essential to the success of the churches, and no church can be a Christian church without the presence of the Holy Spirit. In most of the Haitian-American churches, the pastors do not believe in the divinity of the Holy Spirit. As a result, these pastors are spiritually dried and dead. They do not have the unction necessary to perform the work of ministry. Many of them are like professional workers, who perform their jobs for monetary compensation, but do not have any passion for the work that they are doing. These kinds of pastors are just mercenaries. They show no love for the sheep. As a result of this attitude, in these churches, disciple-making is not a priority, as pastors are only concerned with having enough money in the church's account. Evangelistic mission is not important for these pastors. If mission is organized in their churches, it is because of the initiative of the members of the churches. In these churches, discipleship is a failure, as is evangelistic mission. The Great Commission is completely neglected.

Jesus established Jerusalem as the primary place of mission. Presently, the notion of Jerusalem is used both realistically and metaphorically. For the gentile nations, the term Jerusalem is used metaphorically and refers to the personal environment of every disciple. It includes the disciple's family, friends, parents, workplace, spouse, and other members of his or her immediate community. For example, for the Haitian-American Christians, their Jerusalem is the neighborhood in which they live.

It is also their homeland of Haiti. However, they fail in their mission because they are not involved enough in either the community's life or in their homeland of Haiti. As a result, these churches cannot grow. The church can only grow and multiply when it carries the good news of the gospel to other people.

The message of the gospel is not designed to be preached in Jerusalem only, but also in every city and country all over the world. The Haitian-American churches are called to be the light of the gospel in Haiti.²⁶⁸ They are also called to be the salt of this nation. Haiti is filthy with sins, such as homosexuality, lesbianism, stealing, lying, jealousy, and hatefulness, among many others. There is a great need for the gospel in this country. It is true that the Haitian-American Christians face barriers intended to keep them from preaching the gospel to other people. These barriers, whatever forms or shapes they take, can be overcome by prayer and fasting. The devil always brings negative thoughts and feelings to the mind of the believers. He always tries to distract the Christians from their divine purpose—the plan that God has for every believer.

²⁶⁸ Stan Chu Ilo, Joseph Ogbonnaya, and Alex Ojacor, *The Church as Salt and Light: Path to an African Ecclesiology of Abundant life* (Cambridge: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 66. "Jesus meant that Christians and the Church must be examples of purity: holding high the standards of life, such as honesty, conscientiousness, morality, diligence in work and so on."

There are no barriers that God cannot break. Satan is bombarding the thought process of the Haitian-American believers with feelings of inadequacy. One of the barriers that the devil places before them to keep them from achieving their divine purpose is shame and guilt. The devil uses these barriers against the born again believers whose past was shaky and troublesome. The devil always tries to remind them about their bad experiences they are trying to leave in the past. He is constantly trying to convince the believers that God does not care about them.

They must remember that they are empowered to stand firm to resist the devil since they are now new creations in Christ. They must be reassured that all the bad things of the past have gone away. Jesus Christ has the power to transform the old things to new things. Born again Christians must not carry any doubts in their minds about their bad behavior of the past. Christians are overcomers in Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on the cross at Calvary for the redemption of mankind once for all. Jesus has paid the price of the redemption of all humanity.²⁶⁹ The spirit that God gives is not of shame. It is a spirit of “power, love and of self-discipline.”²⁷⁰

Christian missionaries, mandated by Jesus Christ, God and creator of the universe, must preach the gospel in good and in bad time. The disciples of Christ must preach the spirit of love and self-discipline to all mankind. The world needs to know that God is the source of all good love. The divine love is unconditional. This is the kind of love that Paul preached to the

²⁶⁹ Bernard J. Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God: Toward an Experience-based Pneumatology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 54, *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, *EBSCOhost* (accessed September 28, 2015). “This Spirit is of course, the same Spirit that the Israelite and Christian faith see as the Spirit that inspired the prophets to speak truth in condemnation of false teaching.”

²⁷⁰ 2 Timothy 1:7.

Corinthians.²⁷¹ The Greek word *agape*²⁷² means that love is blind; it does not discriminate; it does not look for personal interest; it does not abuse; it does not humiliate. The agape love is genuine because it came from God. All Christians must cultivate this kind of love, and they must preach it to the sinners all over the world. The Christian love is a genuine love. It is also a barrier breaker. All Christians must display this genuine love constantly. They need to communicate that the love of Christ for the world is pure, genuine, and unconditional.

The Haitian-American Christians are mandated to pray to God, so that He can provide them with His love.²⁷³ The genuine love of God never fails. This love is badly needed in the world. It is reported that the sinners respond more positively to evangelization when Christian love is displayed. That is why Christians are not instructed to approach the sinners with hostility, but with the authentic love of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ loves even sinners. Hence, Christians are ordained to love the sinners, even though they hate their sins. All Christians must hate sin. After all, sins caused the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Haitian-American churches are commissioned to be a reflection of the love of Christ. Christians are instructed not to have any prejudice or to discriminate against anyone. After all, everyone has sinned against God. The repentant sinner is now saved because he or she confesses his sins to Jesus Christ and invites him to reside in his or her life. In addition, Jesus Christ calls every sinner to have peace with His Father through him. God's peace is sweet and

²⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 13.

²⁷² See Strong's G26 – *agape*.

²⁷³ Peter, C. Du Moulin and Matthew McMahon, *The Love of God* (Crossville, TN: Puritan Publications and a Puritan's Mind, 2015), 26. "True love then is that same, which gives rest and contentment to the soul. False love is an irregular agitation, and an endless emotion."

compassionate. There is no other peace like it. God is the God of all, even the worst of the sinners. The Apostle Paul states that he is the “worst of sinners,” yet Jesus saved him.²⁷⁴ Before his conversion, Paul, who was then Saul of Tarsus, persecuted the Christians. He had them jailed and even killed. He was one of the contributors to the martyr of Steven.²⁷⁵

However, Paul was not excluded from receiving salvation. God saved him while he was on the road to Damascus, on the mission to arrest and to kill every Christian—men and women, children or adults. While he was on that road, the grace of God seized him and converted him into an instrument for the Kingdom of God. Jesus loves the sinners, but hates their sins. He wants them to become children of God. He loves them so much that he handed over his own life in order to redeem them.

Paul went on to become the most prominent Christian leader and missionary of his generation. He preached the gospel all over the world. He traveled all over Asia and Europe to preach the gospel and make disciples for the Kingdom of God. He became a true instrument for the salvation of mankind. He preached the message of love and truth of God. He put aside all the promises that the world had made to him. He was contented with the little things that he had in order to serve Christ faithfully and truthfully. He was a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

This is the kind of example that the Haitian-American pastors need to follow, as most of them do not display examples of authentic disciples of Christ. They have not put aside their sense of self-pride and superiority in order to embrace the true nature of Christ.

²⁷⁴ 1 Timothy 1:16.

²⁷⁵ Acts 7:58.

The Bible instructs every Christian to get rid of the old nature, which is characterized by envy and selfish desires.²⁷⁶ The image of God must be a true product of every Christian's life. This is not a time to continue to live in falsehood, lies, and deception.

If allowed to continue, these kinds of behaviors will jeopardize the eternal salvation that Christ offers to them. A true Christian must live in harmony with his or her neighbors. All humans living on this planet are neighbors to each other in the spiritual sense. They must be aware that the spirit of Christ that resides in the Christian is not bound by time, space, or territory.

The Haitian-American Christians must communicate very clearly the message of redemption to the sinners. They must convey to them that Jesus Christ died for their sins in order for them to receive eternal life. This is a message that the Haitian-American Christians need to communicate with joy and felicity in their homeland of Haiti. Jesus wants his Church to be happy and joyful at all times. When the message of the gospel is delivered to the sinners with joy, it makes them eager to become Christians, as they know that there is no real joy in the world. The only true joy that exists is in Jesus Christ. The sinners need to experience that joy. It is reported that many sins that are committed in the world are sins of joyfulness. This means that people are committing these sins because they are looking for joy.

However, they are mistakenly pursuing a false joy. A false joy is the kind of joy that satisfies the flesh temporarily, such as the use of illicit drugs, such as cocaine, marijuana,

²⁷⁶ Ephesians 4:24.

cannabis, amphetamine, ecstasy, alcohol and pornography.²⁷⁷ However, none of these pursuits can satisfy the soul. The false joy keeps the sinners enslaved and dependent, so that they will continue to repeat the same sin. Nevertheless, the sinners need to know that the real joy is in Jesus Christ. The joy that Christ gives satisfies the body, the soul, and the spirit.

Once the sinner is connected with Christ, he or she becomes the recipient of the true source of joy and happiness. The serious believer no longer has to depend on the carnal things of the world to satisfy his needs, for he now becomes a living source of peace, joy, and happiness. This transformation is possible because Christ always gives exceedingly above and beyond what is needed.²⁷⁸ He always gives abundantly because he is the source of all good things. Jesus Christ wants his disciples and his Church to communicate these facts to the lost world. Through the mandate of the Great Commission, all Christian believers are pre-ordained to evangelize the world. Jesus arms them with the Holy Spirit, who is energizing the Christians to go and perform their duty as missionaries to the world. Every Christian is an ordained missionary to the world. Christ sends them to teach the world about the salvation that is offered to them through Him. There is no other name through which the sinner can be saved, only in the holy name of Jesus Christ. He left his throne in heaven and came down, clothed within a human flesh, in order to experience the consequences of sin. Even though he was not a sinner, he was willing to pay the penalty for the sinner's sin. He suffered a humiliating death on the cross at Calvary to deliver all mankind from the condemnation of sin.

²⁷⁷ Kenneth J. Meier, *The Politics of Sin: Drugs, Alcohol and Public Policy* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 10. "Although drug issues are generally salient, Alcohol problems in the 1970's before the rise of Mothers Against Drunk Driving were generally unsalient, as was illicit drug abuse during the 1950's."

²⁷⁸ Ephesians 3:20.

Now, with the growing prevalence of technology, the Haitian-American Christians are starting to use television, the Internet, the radio, and any other modern means of communication to transmit their message to their homeland. Yet, if they accelerate the rate of their evangelistic activities, they might repair their failure within a few years. They could be a true light of the gospel in their community and abroad. The Haitian-American churches do not presently act as the salt of the earth that gives taste to every food and renders it consumable.

They fail to simplify the message of the gospel in order to make it easy to grasp by all the sinners. This is not an impossible task. With the help of the Holy Spirit, everything is possible. However, most of these churches do not allocate enough time to the study of the word of God. Their leaders also fail to acquire higher levels of education both academic and theological.

In addition, pastors need to teach the importance of the Great Commission frequently in their churches. They need to teach the Great Commission mandate in their Sunday school, and in every service, on as many occasions as possible. They need to engage more actively in the life of their community. They need to establish outreach programs for their communities. Moreover, they must encourage the members of their churches to participate frequently in evangelistic missions to their homeland of Haiti. If properly applied, these recommendations could bring great success to the Haitian-American churches, and would certainly improve their mission and disciple-making outcomes. The Haitian-American churches must increase their mission trips to their homeland of Haiti in order to evangelize this nation. The people of Haiti need to hear the gospel from their own countrymen. They need to hear compelling evidence about the love of God for them.

They must be given opportunities to hear testimonies of their countrymen about the power of God. They should be told that the God that they should worship is not the idols or the images of dead people. They must serve and worship the real, the true, and the only living God, who is Jehovah. They need to hear that the practice of voodoo will bring God's judgment on them. The practice of voodoo is the worshipping of Satan and of his angels. They must come to understand that Satan did not create them, as he is only capable of destroying, and he ruins even those who worship him.

They also need to know that God created Lucifer, as a good angel, who was supposed to worship God. However, he became satan, a bad angel, after he attempted to conspire to overthrow God and take over His throne. God chased and cursed satan and all the bad angels who were with him. The Haitian people need to know that satan cannot give them eternal life, as he is already condemned for destruction. He wants to take every human being to hell with him. He is the enemy of God and of God's people. People who are worshipping satan are provoking the judgment of God against them. The people of Haiti are being misled by the voodoo priests, saying that "voodoo is, their culture, and it gave them freedom from slavery. Therefore, they have to practice it."²⁷⁹ The truth is that no culture is greater than the people who practice it. Hence, if an element of the culture is negative and brings shame to the people, they must abandon it. There is no culture that cannot be changed. The culture of a people is very dynamic; this means it can be changed and replaced with something else. The people of Haiti who are worshipping the devil need to hear the message from the mouths of their countrymen.

²⁷⁹ Elizabeth A. McAlister, *Rara: Vodou Power and Performance in Haiti and its Diaspora* (Berkeley University of California Press, 2002). eBook Collection.

They need to hear the testimonies about the saving grace of God and the love of Christ for them. They need to abandon voodoo and embrace Christianity. The Haitian-American Christians are well aware now of the importance of the Great Commission. The Great Commission mandates all Christians to go make disciples for the kingdom of Christ from every nation that exists on earth. This authoritative command requires that every Christian becomes a missionary for Christ in the world.

This applies to all Christians, regardless of the country of their origin, their color, or the language they speak. Every Christian must be an active participant in the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. Any Christian who refuses to obey any commands of the Lord commits a sin, and cannot be a true Christian. A true Christian is called to obey the Lord Jesus Christ without hesitation or questioning.

The Great Commission is a universal order that calls upon the people of God to evangelize the lost world and to help them become Christians. The world needs to be taught about their sin, about the love of God, and about the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus Christ did on the cross at Calvary for the forgiveness of their sin. The world needs to know that every human being born on Earth is a sinner and is under the curse of sin. Mankind is cursed by the sin that the first man and woman, Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden. They sinned when they disobeyed the command that God gave them. God commanded them not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.²⁸⁰ The lost world needs to know that their first parents disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, and they immediately died spiritually. This concept might not be easy to grasp for someone who has no knowledge of the Word of God. There are

²⁸⁰ Genesis 2:16-17.

likely those that would ask how it is possible for someone to die when he or she is still living. There are two important theological points to address when elaborating on this concept.

First, the sinner dies spiritually even though he or she is walking, breathing, or eating, as there is no relationship between the sinner and God. In addition, mankind is subject to a physical death because of this sin. The death of Christ on the cross is the payment for the redemption of mankind. Therefore, it is in the best interest of mankind to accept the gift of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. If the Christians fail to carry this good news to the sinners, they will be as guilty as the sinners themselves. This must be taken very seriously. This project makes it clear to everyone who reads it so that he or she can take his responsibility very seriously. Jesus Christ counts on every single Christian to propagate the good news of the gospel.

Many Haitian-American churches and Christians fail to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission by being too lazy to leave their homes and their comfort zones to go spread the good news of the gospel. They believe that by contributing money to the churches to send Christians on missions, they are fulfilling the Great Commission. Still, there are Christians who are of view that the mandate is not for all Christians, and it pertains to the pastors and the leaders of the churches only. This project clearly demonstrates that this is not the case. The mandate of the Great Commission relates to all Christians, and not abiding by it is a sin. Every Christian must fulfill his or her role. Jesus clearly states that the same way that His Father sent him is the same way that he sends his disciples.²⁸¹ Jesus was sent as a missionary to the world.²⁸² Jesus shares his apostleship with every Christian who commits himself or herself to the work of the

²⁸¹ John 20:21.

²⁸² Hebrews 3:1.

Lord. The Great Commission mandates that every Christian be a missionary for the Kingdom of God to the world.²⁸³ However, unfortunately, many Haitian-American Christians fail to execute this mandate.

Conclusion

The survey revealed that the Haitian-American churches in general are failing to carry out the message of the gospel to their homeland and to the world. In addition, they are failing in every aspect of the Christian Church. One of the major pitfalls for this community is that they do not have effective discipleship programs in their churches. In fact, the survey findings demonstrated that 62.5 percent of the churches do not have an effective discipleship program. They do not train the members of the churches to become authentic disciples of Christ. In addition, evangelistic mission that is one of the most important ministries of the Christian Church is almost completely overlooked in these churches. Presently, only a few Haitian-American churches organize evangelistic missions. Some Christians in these churches have never been on a mission trip, even though they have been converted for many years. The majority of the pastors of these churches do not focus on the importance of the Great Commission. As a result, the majority of the members of the churches do not participate in the Great Commission mandate. This is something that is disastrous to the spiritual well-being of these Christians. Unfortunately, not all the Christians in this particular community are able to read and understand the Bible without assistance. They rely on their pastors to teach them.

²⁸³ Koessler, *True Discipleship*, 151. "Jesus expected His disciples to act upon His teaching and told them that the genuineness of their love for Him would be demonstrated by their obedience."

Regretfully, the majority of the pastors are not educated enough to fulfill this duty. In fact, they are lacking the education and knowledge necessary to lead these churches. These shortcomings constitute an obstacle that hinders the spiritual growth and development of the parishioners.

Deplorably, these pastors are not receptive to learning because they believe that the Holy Spirit has already bestowed upon them all the knowledge they need to manage a church.

The survey clearly demonstrated that these pastors are very wrong, as their churches are not growing because they are not managed effectively. Even in the churches that appear to be growing, the members are not receiving quality theological teachings. They do not have effective outreach programs for their own community or for their homeland of Haiti. The survey further revealed that they do not organize adequate missionary activities in their homeland. The majority of these churches never organized a mission trip to Haiti. Moreover, these churches are not mission-oriented. They are not involved and engaged in community outreach programs.

The Haitian-American churches fail in their mission simply because they do not follow the model of the first century Christian Church, which was a mission-oriented church. They devoted their time to reach out to the pagans via evangelistic missions. The first century church fulfilled the Great Commission by sending Christian missionaries all over the world. For example, the deacon Philip went to Samaria to evangelize the Samaritan people.²⁸⁴ Historically, the Samaritans had no relation with the Jews. The Samaritans believed that they were the ones who worship the true God of Abraham, whereas the Jews were worshipping the false gods of Babylonia. The Samaritan worshipped in their temple at Mount Garizim. The Jews, on the other

²⁸⁴ Acts 5:8.

hand, worshipped in their temple of Jerusalem. At this juncture, it is worth recalling the conversation between Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman. Jesus evangelized Samaria before Philip. Jesus made it clear to them that it is time to end their cultural conflict because God is Spirit. God does not contain by a physical place.

The truth is that the genuine worshipper is the one who worships God in spirit and in truth. The Samaritan people accepted the message of Christ.²⁸⁵ In the same vein, when Philip went to Samaria to share the message of the gospel with them, they readily accepted it and became Christians. This clearly demonstrated that, when someone accepts Christ, he or she immediately belongs to Christ. He should not identify himself with any other groups than Christian. This leads to the conclusion that the Great Commission is also a means to reconcile conflicted people with their adversaries because God is the God of reconciliation.

Philip evangelized the Samaritans with success by the Grace of God.²⁸⁶ Note that Philip also evangelized the Ethiopian Eunuch, in Gaza. By this act, the gospel travelled to Ethiopia. The first century church was instrumental in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Paul started to preach in Damascus, Jerusalem, and in several cities of Asia and in Europe. He was encouraged and supported by the other apostles. In addition to preaching the gospel, the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote several theological books. The Apostle Paul spent the rest of his life evangelizing the world and writing theological books until he was decapitated by the Romans for the sake of the gospel.

²⁸⁵ John chapter 4.

²⁸⁶ Daneel Inus, Charles Van Engen, and Hendrik Vroom, *Fullness of Life for All: Challenges for Mission in Early 21st Century* (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, 1991), 33.

The first century church was also instrumental in the ministry of the Apostle Peter. He demonstrated that the church cannot grow if it does not train and support those who minister as Christian missionaries to the world. The ministry of mission was at the center of the activities of the first century church. The discipleship program of the first century church was very effective. The church had apostles and leaders available to mentor those who are called into the ministry of the gospel. Paul had for mentor Barnabas, who took him under his wing, in spite of Paul's violent past. As it is widely known, Paul was a zealous Pharisee, who vowed to destroy Christianity. However, Christ converted Paul into an effective instrument for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Apollos evangelized Ephesus, Achaia, Corinth, and Alexandria. He preached accurately the message of the gospel. Note that Apollos was mentored by the Apostle Paul, as well as Priscilla and Aquila.²⁸⁷ However, most of the Haitian-American churches do not follow these examples and fail to train or support those who have been called by Christ in the ministry of the gospel. They must not place obstacles in front of the servants of God. Only God knows who should be chosen and called to ministry. The church must not be considered as a private and personal property of the pastor and his family.

Other than Apollos, the first century church fulfilled its Great Commission mandate by sending several Christian missionaries all over the world.²⁸⁸ This church was actively involved in the life of the community. The involvement of the church in community outreach was

²⁸⁷ Acts 18:26.

²⁸⁸ Matthew George Easton, "Apollos," *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Blue Letter Bible, 1897. 24 Jun, 1996 (accessed 10 May 2015).

characterized by the distribution of food to the poor.²⁸⁹ The leaders of the early church made certain that the poor and the widows did not spend a day without food. They received donations, which they distributed to the needy. Corruption was not tolerated in the church.

Ananias and his wife Sapphira attempted to deceive the church and immediately met their death because they were lying to the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁰ The church was also instrumental in the ministry of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, as was in the ministry of Mark. Mark was the Apostle Peter's scribe. He recorded the messages preached by Peter. Mark founded the church of Africa and that of Alexandria. Furthermore, the Apostle Peter, who was one of the most important personalities of the first century church, preached the gospel in Jerusalem, at Antioch, Asia Minor, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Peter also preached the gospel in Rome.²⁹¹ The gospel was disseminated all over the world due to the diligence of the first century church. The Haitian-American churches can also succeed by repairing their failures. They will succeed if they become mission-oriented churches. They also need to create true discipleship programs for their churches. They need to evangelize their homeland of Haiti by organizing more mission trips to their homeland and abroad. Finally, they need to support those who have been called by the Lord into the gospel ministry. It is not too late for the Haitian-American Churches and Christians to do the right thing. Jesus-Christ counts on them and equips them with

²⁸⁹ Acts 6:1.

²⁹⁰ Acts 5: 1-11.

²⁹¹ 1 Peter 1:1-2.

the power and authority to evangelize the sinners.²⁹² As disciples of Jesus-Christ, they have been called to evangelize the world, beginning in their homeland of Haiti.²⁹³

²⁹² Luke 10:19.

²⁹³ Acts 1:8; Matthews 28:19-20.

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Appendix A
Supplementary Notes

Things to know

Matthews 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Many Christians make the mistake of being overly contemplative. A contemplative Christian enjoys the fact that he or she belongs to a church. However, such an individual rejects the notion of evangelistic mission, which requires one to abandon himself and leaves his household environment to be on the mission field, preaching the gospel. This is the kind of disciple Jesus wants. This is why he clearly states that “the son of man has no place to rest himself.

The Greek word “*poreuō*” comes from the root “*poros*,” which literally means a passageway, to go on one’s way, to depart from one place to another.

Some Christians are failing to become authentic disciples, as they are reluctant to leave their comfort zones in order to be on the road, preaching the gospel and converting the sinners. Jesus sees all true disciples as journeyers. As they travel along, they have to preach the gospel and teach other people about becoming Christians. Note that the cardinal rule of Christianity is that every Christian is a journeyer, a disciple of Christ, and a disciple-maker.

Act 1:8

The descent of the Holy Spirit

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

A Christian witness or messenger of the gospel is someone who receives a special power from God. This power enables the witness to be fearless and bold in his proclamation of the gospel. Before Peter received power from the Holy Spirit, he was a coward and fearful disciple. He denied the name of Christ three times before the rooster crowed. He did not have the courage to stand firm in front of danger and calamity. The Holy Spirit is the source of strength of the Christians.

After he received the Holy Spirit, Peter was fearless and bold in the proclamation of the gospel. Later in his life, he accepted death by crucifixion, upside down, instead of denying the name of Christ.

The power that Christ gave to the disciples is available to all Christians.

The day of Pentecost was the day that the disciples received the Holy Spirit that was promised to them by Jesus Christ. Pentecost was a very important day for the first century Christians. This day commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.

The church of Christ is built, ran, and protected by the Holy Spirit. A church without the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit is not a Christian church. The presence of the Holy Spirit cannot be overlooked, as the Holy Spirit is very loud and emotive.

Wherever the Holy Spirit resides, there is noise, shouting, screaming, yelling, crying, jumping, and other emotions and activities that demonstrate his presence. The Holy Spirit is the power and the energy that keeps both the church and the Christians to move on until the end of the journey.

When the Holy Spirit came down, the Bible reports that there was noise in the upper chamber where the apostles were resided; it was windy, and very noisy. People from far away could hear the apostles speaking and preaching in different tongues.

The Jewish Pentecost is different from the Christian Pentecost. While the Christian Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, the Jewish Pentecost commemorates the end of the barley harvest. In ancient Israel, Pentecost was also called the Feast of the weeks; it was the second greatest national festival. It was celebrated forty-nine days after Easter. During the celebration of this feast, all men must appear in the presence of the Lord in the temple. They had to leave their homes and go up to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the feast of the Pentecost.

For the ancient Israelites, this feast commemorated the end of the barley harvest. The people were to come into the presence of the Lord with two loaves of leavened and salted bread (Le 23:17, 24). In addition, they were to offer freewill offerings to the Lord. It was a day of great joy and happiness. On that day, the Israelites offered gifts of good gesture to the Levites, the foreigners, and to the orphans (De. 16:11).

Later on, the Israelites commemorated it as the day where Moses had received the Ten Commandments from God. Furthermore, the feast of Pentecost was also commemorated the day that ancient Israel became a nation.²⁹⁴

For the Christians, however, Pentecost can also be seen as a day of transition when the old Mosaic system, with its laws and temple, was replaced by the church and the Holy Spirit. From that day on, God no longer needed a temple to be worshipped, as each Christian's body became God's temple. In addition, the Holy Spirit replaced the Mosaic Law. The Holy Spirit sets the standard for the Church.

Note the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, "it is no longer on this mountain nor at Jerusalem that God is worshipped. The true worshipper worships God in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The term "omnipresence of God" is not explicitly written in the Bible. However, by reference, God's omnipresence cannot be overlooked. The omnipresence of God is correlated with His omnipotence and omniscience. These three divine attributes complement each other supernaturally, as wherever one is present, the others are as well. Only God possesses these three divine and essential attributes. This proves that God is the sole creator of the universe, and as the legitimate author of the universe, He places His signature, His fingerprint, and His trade mark throughout.

²⁹⁴ Henry E. Dosker, "Pentecost," *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Blue Letter Bible. 1913. 5 May, 2003, accessed Jun 21, 2015, <http://www.blbclassic.org/search/Dictionary/viewtopic.cfm?topic=IT0006798>.

This is something that is above the knowledge and understanding of mankind. The psalmist David sums this up particularly well, as he states, “such knowledge is beyond our understanding.” In this context, he was referring to the omniscience, omnipotence, and the omnipresence of God (psalm 139: 6). God creates all things. He can do all things. He knows all things. He is everywhere, in all places, at the same time. God states that He is not far away from His people. He is the God of proximity (Jer. 23:23-24). In fact, He is in the heart of every one of His servant. He knows every move and every step that every human being takes. Darkness does not exist for God. He sees things in the dark as if it was light.

When it comes to the security of every Christian, particularly the missionary, the omniscience, the omnipotence, and the omnipresence of God are essential and indispensable. Knowing that God is near, watching, controlling all things present and future, and fully capable, with unrestricted power to act in behalf of all His children, should reassure all disciples. The presence and the protection of the merciful God are constantly accompanying His servants, whether they are in their homes or on the mission fields.²⁹⁵

According to dictionary.com, discipleship is a noun derived from the word disciple. In the biblical context, a disciple is “a scholar, sometimes applied to the followers of John the Baptist (Matt. 9:14), and of the Pharisees (22:16), but principally to the followers of Christ.

²⁹⁵ Geerhardus Vos, “Omnipresence,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Blue Letter Bible. 1913. 5 May, 2003, accessed Jun 24, 2015, <http://www.blbclassic.org/search/Dictionary/viewtopic.cfm?topic=IT0006552>.

A disciple of Christ is one who (1) believes his doctrine, (2) rests on his sacrifice, (3) imbibes his spirit, and (4) imitates his example (Matt. 10:24; Luke 14:26, 27, 33; John 6:69).”²⁹⁶

According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the word disciple derives from the Greek Word *mathetes*, which literally means a learner, and the verb is *manthano*, which means to learn. The word disciple comes into biblical evidence via the New Testament. It is an authentic word in the Greek language. The word disciple generally means a pupil or student, whereas the Greek word *didaskalos* means a master (see Matt. 10:24, Luke 6:40).

The disciple is generally one who accepts to follow a master, learn from him, imitate him, and agree to teach others to become disciples. Jesus Christ used the word disciple in its widest sense. Jesus wants his disciples to completely abandon themselves in order to follow him (Matt. 16:24). In the New Testament context, every Christian is a disciple of Christ. It was at Antioch, that the term Christian was applied to the disciples of Christ for the first time (Acts 11: 26).

In the Great Commission text, Jesus uses the Greek word *matheteou* (Matt. 28:19-20), which practically means a disciple of Christ. Thus, the Great Commission ordains every Christian to make disciples, not for his own desire or in accordance with his own ideology, but of Christ’s. The disciples that the Christians will make belong to Christ. They must make disciples of Christ from all nations.

The disciples must go through the spiritual and theological training indispensable for the work of ministry. Discipleship is the roadmap, the process of training and studying the word of

²⁹⁶Dictionary.com. *Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary*, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/discipleship>.

God, the learning of the Christian principles and the Christian way of life. Discipleship is a process that, through its different steps, will transform the sinner into a new person in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Appendix B

Power Point Presentation

Discipleship According to the Great Commission

Defense

1. Why you chose the topic
2. What you learned in research
3. How the findings impacted you personally and in ministry
4. How you plan to utilize the information

Reasons: Obedience to Christ

- The majority of pastors in the Haitian American churches do not give much importance to missionary work.
- This thesis project will allow the Haitian-American pastors and Christian believers to gain a better understanding of the mandate of creating disciples of all nations.
- Through missions, many people are liberated from the influence of Satan due to interventions of Christian missionaries.
- Missionary work is important because it is a good method for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore

- The project aims to find solutions to the problem of inadequate participation in Christian missions that exists in the Haitian-American Christians living in the United States, especially those living in South Florida.
- This thesis was also chosen because missions and evangelization are instruments in the growth and development of a strong Christian community. If the Haitian American churches in the United States need to make a positive impact, they need to be more active in these areas.

Additionally

- This thesis not only encourages the Haitian American churches to be more involved in the activity of mission, but it also encourages them to place their trust in God as their protector. God will never abandon his children on the mission fields.
- Mission is both biblical and historical. The first century Christians exposed their lives for the spreading of the gospel.
- Mission and discipleship assured that the lost will hear the gospel of Jesus-Christ.

Reasons for choosing this thesis

- Disciple formation is important for the continuity of the work of Christ on earth.
- The Great commission is an invitation to all nations on earth to partake in the grace of God. I want to make sure that the people of Haiti take the opportunity to reconcile with God.
- I also try to raise awareness among the Haitian American pastors about the importance of mission and discipleship in the Church of Christ.
- I notice that there is a lack of teaching in the churches on these subjects.

Reasons for choosing this thesis

- To help the Haitian American churches understand that the Great Commission is a universal command that relates to all Christians.
- It requires that all Christians participate actively in the preaching and spreading of the Word of God.
- To help the Haitian American churches to better organize themselves by forming a league that will be responsible for teaching the churches about the importance of missions and evangelization and also responsible to organize mission trips to Haiti.

Reasons for choosing this thesis

- To encourage the Haitian American churches to practice good deeds.
- To encourage the Haitian American churches to become mission oriented churches.
- To encourage the Haitian American churches to implement effective discipleship programs in their churches.
- To encourage Christians and the evangelical churches to be more involved in missionary work.
- To encourage the Haitian American churches to become authentic disciple makers.

Things learned in the research

- There are several things that I learned in the research for this thesis. For example, I learned that the Haitian American Christians do not participate enough in the mandate of the Great Commission. One of the reasons for their lack of participation is their lack of knowledge of the Word of God. The pastors of the churches do not teach the parishioners about the importance of the Great Commission. If the Great Commission mandate was taught adequately, the rate of participation would have been greater.

Secondly

- I learned in the research that evangelistic missions is not a priority in the Haitian American churches. The Haitian American Christians are too comfortable in the United States. They neglected traveling to their homeland of Haiti in order to evangelize their countrymen.
- I also learned that evangelistic mission and the formation of discipleship are so neglected in the Haitian American churches that the majority of the churches do not even have a budget for these activities.

Furthermore

- I learned that there is a lack of administrative and managerial skills in most of the Haitian American churches. The majority of pastors are not interested in obtaining adequate theological knowledge. This attitude causes them to be mediocre Christian leaders.
- I discovered also that most of the pastors run their churches as though the church is a family business. The pastors mentored only those members who are part of his immediate family.

In addition

- I learned that the majority of the Haitian American Christians does not go to Haiti on evangelistic missions because they are afraid of demonic attacks. The practice of voodoo is very prevalent in Haiti. Therefore, it is possible for Christian missionaries to be mystically attacked by the forces of darkness.
- I learned that a majority of Haitian American Christians do not know if the Great Commission pertains to all Christians. They thought that only the pastors and church leaders should go to missions.

- I learned in the research that the Haitian American are not involved enough in the social and spiritual development of their community in the United States. For instance, they do not organize programs that will feed the homeless, visiting the prisoners and the sick.
- Most of the churches have never visited even people who live in their own neighborhood.
- Most of the Haitian American churches do not have outreach programs.

More things that I learned

- I learned that most of the Haitian American Christians never been on a mission trip since their conversion.
- The few Haitian American Christians who went on mission in Haiti done so on their own initiative, not because they were taught to do so by their pastors.
- The majority of pastors in the Haitian American churches never went on any evangelistic missions.

Further

- I learned that most of the Haitian American churches do not have an effective board that assists the pastor, especially in the independent churches.
- I also learned that the Haitian American churches are not growing quantitatively because of a lack of outreach programs.
- I further learned that there is corruption in the way the pastors are handling the church money.

How the findings impacted me personally and in ministry

- The findings of this research impacted me personally and my ministry in several pertinent ways. For example, I believe that I have not done enough to educate my brothers and sisters about the importance of the Great Commission.
 - I should have been more active with the pastors in the Haitian American churches, discussing discipleship and evangelistic mission.
 - The way that the Haitian American churches are functioning saddens my heart. Most of the churches become personal property of the pastor.
-
- I am very concerned by the lack of theological knowledge noted in the Haitian American churches. The Great Commission mandate is not well-taught in the churches. The lack of spiritual knowledge constitutes an obstacle to the spiritual well-being of the Christians.
 - I am concerned by the lack of spiritual responsibility noted among the pastors in the Haitian American churches. Many members in the Haitian American churches are financially victimized by their own pastor.

In addition

- I am saddened by the fact that the research proved that most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches are more interested in making money than in saving the lost souls.
- I have also been impacted by the fact that most of the Haitian American churches do not have effective discipleship programs.
- Most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches refuse to spend time in seminaries to learn.

The findings impacted my ministry

- The lack of theological knowledge that is so prevalent in the Haitian American churches impacted my ministry in a negative way. Most of the pastors are not willing to hear the truth of the Word of God that I am dedicating to preach.
- Most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches prefer to hear the sermon from someone who will praise them even though they are not doing what the Bible asks them to do.

The findings impacted my ministry

- The lack of theological knowledge that is so prevalent in the Haitian American churches impacted my ministry in a negative way. Most of the pastors are not willing to hear the truth of the Word of God that I dedicating to preach.
- Most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches prefer to hear the sermon from someone who will praise them even though they are not doing what the Bible asks them to do.

Moreover

- I have to work harder to spread the message of the gospel to my fellow Christian brothers and sisters in the Haitian American churches. There are many stumbling blocks that the devil places on the way to keep me from preaching the Word of God.
- I am constantly on my knees praying and interceding for the Haitian Christians in the United States so that they can devote more time doing the work of God.

Additionally

- Most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches are not welcoming other pastors in their midst. They are not working in a truthful way to promote the kingdom of God. Most of the pastors see the church as his own personal business.
- This approach causes a mistrust of the churches among those who are not yet knew Jesus. The unchurched Haitians become very resilient and resistant to the Word of God.

Further

- Some of the pastors in the Haitian American churches devote their time to keep others from coming into ministries instead of forming disciples to work in the vine of the Lord.
- There is a lack of unity among the Christian leaders in the Haitian American churches. These things are negatively impacting the ministry of the genuine servants of God.

Also

- My ministry is impacted negatively due to lack of spiritual support from other pastors. Most of the pastors in the Haitian American churches consider other pastors as competitors rather than fellow workmen in the vine of the Lord.
- The majority of the pastors is not being faithful in the administration of their churches. There is a complete lack of trust in the pastors; this mistrust impacts all genuine ministries.

How you plan to utilize the information

- I will use the information obtained in the research in a very positive way in order to help the Haitian American Christians and the pastors to become better Christians.
- I plan to distribute several copies of this book free of charge to the Haitian American pastors.

Beside

- I will preach about the findings of the research everywhere I go in the Haitian American churches. I will advocate for the pastors to be honest and faithful in the work of the Lord. The church belongs to Jesus Christ, and nobody should attempt to block someone else from exercising the ministry that God calls him or her to do.
- I will continue to encourage the Haitian American Christians to participate in the activity of mission and evangelization as mandated by Christ.

Furthermore

- I will organize conferences to share the findings of this research with other pastors, leaders, and Christians in the Haitian American churches.
- I will call and write to the Haitian American pastors of the Haitian American churches to encourage them to establish authentic discipleship programs in their churches.

In addition

- I will visit as many Haitian American churches as possible so that I can share with them the findings of this research. I will encourage the pastors to teach and preach as often as possible on the importance of evangelistic mission and discipleship.
- I will also encourage them to teach and preach about the importance of the Great Commission mandate.

Further

- I will continue to encourage the pastors and the Christians in the Haitian American churches about going to Haiti in order to evangelize the sinners.
- I encourage them to preach against the voodoo in Haiti. The voodoo is a curse, and Haiti is suffering because of its involvement in the voodoo.
- The voodoo is destroying the country with all its human resources. God is asking the Haitian people to abandon the voodoo in order to serve Him because He is the only true God.

Finally

- I will continue to preach and emphasis that the Great Commission mandate pertains to all Christians, and the Haitian American Christians must not be afraid of going to Haiti to evangelize the sinners. For the God who sends them is capable of protecting them because He is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.

Appendix C

Author's Vitae

Lony Antoine has been a Baptist minister for several years. He became a born again Christian at the age of fourteen. He is married and lives in Florida with his wife and his four children. He has his ministry in his homeland of Haiti. He travels extensively back and forth to Haiti in order to preach the gospel so that the sinners will know Jesus-Christ as their Savior and Lord. He is an advocate for change in his country, both spiritually and socially. He believes the practice of voodoo should be banned in Haiti because the voodoo is a hindrance to Haiti's progress. He constantly preaches against social injustice. In the United States, he encourages the Haitians pastors and all Christians to be involved in missionary works. Pastor Lony observed that the activity of mission is not well understood in the Haitian American Christian community. He encourages them to participate in Christian missions to their homeland so that the sinners can repent of their sin and become children of God by becoming born again Christians.

Appendix D

Survey Questionnaire and Result

Lony Antoine

DMIN 889 LUO 01

Spring 2015

Liberty University

Mentor: Charlie Davidson

Subject: Discipleship According to the Great Commission

This questionnaire is created in order to determine the level of participation of the Haitian-American Christians in the ministry of mission and discipleship and their understanding of the Great Commission Mandate as stated in the Gospel of Matthew (28:19-20).

These questions should be answered by selecting either “yes” or “no.” Only adult Christians are allowed to participate. The questions are general, and no personal or invasive questions will be asked. The names of the participants or the churches will not be published. This study will be conducted by Lony Antoine, a doctor of ministry candidate at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

Questions: Please put a check mark alongside the appropriate answer.

I am a pastor: Yes No

I am a church member: Yes No

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. My church is mission oriented: | Yes | No |
| 2. My church has a discipleship program: | Yes | No |
| 3. My church organizes a mission trip every 6 months: | Yes | No |
| 4. My church organizes at least one mission trip each year: | Yes | No |
| 5. My church has a yearly budget for mission and discipleship: | Yes | No |
| 6. I go on a mission trip every year: | Yes | No |
| 7. I have been on a mission trip: | Yes | No |
| 8. Every Christian must go on a mission: | Yes | No |
| 9. The “Great Commission” relates to all Christians: | Yes | No |
| 10. Not going on a mission is a sin: | Yes | No |
| 11. This church is more than five years old: | Yes | No |

Survey Results

Does this church have an effective discipleship program?

375	no	25	yes
-----	----	----	-----

Have your church organized a mission trip to Haiti in the past six months?

368	no	32	yes
-----	----	----	-----

Does this church organize a mission trip at least every year?

384	no	16	yes
-----	----	----	-----

Does your church have a yearly budget for mission and discipleship?

375	no	25	not sure
-----	----	----	----------

Should a Christian go on a mission trip at least once a year?

240	yes	120	not sure	40	no
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Appendix E

June 25, 2015

Lony Antoine

IRB Exemption 2123.062515: Discipleship in the Haitian-American Churches as it Relates to the Great Commission

Dear Lony,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D. *Professor, IRB Chair* **Counseling (434) 592-4054** *Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*