

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**A Case Study in Developing an Apologetic Discipleship Model
Among Second Generation Haitians in Florida**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that equipping second-generation Haitian believers in Florida requires a contextually-appropriate, apologetics discipleship model. This project starts with an examination of the weakness or absence of the use of current apologetics discipleship among second-generation Haitians, which gives birth to unequipped second-generation Haitians ravaged by worldview conflict and who leave the church in record numbers. Building upon this foundation, this work sheds light on a cultural shift among second-generation Haitians. The objective is to isolate some key discipleship factors among second-generation Haitians in Florida by examining the fear of some Haitian pastors to address voodoo and its influence on second-generation Haitian believers. Such inaction has negative impacts on them from the loss of confidence in their pastors and God's Word. The discipleship chain being broken leads to syncretism and the drifting away of second-generation Haitians from the church and even the unsubscribing from the biblical worldview. In addition, this thesis will map out what a vibrant community of disciples among second-generation Haitians in Florida looks like and how it can be achieved by training Haitian pastors both theologically and apologetically. It also will encourage viable training venues to include apologetics in their programs. Finally, it will encourage disciple-makers to teach second-generation Haitian believers a thorough biblical worldview to defend their faith through love and the use of the mind in this culture of feeling.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

According to research conducted by the Barna Group on the state of discipleship in 2015, participants used different expressions and words to describe the process of discipleship. The report goes on to state that most people in the pews believe their churches are doing a good job in discipling them, whereas most church leaders believe the total opposite. Only one percent of church leaders agree that churches are doing very well at discipling new believers and young people.¹ Without discounting what their congregations say, one must give careful attention to the church leaders' opinion, given the fact that they are the ones initiating and creating an environment to help the people to grow, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."² Clearly, most second-generation Haitian believers in Florida are not being discipled to withstand the dark forces that come against them through pop-culture.

Part of the reason why they are not adequately equipped is because they are not being taught a thorough biblical worldview, which would help them understand their environment, and identify and reject other worldviews that essentially are vehicles of oppression. In the absence of such thorough biblical worldview, many questions arise. Why is it that Haitian pastors are not equipping second-generation Haitian believers? How is it that Haitian church leaders refuse to answer youth and young adults' questions regarding the issues of today's world that are impacting young people, especially voodoo and its deep influence over their lives?

¹ The Barna Group, *New Research on the State of Discipleship* (December 1, 2015), <https://www.barna.com/research/new-research-on-the-state-of-discipleship/> (accessed February 28, 2022).

² Ephesians 4:13.

Specific research about the Haitian Church in the United States is rare, as it relates to discipleship models and especially its entanglement with voodoo. Only a couple of articles are available on the subject.

The first article is written by John P. Homiak in which he reviews a work called *Voodoo and the Church in Haiti*, a film that was supposed to be “exposing the manifold historical and cultural relationships that exist between Vodun and Catholicism in Haiti.”³ For Homiak, the film did not live up to its expectations and failed to demonstrate the connection between Voodoo and Catholicism. In his review, Homiak points out, “In the end, this film will prove most useful to specialists who are interested primarily in a visual primer on Haiti and who are at the same time prepared to substantially argue its narrative and ethnographic content.”⁴

Stephen Glazier of the University of Nebraska has reviewed the same film and came to similar conclusions. He writes, “Voodoo and the Church in Haiti is less successful in attaining its stated goal of providing a theological dialogue between practitioners of folk religion and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.”⁵

Such theological dialogue between Catholicism, Protestantism, and Voodoo is provided in the essay “Catholic, Vodou, and Protestant” written by Elizabeth McAlister and Karen Richman, published in *Immigration and Religion in America*,⁶ the authors argue that “Haitian Society has become thoroughly transnational when President Aristide declared in 1990 that the

³ John P. Homiak, *American Anthropologist*, New Series, vol. 93, No. 1 (March, 1991), pp. 261-262.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Stephen Glazier, *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 105, No. 415 (Winter, 1992), pp. 82-83.

⁶ Elizabeth McAlister and Karen Richman, “Catholic, Vodou, and Protestant” in *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, Ed. Alba, Richard D., and al. (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009), 324.

Haitian diaspora is the tenth geographical department of Haiti.⁷ The authors also suggest that Haitian immigrants who are Catholics “looked to US Catholic Church as an already-established religious institution, a possible refuge, a site of cultural affinity, and a place to network as well as to worship.”⁸ The authors also observed syncretism in the Catholic Church led by Haitian priests in the U.S., and it is seen even in their style of music, which is a mixture of the Afro-Creole Voodoo and Pentecostalism.⁹ Haitians are predisposed to this voodoo-style of music.

McAlister and Richman observed that “The evangelical churches responded swiftly to the new migrants’ religious ‘needs.’”¹⁰ While in Haiti, there is a conflict between Protestants and Voodooists, here in the United States, McAlister and Richman note that it is almost non-existent. Albert Raboteau finds the conflict between “Christianity and conjure more theoretical than actual...not so much antithetical as complementary.”¹¹

What this researcher deduced from these limited materials on the subject of voodoo in the evangelical churches is that 1) the majority of Haitian Catholics in the United States are openly practicing Voodoo for individual and family protection; 2) Some Haitian evangelicals practice Voodoo for the same reasons, but not openly. Thus, syncretism is almost a normal behavior in the Haitian Catholic Church in the United States, and in evangelical churches, things are not much better. Even though they have orthodox teaching, their discipleship models do not keep their members from falling into many of the same voodoo practices.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 329.

⁹ Ibid., 340.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 348.

If current discipleship models have not helped equip second-generation Haitian believers properly to be winners in this worldview conflict, then is there a need for an apologetics discipleship model? If yes, what does it look like, and what are the steps that must be taken to construct an adequate framework?

Evidently, the Bible does encourage and teach believers to believe the doctrines of the biblical worldview, but it also strongly calls for the use of apologetics. Such a call is unambiguous when Peter the apostle writes, “but in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”¹² This aspect in current discipleship models among second-generation Haitians has been greatly missing, damaging their lives and jeopardizing their futures. Though apologetics may not be necessary for second-generation Haitians to give their lives to Jesus, it is, however, critical to equip them to face worldview conflicts, express their honest doubts, find the truth, and share it with the world.

Statement of the Problem

Most observers of the individuals responsible for discipleship among second-generation Haitian believers are aware of the rate at which young people are leaving church and the Christian faith. While such acknowledgment is important, it does not, however, help disciple-makers grasp the reasons for his alarming fact. Thus, the problem must be understood on every front. The Word of God provides a framework for a discipleship model that works, which has been mostly non-existent in churches attended by most second-generation Haitian believers. There is disconnect between what most Haitian pastors are teaching their flocks and the issues the youth and young people are facing on a day-to-day basis, which causes them to lose faith in

¹² | Peter 3:15.

their pastors, and make them feel unwelcome in the church. At the heart of the issue is an undeniable lack of theological and apologetical training of Haitian pastors, which is manifested by their inability to equip their youth and young adults to face other worldviews.

There is a misconception of what it means to disciple second-generation Haitian believers, and that range of response is evident by the broad scope of responses church leaders have employed to combat this issue. Perhaps the most common responses are a traditional sermon or mid-week Bible study with little to no relevancy. While this kind of teaching seems to be important, it is inadequate and ineffective in equipping second-generation Haitians in the context of these postmodern times and all it entails. Thus, the apologetics component is critically necessary for an authentic discipleship model. Not being trained in apologetics, pastors of most second-generation Haitians are not able to equip them. Since apologetics is “the attempt to defend a particular belief or system of beliefs against objections,”¹³ second-generation Haitians must be trained to defend their Christian faith. The truth is that it is unconceivable to expect them to defend the Christian faith when they are not being taught a thoroughly biblical worldview and when their questions are not even welcome in the church. Obviously, the above-mentioned problem has had many far-reaching consequences that not only disrupt the well-being of churches but result in the disintegration of second-generation Haitian believers, and even destroys the fabric of many families.

Statement of Purpose

In the end, the purpose of an apologetics discipleship model is to glorify the Lord in that when second-generation Haitians are taught a thorough biblical worldview, they will be adequately equipped to defend the truth of God and stand firm in the Christian faith. In grasping

¹³ James K. Beilby, *Thinking About Christian Apologetics: What It Is and Why We Do It* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 11.

the importance and understanding of the biblical worldview, second-generation Haitians will be able to fulfill God's purpose by being immovable in their faith in the Lord Jesus. The purpose of this study is to examine the reasons why current discipleship models have failed in equipping second-generation Haitian believers to face worldview conflict and demonstrate that the use of an apologetics discipleship model is critically important. Postmodernism is launching heavy attacks against second-generation Haitians and seeking to win them over to spiritual darkness. Besides postmodernism, most second-generation Haitians are still in family bondage, suffering from *loas*, *pwen* or 'evil spirits' and they have no point of reference as to how to deal with this real issue. Most discipleship models have failed second-generation Haitian believers as they are often told to pray and listen to preaching that is not relevant to what they are facing. This thesis will ultimately show that any discipleship model that seeks to equip second-generation Haitian believers to be on the winning side of worldview conflict ought to include culture-specific apologetics, which will arm Haitian pastors to teach a thorough biblical worldview and help students sharpen their foundational convictions to answer questions that may arise.

Statement of Significance of the Research

The mandate to use apologetics is clearly stipulated in the Bible, especially in the above quoted verse in the first epistle of Peter, and many biblical figures have engaged in an apologetics discipleship in cross-cultural context. The Greek word for apologetics is *apologia* or 'defense.' Believers in the Christian faith are called to give an *apologia* for the reason of their living hope. Given the worldview conflict in these postmodern times that particularly target youth and young adults through pop-culture, second-generation Haitian believers are especially obligated to give an *apologia*, as they are facing daily issues. Yet, most church leaders of second-generation Haitian believers are using discipleship models that only see traditional

Sunday preaching and Bible study sessions as tools to disciple the youth and young people. This study reveals what second-generation Haitians are thinking about the major players in the discipleship model – church leaders and parents. It will also shed light on how church leaders are dealing with youth and young people’s questioning minds, which indicates the direction in which current discipleship processes in use are heading.

Statement of Position on the Problem

It is the position of this thesis that apologetics must be part of any credible discipleship model that aims at equipping second-generation Haitian believers to overcome daily worldview conflict. Along the way, training Haitian pastors and church leaders both theologically and apologetically is critical to boost their confidence in providing answers to the youth and young adults’ questions regarding same-sex relationships, creation and evolution, and other relevant questions. Furthermore, most church leaders and parents of second-generation Haitians refuse to answer their questions regarding voodoo, family curses, and their real fear of being offered to a *loa* by their parents or grandparents. Jesus’s conversation with the Samaritan woman provides evidence of how important it is for disciple-makers to not underestimate the prospective disciple’s questions. Such intentionality of addressing questions can help lead a soul to freedom and even a whole village, as it was in the case of the Samaritan woman. Only that confidence can help Haitian pastors and church leaders to teach second-generation Haitians a thorough biblical worldview, equipping them to practice both responsive apologetics by responding to skeptic’s charge against the Christian faith and to engage in proactive apologetics when taking the initiative to give “arguments for Christian belief, arguments intended to show that Christian belief is intellectually superior to other worldviews.”¹⁴ In addition, only Haitian pastors and

¹⁴ Beilby, 15.

church leaders who are confident in their ability to think will encourage second-generation Haitians to think critically and not shy away from the issue of voodoo and its devastating influence over many second-generation Haitians, their families, and the church at large.

Limitations and Scope of Study

The subject of an apologetics discipleship model among second-generation Haitians in Florida is very wide and its components will often be referred to in this study. This work is limited to the importance of discipleship and its completeness when coupled with apologetics for the purpose of equipping second-generation Haitian believers and does not examine structure and different steps to implementing a discipleship process. On the topic of apologetics, this thesis does not consider the types of apologetics, nor does it address how one can become logical in thoughts and words. Rather, this work focuses on the importance of apologetics in equipping second-generation Haitian believers. Furthermore, this work focuses on surveying second-generation Haitian youth to discover the critical issues in equipping postmodern Haitian in Florida and beyond.

Additionally, this study did not interview parents but focused on Haitian pastors and second-generation Haitians whose views give an open window for the reader to observe, to some extent, the attitude of their parents. Furthermore, this work does not provide an overview of the Haitian culture or voodoo and its elements. Rather, it is limited to presenting a framework of the Haitian culture in which the reader can understand why many Haitian pastors and church leaders are not willing to talk about the influence of voodoo and syncretism on second-generation Haitians, and their churches at large. Finally, the author subscribes to the belief that voodoo “transcends its religious role, becoming a spiritual discipline that infuses all other societal

systems”¹⁵ and that only a thorough biblical worldview can give complete victory over the oppression of *loas* or “evil spirits.”

Methodological Considerations

The method of this thesis includes individual interviews, bibliographical research, and exegesis on key passages in the book of Acts as they relate to apologetics discipleship in cross-cultural context. Being a case study, this thesis relies heavily on interviews. One hundred and fifteen individual interviews were conducted for a comprehensive understanding of the problem as well as for formulating better solutions. Many books on apologetics from Groothuis, Stackhouse Jr., Moreland, Beilby, Kinnaman and Hawkins and others have been consulted to construct a vantage point for a healthy approach to the unique challenges of Haitians in Florida. This project cites several books on the topic of strategic discipleship as it relates to the Haitian culture context. In addition, the researcher addresses the complexities of syncretism in the Haitian community in Florida and its influence on second-generation Haitian believers. In presenting and analyzing a variety of reasons why second-generation Haitian believers are leaving the church, the researcher integrates the case study conclusions with the most recent scholarship. Furthermore, framing the Haitian culture led the author to research books and journals on what the Haitian culture is about, understanding that is foundational for a solid apologetics discipleship model among second-generation Haitians.

Study Overview

Understanding what lies underneath the lack of equipping second-generation Haitian believers is important. Because of this, chapter two addresses the unveiling of the need for

¹⁵ Claudine Michel, and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, *Vodou in Haitian Life and Culture: Invisible Power* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), xii.

contextualizing an apologetics discipleship model, a need that is ever increasing because of the assaults of postmodernism against young Haitian believers. It also shows a lack of theological training of Haitian pastors, which leaves most second-generation Haitians on shaky ground to face worldview conflicts. Consequently, many are poised to leave the church.

Chapter three addresses the assessment for Haitian apologetics training and expounds on the methodology used for the study by disclosing the number of individual interviews and the demographics. In addition, this chapter also provides proof of a second-generation Haitian cultural shift through the collected data from conducted interviews and closes with the assemblage of pieces for a structured apologetics needed among second-generation Haitians.

Chapter four tackles the issue of the Haitian culture, presents a framework in which discipleship among second-generation Haitians in Florida must be understood, and why the voodoo is seen as the defining feature of the Haitian cultural framework. Furthermore, this chapter investigates the fear of many Haitian pastors and parents to talk about the hereditary character of voodoo and its ruinous consequences on second-generation Haitians in Florida by contract between family elders and *loas, pwen* or ‘evil spirits.’ The chapter goes on to reveal the fear of many church leaders and parents to address the issue of demon possession and its implications on the discipleship development of youth and young adults. The effect of that ranges from the loss of confidence in their pastors and God’s Word to the breaking of an already feeble discipleship chain to an acceleration of mass exodus of second-generation Haitians from the church and from the Christian faith.

Before concluding, this work will describe what a road to a vibrant community of disciples among second-generation looks like and what it will take to get there by gathering pieces that will help construct a relevant apologetics model. Such an undertaking comes with big

challenges concerning training Haitian pastors theologically and apologetically. This chapter suggests further solutions to overcome these challenges by making an appeal for viable training avenues where apologetics is an integral part of church programming, one which encourages church leaders to invest in their continuing education so they can be ready to intelligently address new issues that may arise. Finally, this chapter stresses the necessity of equipping second-generation Haitian believers in Florida to defend their Christian faith by an effective use of apologetics and the mind in a culture dominated by feeling. It lastly addresses how Haitian pastors can address other sensitive questions.

CHAPTER 2
WEAKNESSES IN THE USE OF APOLOGETICS DISCIPLESHIP
AMONG SECOND-GENERATION HAITIANS

Many of the second-generation Haitians in Florida are attending Christian congregations because of their Christian parents, who have either received the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior in Haiti or here in the United States (U.S.). Being from a voodoo background with realities that present a challenge to scientifically explain, and that many other cultures do not experience, Christian Haitian parents stress the importance of finding security and protection in Jesus. Thus, church plays a vital role in the Christian Haitian families, and children are brought to and grow up in church. But as early as in middle school, second-generation Haitians, as their peers with other cultural backgrounds, begin to show a lack of interest, and even start to rebel against their parents concerning going to church activities, which they carry up through college and beyond. Many components can explain this lack of interest, but perhaps the most fundamental piece is an underappreciation and lack of use of apologetics discipleship.

Need for A Contextualized Apologetics Discipleship Model

Parents, pastors, and other church leaders are responsible for discipling second-generation Haitians if they wish to win them over to Christ. While these individuals are well intentioned and sincere at heart, one must question the model used to disciple second-generation Haitians in general, especially those in Florida. Being raised in the U.S. and espousing a good part of the Western culture, most second-generation Haitians in Florida are, to a certain extent, disoriented from the world, unable to interpret their surroundings and, as Josh Chatraw suggests, there are signs that they are experiencing a “cultural concussion.”¹⁶ This is precisely what seems to be happening in our days; things have changed, or should one say, our understanding of the

¹⁶ Josh Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 25.

world has changed, causing a shift in ways people think, speak, and act. Many second-generation Haitians have lost their spiritual compass. What is more is that many of their church leaders are not able to accurately diagnose the problem. When they cannot adequately equip the youth and young adults, then there is a need for self-examination leading to a change of strategies.

The changes are so profound that many pastors of second-generation Haitians in Florida have missed a great opportunity to disciple them, being themselves attached to an old model that simply focuses on irrelevant preaching and teachings. It follows that there is a need for a new apologetics discipleship model. A discipleship program seems not to be complete without a strong element of apologetics, especially when the perspective disciples are young people, as they ought to be prepared to avoid being hit by postmodern ideologies.

An Increasing Need in These Postmodern Times

One may still question whether there is a need for an apologetic discipleship among second-generation Haitians in Florida, and such skepticism is legitimate. However, not only is there a need for apologetics discipleship, but that need is forever increasing in these post-modern times. Discussing the pre-modern, modern, and the post-modern eras, Josh Chatraw helps us understand the profound changes that are taking place at a light-speed. When talking about the post-modern era, Josh Chatraw points this out:

Some late moderns went to an extreme in rejecting the Enlightenment search for Truth. They've reasoned that since everyone approaches the external world with a preconceived interpretative framework developed from inherited biology and the biases of the social environment (i.e., nature and nurture), then individual perspectives are all that exist. There is no universal Truth (with a capital "T") that we can know; we can only know what the truth (little "t") is for ourselves.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

This is the world in which second-generation Haitians are living and they, too, are subject to these new ways of seeing life. Because by rejecting the absolute truth, which we believe is the Word of God through the holy scriptures, moderns – which many second-generation Haitians identify themselves as – give themselves an endless framework of understanding things in their surroundings, especially the divine. Moreover, some post-moderns practice radical skepticism and are led to believe that “there is no meaning,”¹⁸ which is the predicament of many second-generation Haitians.

A Need for Second-Generation Haitians to Understand a Thoroughly Biblical Worldview

Besides the increasing need for an apologetics discipleship model in these post-modern times, one would find a deep misunderstanding of a thorough biblical worldview. The world is full of worldviews, one more ridiculous and illogical than others, and recognizing their weaknesses and strengths has become a tedious intellectual exercise. There certainly is a critical need for second-generation Haitians to get a thorough biblical worldview. But first we must ask, what exactly is a worldview? Citing William H. Halverson, Groothuis writes, “a comprehensive view of reality in terms of which one attempts to understand and ‘place’ everything that comes before one’s consciousness.”¹⁹ This practical definition of worldview presents the fundamental elements that one must consider when seeking to get a concise picture of what a worldview is all about.

According to Groothuis, “A worldview is forged out of beliefs that have the most consequence for a comprehensive vision of reality. It is an overall conception of reality that

¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 74.

touches on the key areas that philosophy and religion have always addressed. Through a worldview, one orients oneself intellectually to the universe.”²⁰ Americans are being bombarded by so many worldviews that our second-generation Haitians in church find it difficult to navigate. Fred C. Smith, discussing what a biblical worldview looks like writes, “The biblical teaching arises out of an interconnected worldview while the larger world’s understanding arises from an atomic worldview where personal autonomy is seen as the highest good. Christians have been infected with the same kind of thinking.”²¹

Without a solid understanding of the biblical worldview, it is almost impossible to disciple second-generation Haitians God’s way. A thorough biblical worldview are the lenses through which they need to see the world, which many if not most second-generation Haitians in church do not wear.. Smith further discusses the dangers of seeing the world according to post-modern philosophy. He writes:

Far from being limited to a particular aspect of life, the biblical worldview is comprehensive. It includes everything related to the doctrines, values, priorities, and understanding of how the world works that the Bible commends and promotes. It looks at the modern world through the lenses of the Bible rather than looking at the Bible using the lenses of the modern world. The Bible should determine how you understand reality, yourself, and those around you, and how you solve problems. It is not something we “adopt” in a single moment, but rather it is something we “develop” over a lifetime. This is why it is more complex than a mere list of doctrines and moral values.²²

One does not need a degree in theology to see a disconnect between what second-generation Haitians are getting from the pulpit of their churches and how they are unable to navigate the sea

²⁰ Ibid., 74.

²¹ C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God’s Way* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publication Group, 2015), 7.

²² Ibid., 35.

of conflicting worldviews of these post-modern times. This begs the question: Since second-generation Christian Haitians are willing to get a solid understanding of the biblical worldview, what could possibly explain their inability?

Lack of Theological Training Among Many Haitian Disciple-Makers

Many pastors and church leaders have the willingness to equip their second-generation Haitians but when their willingness is not coupled with ability, it becomes just empty desire. Thus, second-generation Haitians in church who are exposed to the confusion created by the worldview conflicts are left without proper protection. As Lony Antoine points out in his *Discipleship: Encouraging Haitian Church in the United States to Fulfill the Great Commission Mandate*, “One cannot become an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ without having the proper knowledge of the doctrine of Christ. The perspective disciple must be taught properly, and in return be able to demonstrate that he or she has a perfect grasp of the instruction received.”²³ It is the responsibility of church leaders and teachers to properly teach, meaning to make sure that their teaching is relevant as to prepare second-generation Haitians in church to face this post-modern world.

As part of this study, this researcher interviewed 30 Haitian American pastors of second-generation Haitian Christians. The study found that only 50% of them have had either some theological training or have a seminary education. When asked to explain in detail what they think apologetics is all about and to establish the relationship between faith and reason, about 80% of them struggled to do that with accuracy. To the question of how what they do to encourage their congregations to think critically about their Christian faith, about 90% of them pointed to their Sunday School, mid-week Bible study and their Sunday morning preaching.

²³ Lony Antoine, *Discipleship: Encouraging Haitian Church in the United to Fulfill the Great Commission Mandate*, (D Min dis...Liberty University School of Divinity, 2015), 65.

Only 10% of them were explicit in pointing out their attempt to give proof, for example, of the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. While being grateful for this 10%, it is alarming the kind of discipleship programs that are in place to prepare second-generation Haitians to face the worldviews that are competing to win them over. If most of their pastors with some seminary education and who are responsible to disciple them struggle to understand what a worldview really is, how will second-generation Haitians grasp this concept?

Absence of Theological Training Among Many Haitian Disciple-Makers

The absence of theological training among many Haitian disciple-makers is extremely alarming. Because of the 30 pastors of second-generation Haitians interviewed, this study found that about 50% of them have no theological training whatsoever. This is not good news at all, when considering the challenges their church members, especially second-generation Haitians are facing. As previously established, it is one of the roles of a pastor to disciple them. When 50% of pastors of second-generation Haitians in Florida do not even know what a worldview is, or grasp the difference between faith and reason, we have reason to believe that these people, mostly between 18 to 29 years old are inadequately equipped, if at all.

Such a heartbreaking fact presents a sober scene, one that Jesus described when speaking of the Pharisees. Not that these church leaders are Pharisees; they simply do not have what is required to adequately lead people, and especially second-generation Haitians to enter the marketplace of worldviews with the capacity to decipher what is true and false. However, the gut-wrenching truth remains that they are blind when it comes to equipping their flocks. Jesus said, “If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”²⁴ Because these pastors – not on

²⁴ Matthew 15:14.

purpose – fail to do their work of discipling, second-generation Haitians are often the ones that pay the consequences.

Consequences of the Lack and/or Absence of Training Among Many Haitians Disciple-Makers

Purposefully or not, decisions have their consequences, some more catastrophic than others. Whether or not we are unwilling and/or unable to grasp our inaction, it does not necessarily erase its consequences. In his book *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry*, Aubrey Malphurs discusses the importance of biblical discipleship as he pinpoints some elements of such a process. He writes:

Jesus was clear about his intentions for his church. It wasn't just to teach or preach the Word, as important as those activities are. Nor was it evangelism alone, although the latter is emphasized as much as teaching. He expects his entire church (not simply a few passionate disciple makers) to move people from prebirth (unbelief) to the new birth (belief) and then to maturity. In fact, this is so important that we can measure a church's spiritual health and its ultimate success by its obedience to the Great Commission. It is fair to ask of every church's ministry how many people have become disciples (believers) and how many of these disciples are growing toward maturity.²⁵

When Malphurs talks about disciples that are growing toward maturity, one must believe that he is talking about disciples strong enough to withstand the storms of competing worldviews. When that is not properly done or not done at all, it will result in a series of consequences that will negatively affect the people in the pews especially second-generation Haitians. These consequences could be placed under two umbrellas: a) an unequipped generation in a world ravaged by conflicting worldviews, and b) a generation that is leaving the church in record numbers.

²⁵Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 131.

An Unequipped Generation in a World Ravaged by Conflicting Worldviews

As conflicting worldviews are competing for supremacy and for thinking, they are making significant impact on people's lives. In some respects, one could even say that these worldviews have made many victims and are keeping them prisoners of their erroneous belief systems. Among those victims and prisoners are second-generation Haitians, since many of them sit in the pews where most church leaders do not have a clear understanding of today's issues, or if they do, they do not know how to approach them biblically and methodically. These second-generation Haitians are not being equipped to face the *tohu wa-bohu* of these post-modern times.

In their book *When Worlds Collide*, Daniel Blackaby and Mike Blackaby describe the collisions we are seeing in today's world. They write, "Physical conflict is a fact of life. So are spiritual battles. It's not visible, noisy, or readily obvious, but it's every bit as real. The Bible says collisions are happening in the spiritual realm all around us (Eph. 6:12). Collisions change everything. Usually there are winners and losers."²⁶ This is an accurate picture of the predicament in which second-generation Haitians find themselves, and all-too often, they are on the losing side of spiritual battle. More than church leaders are willing to admit, second-generation Haitians are in the middle of a war that is raging against them, and for which they are not prepared. Daniel and Mike Blackaby help us to begin seeing the scope of that war around us every day. Consider this:

From the moment we finally stop slapping the snooze button and crawl out of bed until we hit the pillow again at night, whether we realize it or not, our faith connects with everything we do in one way or another. Like the bumpercar attraction at the amusement park, some collisions are directed at us and others we initiate; we can get gently tapped or wickedly blindsided. But if we want to go for the ride, we'd better plan on getting hit.²⁷

²⁶ Daniel Blackaby and Mike Blackaby, *When Worlds Collide* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins agree with Daniel and Mike Blackaby on the mediocre work of preparing second-generation Haitians. They assert that “for the most part, we are sending them into the world unprepared to withstand the fallout. Too many are incapable of reasoning clearly about their faith and unwilling to take real risks for Christ’s sake. These shortcomings are indicators of gaps in disciple making.”²⁸

Second-generation Haitians in church have their fair share of being bombarded by the pop culture, which is found at every turn in daily life. Many find it irresistible because it is so fun, so they think, or that there is nothing wrong with the American pop culture. Daniel and Mike Blackaby write, “Surely Satan’s deadliest weapon to derail our generation from following God is entertainment, not because entertainment itself is bad but because it comes to us in our unguarded moments as we veg, transfixed in front of a screen, leaving all inhibitions and filters behind. God help us if we model our lives after *The Bachelor* instead of the Bible.”²⁹ Some other churches have gone so far in their attempt to give an alternative to second-generation Haitian Christians, they have sacrificed some of their biblical core-values at the altar of keeping the younger generation in church. In their book *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home*, Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez consider some of these secularized devices. They write, “There have been efforts to modernize and introduce loud, secularized worship music, played by people on stage wearing beanies, tight cut V- neck T-shirts, and ridiculously skinny jeans. Fail. Some churches have attempted to create an atmosphere where everyone is right and no one is wrong. Total fail.”³⁰

²⁸ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Group, 2011), 21

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

As part of this study, 85 students from thirty churches were interviewed among whom are 35 college students and college graduates, 30 high schoolers and 20 middle schoolers. To facilitate better understanding, the questions were asked in English, their primary language. When asked to explain what they think apologetics is all about, 87% of both highschoolers and middle-schoolers did not have any idea of what it was, and 9% confess that they vaguely heard the word in church, and only 4% were able to offer any thought, though they were not accurate. To the same question, 40% of the college students and college graduates knew the word “apologetics,” but did not know what it was all about, and 60% of them offered some thoughts on it, which gives some consolation. However, when ask to discuss the degree to which they were equipped by their pastors and other church leaders to face the challenges of the post-modern times, 84% of 85 students and college graduates confessed the hard truth that they were not equipped by their pastors and church leaders to face the confusion of worldviews out there. Sadly though, these findings accurately reflect the lack of training among many pastors of second-generation Haitians, and even the absence thereof. Only 12% of them said their pastors have, intentionally, attempted to equip them to navigate daily spiritual collisions. These 12% are a beacon of hope and should be an encouragement to us all.

To better comprehend the issue, these 12% who said that their pastors have been intentional in equipping them were asked to describe the effectiveness of their pastors in training their congregations to answer worldview questions. About 60% of them said their pastors were highly effective, whereas 40% said their pastors were somewhat effective. These findings show how unequipped second-generation Haitians are to face the brutal war of worldviews.

³⁰ Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* (Carol Stream, IL: Tindale House Publishers, Inc, 2017), 7.

Moreover, Douglas Groothuis in his *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* lays out the importance of apologetics in discipling Christians. He writes, “But if Christians desire to demonstrate the truth and rationality of Christianity to those who hold other worldviews, they must apply objective criteria to the contending worldviews . If none are given, there is no apologetic, but only preaching.”³¹ Only preaching is what seems to be happening in most churches second-generation Haitians either grew up in or currently attend.

Furthermore, Groothuis presents eight ways one can evaluate a worldview to determine whether it is true or false. Among others, he mentions that the worldview must explain what it ought to explain, it must have internal logical consistency, it ought to be coherent, factual adequacy, and must be existentially viable”³² Second-generation Haitians are being disciplined but not adequately equipped to even analyze a worldview considering these factors, let alone to contend for their faith. This alone is heart breaking. What is more, the consequences of such a negligence, lack of diligence, and lack of equipment are increasingly disastrous. What else should one expect when “for the most part, we are sending them into the world unprepared to withstand the fallout. Too many are incapable of reasoning clearly about their faith and unwilling to take real risks for Christ’s sake. These shortcomings are indicators of gaps in disciple making.”³³ Indeed, disciple-making is the heart of the issue, and the current model is too flawed to equip second-generation Haitians to confront post-modern ideas. One could ask if the consequences can be more disastrous than has been already demonstrated. Yet, what follows is a

³¹ Groothuis, 22.

³² Ibid., 53-55.

³³ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 20.

direct result of the first set of consequences, leading second-generation Haitians further into spiritual confusion.

A Generation that is Leaving the Church in Record Numbers

As a result of this lack of resources, second-generation Haitians are leaving the church at an alarming rate that should concern pastors and church leaders. This is so scary that some churches are turning to the flashy things of Hollywood in hopes of keeping them in church. As it relates to how pop culture has been influencing the lives of many and how the degree to which it is leading many to the pit is not even understood, the authors of *When Worlds Collide* write, “Like a cruise missile it flies under the radar and overtakes us because we are oblivious to the danger in our midst. It is both flashy and subversive at the same time, and it’s something we welcome into our lives too readily.”³⁴

Many of the second-generation Haitians are leaving the church. As their peers with other cultural backgrounds, they too, are the “dropouts,³⁵” as David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins call them in their *You Lost Me: How Young Christians Are Leaving Church...Rethinking Faith*. Many of them think that their church leaders are responsible for their wandering feet in the world. Kinnaman and Hawkins write, “Many young people who grew up in church and have since dropped out do not hesitate to place blame. They point the finger, fairly or not, at the establishment: you lost me.”³⁶ This further confirms the alarming fact that most pastors of second-generation Haitians lack the necessary theological training to equip them to successfully navigate the worldviews and stay attached to their Christian faith.

³⁴ Blackaby, 113.

³⁵ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 6.

³⁶ Blackaby, 113.

While there is a myriad of reasons that can explain why young people are leaving church which is also true for second-generation Haitians, Kinnaman and Hawkins suggest that “The dropout problem is, at its core, a faith-development problem; to use religious language, it’s a disciple-making problem. The church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture.”³⁷ This lack of adequate disciple-making is the result of a mentality of doing business as usual without any consideration for what second-generation Haitians are facing. Speaking of the reasons why millennials are leaving the church, McFarland and Jimenez point out that, “The first and most notable way the church has failed millennials is by considering tradition to be more important than people. Many church leadership meetings focus on urgent, immediate issues: financial concerns, building renovations, and the next children’s program. Unfortunately, praying for and pursuing young leaders often takes a back seat to what happens next Sunday.”³⁸

Pastors and church leaders cannot effectively disciple second-generation Haitians if they do not consider the ever-changing world and the shifting sand of worldviews, as they ought to equip them not to be drowned by the enemy of their souls through post-modernism with, perhaps, the pop culture as its most powerful instrument. The need of being disciplined to face worldviews cannot be overstated. It is in that same vein that McFarland and Jimenez write, “Beneath the questions, many young people carry an insane amount of confusion, hurt, and rejection. They might also have bits and pieces of the truth, but because they were never taught and disciplined in the Christian faith, they now lack a biblical worldview.”³⁹ At some point, many

³⁷ Ibid., 15.

³⁸ McFarland and Jimenez, 70.

³⁹ Ibid., 26.

of the second-generation Haitians feel disconnected with church, and that feeling is as real as it gets. Kinnaman and Hawkins present a list of things that are responsible for such a disconnection. They believe young people see the church as overprotective and thus a killer of creativity, which young people are known for. Most pastors, church leaders, and parents of second-generation Haitians grew up under a disciple-making model that almost leaves no room for them to apply their creativity. Not that one needs to change the content of the gospel, because that would be unbiblical, but one should be able to welcome creative and relevant ways to present it to the world. Many young people in Haitian settings believe the cultural faith is shallow. Whenever creativity is not welcomed, the feeling and fact of being bored will surely arise. Then comes the issue of anti-science because young people find science more welcoming to their skepticism than the church. Part of this problem is the fact that, at many levels, church leaders failed to disciple them to successfully face the increasing amount of skepticism. When skepticism wins them over because of lack of equipping or the absence thereof, many church leaders see them as troublemakers.

The church is also considered repressive because of its failure to provide a more effective approach in explaining relationship within a biblical framework. Being won over by skeptic ideologies, some second-generation Haitians are facing the demon of same-sex relationships, which are addressed clearly in Romans chapter 1. What is happening is that many church leaders are failing to teach biblical frameworks for gender identity. Now that some of them find themselves in that vicious spiral – declared or undeclared – church leaders are now enforcing repressive measures against them. It is as if church leaders are asking them to either change or leave. They see church as exclusive with narrow-minded people, and they see themselves as open-minded. Because many church leaders do not have the ability to explain a thorough biblical

worldview, they become intolerant of those who do not share their view. People are not treated with love in many churches where second-generation Haitians attend. Finally, Kinnaman and Hawkins observes that young people, which is also true for second-generation Haitians, see church as a place with no room to express even the most legitimate and sincere doubts.⁴⁰ Here again, the lack of training of many church leaders of second-generation Haitians prevent them from understanding that doubt is not the absence of faith. Rather, doubt is a part of the process of disciple-making, and that one with sincere doubt should not be seen as an unbeliever. Considering all these shortcomings, one should not be surprised at the degree to which second-generation Haitians are leaving church.

The Barna Group has conducted a plethora of research aiming at understanding how young adults are leaving church. Kinnaman and Hawkins share some of the findings. They found that:

The research confirmed what we had already been piecing together from other data: 59 percent of young people with a Christian background report that they had or have “dropped out of attending church, after going regularly.” A majority (57 percent) say they are less active in church today compared to when they were age fifteen. Nearly two-fifths (38 percent) say they have gone through a period when they significantly doubted their faith. Another one-third (32 percent) describe a period when they felt like rejecting their parents’ faith.⁴¹

These stats surely put things into perspective, as they serve as a thermometer to measure the hot water in which church leaders and second-generation Haitians find themselves. The water even gets hotter when many of them do not even realize it and those who do, just ignore these facts as if they would just go away. The more church leaders keep on ignoring this situation, the more these second-generation Haitians will leave the church, being swept away by other worldviews

⁴⁰ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 68.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

that appear more logical than their Christian faith – not that they are more logical, but because the Christian worldview has not been clearly explained to them. This issue of leaving church hits the families, particularly parents who have raised their young adults in “church,” meaning they have regularly brought them to church services and activities such as Sunday School. Though parents may not have the ability to address the current threats posed by other worldviews, their years of walking with the Lord Jesus, has solidified their conviction in the biblical Christian faith to a point where it is nearly impossible to abandon their faith. However, seeing their young adults leaving church has forced them to realize that something is wrong. It has almost become a normal trend to hear parents say, “Well, you know, when they are young like that, they do not want to come to church anymore.” Christian parents of second-generation Haitians are in pain of seeing their young adults staying away from church, and they do not know what to do.

McFarland and Jimenez capture the preoccupations of many individuals responsible for equipping second-generation Haitians. They report that, “From the psychologists to student pastors, many have sought answers to explain the decline of Christianity among millennials. What happened to them? Why are millennials leaving the church? Where did we go wrong? Will they ever come back? These, and many other questions, have plagued the hearts and minds of loved ones—mostly parents.”⁴² These are some of the questions that parents of second-generation Haitians are left perplexed with, and no satisfying answers have been offered to them, because the only answer they want to hear is when will their young adults come back to the faith.

It is worth noting that of the thirty churches that participated in this study, only three (3) of them have – as of the time the interviews were conducted – a youth pastor. As previously reported, 12% of college students and college graduates among second-generation Haitians

⁴² Ibid., 6.

confessed that their pastors were intentionally equipping them to avoid being victims of other worldviews; they are from the churches with a youth pastor. This shows how second-generation Haitians are left by themselves to make sense of their Christian faith as it relates to the clash of worldviews. The other 27 churches have pastors between the age of 50 to 75, many of whom do not grasp today's reality. What is more, some of them do not seem interested in grasping the new realities of these post-modern times. Thus, one must ask whether there is a need for an apologetics discipleship model among second-generation Haitians in Florida. The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

At this juncture, one must question whether there is a biblical basis for such model since everything in church ought to be grounded in the Word of God. In what is to follow, this aspect of the study will be addressed.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: PARAMETERS AND POSTULATING HYPOTHESES

In laying out an approach to this research, it is critical to assess the need for Haitian apologetics training by pointing out some of the major reasons why second-generation Haitian believers are leaving the church. In addition, this chapter will explain the methodology of the research including but not limited to demographics and what the questioning instrument was designed to accomplish and how it achieved it, all the while testing the assessment and validation of the interviews conducted. The task of this chapter is to also identify clues that point to a possible cultural shift among second-generation Haitians, which begs for a new apologetics discipleship model. Finally, this chapter will set the sail on moving toward a structure of apologetics among second-generation Haitian believers in Florida in hopes of equipping them adequately to stand against worldviews that serve as spiritual oppressions' vehicles.

When pastors, church leaders, and parents embrace this model of apologetics discipleship, they are more likely to equip second-generation Haitians to face competing worldviews that seek to win them over. Furthermore, when these actors agree to answer the questions of their prospective disciples and strategically address their doubts with patience and love, the assumption is it will help them build confidence in the biblical worldview and help them find rational answers. Finally, when pastors, church leaders, and parents do not shy away from addressing questions regarding voodoo and the spirit world, they set themselves up for effective discipleship and thus equip second-generation believers to be on the winning side of the brutal worldview conflicts of our day.

A Needs Assessment for Haitian Apologetics Training

One of the major reasons why second-generation Haitians are leaving the church is the deplorable lack of training and even more alarming is the absence thereof. This study has confirmed this claim because as previously mentioned, only 50% of the 30 pastors interviewed had some theological training, leaving the other half without any theological training whatsoever. What is more, an overwhelming number of second-generation Haitian believers, who participated in the study, confirmed it as well. When asked to discuss the degree to which they were equipped by their pastors and other church leaders to face the challenges of postmodern times, 87% of 85 students and college graduates confessed they are not equipped by their pastors because the pastors are not equipped. Responding to the same question, Jean-Claude Prevalus, who is in his second year of college from Port-Charlotte had this to say: “I love my pastor! He has been a father figure for me. But if I must speak my conscience, I must acknowledge that he is not trained to teach us what we need.”⁴³ Jacqueline Maury who is a senior in high school from Tampa offered these words: “I grew up in this church, and the pastor, not to minimize him because I love him, but he has not done much to answer our questions. Well, after all, he did not go to Bible school or seminary.”⁴⁴

This lack and/or absence of training as seen in these statements is twofold: 1) theological, and 2) apologetical. Thus, there is an urgent need to train the people involved in disciple-making, especially pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitians. The benefits of such training are so big and positive to not consider training them. It will help slow down the rate at which second-generation Haitians are leaving the church. And, when such training is being

⁴³ Jean-Claude Prevalus, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Port-Charlotte, February 5, 2019.

⁴⁴ Jacqueline Maury, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, April 10, 2019.

intensified throughout the state of Florida, touching more and more pastors and church leaders, more second-generation Haitians will adequately be equipped, and fewer of them will leave the church. The kingdom of God will benefit from such a training since it will help second-generation Haitian believers to be firmly grounded in thorough biblical worldview.

Method and Demographics

To be included in this study, participants needed to be within an age range and educational spectrum; either in middle, high school, college, or post graduate school; be second-generation Haitians; and be a member of a church where pastors and church leaders are Haitians. Among 115 participants, 85 of them were youth and young people, while 30 were pastors. The rationale behind this sample is that the youth and young adults of second-generation Haitians are more affected by pop culture, victims of worldview conflicts, and thus are leaving the church at the highest rate because of a lack of equipping through an apologetics discipleship model. This study has excluded anyone 35 years and older. However, there is a need to consider these demographics, which further study could address.

Demographic Information

Having obtained IRB approval, the researcher contacted and recruited 115 voluntary participants from 30 different churches on both the east and west coasts of Florida. They included pastors, middle and high school students, collegiate and graduate students (30 pastors, 20 middle schoolers, 30 high schoolers, and college and graduate school students). Written parental permission was obtained before interviewing any participants below the age of 18. All participants were Haitians and second-generation Haitians. Of the 115 interviews conducted, about 45 of them were done in the Creole language and translated into English by the researcher. Falling under a Christian discipleship umbrella, the researcher verified the participants' religious

backgrounds. In fact, many of the pastors were being interviewed in their church office, which was more convenient for them. Second-generation Haitians, who participated in the study, were part of these pastors' congregations. For anonymity purposes, these churches and participants will be given pseudonyms.

Questioning Instruments: Design and Implementation

The questioning instrument was designed to collect information about the issues of apologetics discipleship as it relates to the followings: a) lack and/or absence of training of pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitians, b) inadequate equipping of second-generation Haitians, c) victimization of second-generation Haitians in the worldview conflicts as seen today; d) lack of available answers to questions regarding doubt, same sex relationships, God, evolution, voodoo, and other social questions, and e) the tendency of second-generation Haitians to leave the church as a result of all the points mentioned above. The researcher met with the participants in a place where they felt safe to express their thoughts on the various questions presented to them. For some, as it was for most of the pastors, it was their church office, whereas home was more suitable for most participants. When it was at home, the conversations took place in private.

Measuring Second-Generation Haitian Cultural Shift

This study suggests that there is a cultural shift among second-generation Haitians. They no longer want to swallow the kind of cliché answers of 'because God said so,' as they demand answers, logical ones to strengthen their Christian faith, answers that their pastors, church leaders, and parents barely provide. Another aspect of that cultural shift is seen in their embrace of pop culture, which leads them further into spiritual darkness. Some second-generation Haitians have even considered making a 360-degree turn by joining some cults that are more

open to their questioning minds, though they know these worldviews are opposed to their Christian faith. Many of them are joining the ‘nones.’ Discussing the rise of the ‘nones’, James Emery White reminds us how the “long-held view that young people raised in the church may sow a few wild oats, drift away from the compulsory attendance inflicted by their parents, but then return once they marry and begin having children,”⁴⁵ If that was proven true for millennials, it does not prove to be true in the case of younger generations, which includes second-generation Haitians.

More alarming is the fact that pastors, church leaders, and parents of second-generation Haitians are undergoing a cultural shift and they too, are left with little to no explanation of why they are running away from the Christian faith. For instance, to the question of whether they have any hope in their church leaders to equip them, Jeanine Claude, one of the second-generation Haitian college students lashed out: “I do not understand why my leaders cannot get it right. I have questions, and there are no provided answers. Some of us do not even bother asking questions anymore, because they are not welcome. At some point, I may have to leave the church. By the way, I know many others who have done so.”⁴⁶ She is not the only one with such a view. Answering the same question, Jensen Arnold, another young man in his third year of college on the west coast of Florida confessed this: “Frankly, it is frustrating that my church leaders pay little to no attention to today’s issues. The preaching is a little out of touch with what we are facing, and I do not know for how long I will be able to endure it.”⁴⁷ In both cases, the expression of their faces invited the researcher to see and read the unspoken that is they do not

⁴⁵ James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2014), 14.

⁴⁶ Jeanine Claude, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, March 07, 2019.

⁴⁷ Jensen Arnold, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, February 19, 2019.

take joy entertaining the possibility of leaving the church. They are not the only ones because of the 35 college and graduate students interviewed, about 75% of them expressed similar thoughts.

Interview Validation and Assessment

As previously noted, 115 individual interviews have been conducted over a span of 9 months with a variety of participants being pastors with and without theological training, and second-generation Haitian youth and young adults. The results are raw and unfiltered. Conclusions flow from interviewing 115 real people, from real churches, in real geographic places with real answers to real questions. The questioning instrument was tailored to help grasp the different facets of apologetics discipleship among second-generation Haitians in such a manner that the result would be trustworthy and validated. Of the 115 interviews conducted, 92 were done in person, 10 on Zoom, and 13 via telephone. Not taking anything away from the other interviews, the 92 that were done in-person presented more benefits by giving the researcher more access to the participants' thoughts through their facial expressions.

Toward a Structure of Apologetic Need

The assessment of these interviews' results not only show that second-generation Haitians, their pastors, church leaders, and parents are in a bad place in terms of disciple-making, but we are heading for even more trouble if nothing is done to turn the ship around. Speaking of the secular age in which we are living, Josh Chatraw asserts that it "also means that the way people believe has changed. Faith has become far more fragile. Christians now face a dizzying array of religious and nonreligious options for belief, many of which are held by intelligent and admirable people. Many feel the constant pressure of the skeptical currents they swim against daily and confess that swimming against their own personal doubts can be exhausting."⁴⁸ Current

⁴⁸ Chatraw, 11.

discipleship models in use among second-generation Haitians have not been able to equip them to face worldviews that are vehicles of spiritual oppression. Josh Chatraw believes that, “The need of the hour is a mature apologetics that is historically informed and theologically rooted in the gospel itself.”⁴⁹ This is also true for second-generation Haitians.

Thus, this study suggests some thoughts on a new apologetics discipleship model capable of equipping second-generation Haitians by teaching them a thorough biblical worldview so they can hold on to their Christian faith, and hopefully enable them to expose this new view to their peers. Most of the individuals in disciple-making among second-generation Haitians including themselves express a sense of hopelessness. Only an apologetics discipleship model that does not shy away from addressing questions no matter how taboo they sound or tough they seem will instill some hope in second-generation Haitian believers in Florida as well as their church leaders and parents.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 19.

CHAPTER 4
ISOLATING KEY DISCIPLESHIP FACTORS AMONG
SECOND-GENERATION HAITIANS IN FLORIDA

This chapter will build on what was discussed in chapter three, as we further pursue a clearer picture of what an apologetics discipleship model among second-generation Haitians in Florida looks like and how it can be put into practice. Along the way, we will seek common ground on what the Haitian culture is about and describe a too familiar fear among pastors and church leaders to talk about voodoo and its influences on second-generation Haitian believers in Florida. Many of them are frightened by the idea that their parents may have offered them to *loas* or to evil spirits, not knowing the full scope of their decisions' effects on their children's lives. Moreover, we will paint a picture of the fear among many pastors to address the issue of demon possession, which, to say the very least, has tremendous implications on the discipleship development of second-generation Haitians, and the heartbreaking consequences on family dynamics. Lastly, this chapter will shed light on syncretism and the issue of second-generation Haitians abandoning the church because of all the above-mentioned failures. Together, these factors are the iceberg that is sinking the church. Though second-generation Haitians seem to be the only victims, the truth is that pastors, church leaders, and parents also are among the victims.

Framing the Haitian Culture

It should be obvious to any actor involved in apologetics discipleship of second-generation Haitians that some knowledge of the Haitian culture is necessary. The apologetics discipleship process is already a complicated one, but given the dual cultures in play, disciple-making among second-generation Haitians is even more complicated. Such process is intricate, since it requires not just knowledge of the American culture which second-generation Haitians

espouse by way of education, but also the Haitian culture which was transferred to them naturally by way of blood and at home. This combination of cultures creates confusion and even conflict, and that does not make the process of apologetics discipleship any easier.

The Haitian culture is rich with bits and pieces from so many other cultures from Africa, Europe, and of course from the indigenous tribal culture in the Caribbean. But it seems that most ethnologists, sociologists, and anthropologists see voodoo as its main characteristic, to a point where they even equate the Haitian culture with its voodoo. In their book *Vodou in Haitian Life and Culture*, Claudine Michel and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith express such a view and see “Vodou as superstructure.”⁵⁰ They go on to say that “Vodou transcends its religious role, becoming a spiritual discipline that infuses all other societal systems.”⁵¹ In their book *Vodou Songs in Haitian Creole and English*, from the get-go, Benjamin Hebblethwaite and Joanne Bartley make a bold claim that “Vodou is the hereditary spiritual tradition of African descendants in Haiti,”⁵² and that “throughout the ages, Vodou has been transmitted by the elders to the children.”⁵³ One of the greatest Haitian scholars in ethnography and sociology is Jean Price-Mars. On the work of some authors who have analyzed Dr. Jean Price-Mars inescapable work, Celucien Joseph writes, “It is true that Price-Mars had posited that Vodou is largely practiced by the majority of Haitian peasants, but he had not made the claim of Vodou as the “only” religion in Haiti, nor had he excluded other religious expressions in the everyday experience of the Haitian people.”⁵⁴ I

⁵⁰ Michel, xii.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Benjamin Hebblethwaite and Joanne Bartley, *Vodou Songs in Haitian Creole and English* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2011), 2.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Celucien L. Joseph, *The Religious Philosophy of Jean Price-Mars*, *Journal of Black Studies*, 43 (no.6, September 2012), 620-645.

wholeheartedly agree with Celucien L. Joseph's analysis. However, being honest with ourselves, we can agree that voodoo transcends our societal systems to a point where even some people in church unknowingly carry some of its traditions. This view, one widely held among experts, is the framework of what is to follow.

The Fear of Talking About Voodoo and Its Deep Influence on Second-Generation Haitians in Florida

Though many voodooists do not want to hear it, the main aspect of voodoo is associated with the *loas* or simply 'evil spirits.' These *loas* or 'evil spirits' could be considered under two categories: the *loas* and the *pwen*. Though it has various meanings, a *pwen* is mainly seen as "a magical power that symbolically captures the essence of a relation or an entity – a kind of sympathetic magic."⁵⁵ In her effort to capture the difference between *loas* and *pwen* Karen E. Richman, citing Zo Guerrier, writes:

A lwa is a member of your family. A pwen is a stranger from far away. The lwa Sobo has children, Ogoun has children, Loko has children. A lwa is like your mother. Whenever she feels like it she can make you kneel and give you a spanking. The root lwa can hold you at any time— if you don't take care of them. The lwa are there to protect you. But a pwen can work for you. You could go to a gangan and buy a pwen because you want to have a car. The lwa could make you have two or three cars. You owe the pwen only if it works for you. If the pwen made you win three thousand dollars, to give the pwen a thousand of it is nothing. If you don't pay the pwen, it can eat you. —Zo Guerrier, January 1984.⁵⁶

A few things are worth highlighting from Richman's quote. First, many Haitians are seeing the *loas* as members of their families, and they have many of them according to what they need as each of them is responsible for a particular aspect of life. As such, these *loas* or evil spirits see

⁵⁵ Karen E. Richman, *Migration and Vodou* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), 42.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

themselves as a patriarch of the family. “When Haitians refer to the religious dimension of their lives, they refer to a form of activity rather than an institutional entity. They say they ‘serve the spirits.’”⁵⁷ We must note that *loas* are not imaginary, they are real spiritual beings that people get access to through magical recipes with the help of *hougan* or “voodoo priest” as mediums.⁵⁸

Secondly, and because they are seen as family members and even as mothers, the ‘*loas*’ give them the right to inflict punishment on anyone who does not follow their instructions and orders. There are certain colors they want their worshippers to wear, a certain food to offer them, and so on; and if the practitioners do not yield, punishment is to follow, which can be the illness of a child and even death in the family. Such punishments do not showcase any protection; if anything, they might exhibit retribution. The third key point that deserves our attention from that quote concerns the ‘*pwen*,’ which someone can buy for protection and to gain material possessions. At first, these evil spirits are enjoying unspeakable respect from their worshippers, but the punishments they wreak on people inspire a great deal of fear.

Many of the second-generation Haitians in Florida come from such voodoo practices background. Most of their parents left voodoo because of the severe punishments under the hands of the angry *loas* or evil spirits. Having been delivered – partially – from the influences of these *loas*, many Haitians in the church do not want to talk about this reality either by shame or, worse yet, by fear of their wrath. Shame, because many Christian Haitians do not want people to know how deep they were in voodoo, and fear because they believe the *loas* can still punish them for abandoning them.

⁵⁷ Michel and Bellegarde-Smith, 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xi.

Utilizing Paul's Method of Dealing with Demonic Oppressing in the Haitian Cultural Context

As one is involved in apologetics discipleship, there are times where they will face cases of demonic oppression, which calls for exorcism. Paul the apostle provides a biblical path as to how one must deal with demon possession and exorcism in doing apologetics discipleship in cross-cultural settings. Thus, Paul has used this proposed model of apologetics discipleship both within the Jewish culture and in cross-cultural situations.

Some cultural backgrounds may not be familiar with this aspect of discipleship. Though some people may not be conscious of it, the fact is, it is everywhere in today's world, and perhaps Haitians and even second-generation Haitians are among the most conscious of it having seen and, in many cases, experienced it on a personal or familial level. For a better understanding of the prospects' worldviews, Toren suggests that Christians "see alternative worldviews as either vehicles of spiritual oppression or freedom. Worldviews represent spiritual forces, and a change of worldview, particularly from an oppressive worldview to the liberating Christian faith therefore also implies liberation from spiritual bondage in the context of a power encounter"⁵⁹ This perspective really can facilitate the effort of disciple-makers facing the harsh reality of demon possession because they see alternative worldviews as vehicles of spiritual oppression as opposed to a thorough biblical worldview, vehicle of spiritual freedom.

The apologetics discipleship effort of Paul in Philippi provides a great example of how Haitian pastors and church leaders should handle such a complicated situation. The story is found in Acts 16:16-18 and is a fascinating one because the scene opens with the narrative of Paul in route to a certain place of prayer. This underscores that during his stay in Philippi at Lydia's home, however long or short it was, Paul and his companions had already adopted a

⁵⁹ Benno Van Den Toren, *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue* (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2011), 163.

place of prayer, and understandably so, nobody can ever overemphasize the role of prayer in the Christian's daily life. As Haitian pastors and church leaders are facing this reality of demon possession, they must spend time in prayer before the Lord. Paul, one must believe, did not know he was going to face a demonic possessed lady, but he knew he needed to be prepared for whatever may come. He was there to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which involves using apologetics discipleship. But his prayer time prior to this encounter, prepared him to biblically face those evil spirits, much as Haitian pastors are facing the *loas*' oppression.

The biblical text is crystal clear about the notion of demon possession, which many church leaders and disciple-makers ignore. Paul and his companions were met by that slave-girl. This gives the idea that the demon-possessed woman came to Paul, not the other way around, which speaks of the demonic opposition to the message of Paul. Kwon, expounding on the identity of the demon possessed, writes, "We met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination: Literally, 'she had a spirit of the Python,' a snake-god in charge of the Delphic oracle. The phrase seems to have become an idiom for divination or fortune-telling"⁶⁰ As J.W. McGarvey points out in his *A Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, "Demons exhibited a knowledge of the person of Jesus, and the mission of himself and the apostles, which seems not to have been derived from preaching. This was a superhuman knowledge."⁶¹ Kwon seems to be in agreement when he writes that "with demonic insight she kept shouting that the missionaries were 'slaves of the Most High God' and that they were announcing 'the way of salvation.' This reminds us of the stories of the demoniacs met by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (4.34, 41; 8.28)."⁶² For a few

⁶⁰ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *A Commentary on Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press Edition, 2005), 142.

⁶¹ J.W. McGarvey, *A Commentary on Acts of Apostles* (Lexington, KY: Transylvania Printing and Publishing CO., 1872), 206.

⁶² Kwon, 142.

days, Paul did not pay attention to the demon. But then, Paul has had enough and chose to get rid of that distraction. Paul followed the Lord Jesus who, He too, did the same in His earthly ministry. McGarvey gives a two-fold explanation as to why Paul had to cast out the demon from the possessed slave-girl. He writes:

The course pursued by Paul was the same with that of Jesus, who invariably stopped the mouths of demons when they attempted to testify to his claims. The propriety of this course will be apparent upon observing: *First*, that to have permitted demons to testify for the truth would have convinced the people that there was an alliance between them and the preachers. *Second*, this supposed alliance would have caused all the good repute of Jesus and the apostles to reflect upon the demons, and all the evil repute of demons to reflect upon them.⁶³

One cannot but wonder why Paul did not immediately cast out the demon as the apostles and Jesus would have done in situation like these. McGarvey beautifully offers an explanation, which gives great insights of Paul's state of mind, preoccupations, and his apologetics skills. He writes:

In the present instance, Paul could not pursue the settled course of the apostles, without greatly depreciating the value of the slave; and doubtless it was an extreme reluctance to interference with the rights of property which had induced him to submit to the annoyance of so many days. At length, seeing no other means of relief, he cast the demon out, and, in doing so, framed the exorcising sentence in such a way as to indicate an antagonism between the demon and Jesus Christ; saying, "*In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her.*"⁶⁴

The antagonism is not personal, but it is between two worldviews, one that is repressive and the other liberating. The phrase 'in the name of Jesus' shows it was not his apologetics skills that was achieving the needed exorcism to bring freedom to the slave-girl demon possessed. The power of the Jesus' name through prayer is what Haitian pastors need to deal with the oppression of the *loas* effectively and victoriously as seen in the life of second-generation Haitians as well as

⁶³ Ibid., 207.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

their parents. Paul, indeed, was following Jesus’s footsteps because “while Jesus was the greatest apologist of all time, he nonetheless affirmed that no person can be brought to God without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Even though he used reason and stressed evidence, yet he was aware of the fact that neither reason nor experience alone was sufficient to elicit faith.”⁶⁵ It thus becomes clear that anyone who is involved in apologetics discipleship must be empowered by the Holy Spirit for any situation that may arise, especially that of demon possession, which is common in many cultures. Analyzing the exorcism Jesus performed in Luke 9:37-43a, Todd Klutz and John Court write, “In comparison with both the crowd and the two groups of disciples, whose function in this unit is chiefly to form a backdrop – partly neutral, partly negative – against which Jesus can stand out, the father of the demoniac plays a more prominent and interesting role in the story.”⁶⁶ But Paul and Silas did not have a father eager to see her girl being delivered, nor a cheering crowd. They were faced with great opposition from both the girl’s master and the crowd. This further proves the prayer life of these disciple-makers was real, not fake, not superficial, and we know that to be true because after what transpired, they were arrested, severely beaten, and thrown into the dungeon. Haitian pastors are not thrown in the dungeon as a result of casting out a demon from someone. However, it is believed in the Haitian cultural context that after an exorcism, that *loa* or evil spirit will come after the one who performed it. As McGarvey notes, “Men do not pray when they are enraged, nor when they are hopeless. The soul must recover from the turmoil of violent passion before it can offer thoughtful prayer. But still greater composure is necessary to induce a disposition to engage in singing.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Norman L. Geisler, and Patrick Zukeran, *The Apologetics of Jesus: A Caring Approach to Dealing with Doubters* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerBooks, 2009), 167.

⁶⁶ Todd Klutz and John Court, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 169.

But that was exactly what Paul and Silas were doing in one of the darkest nights – literally and figuratively – of their lives. They were not only ready to highlight the biblical worldview that provides the best alternative of life, which is freedom, but they also were ready to face the repercussions of the repressive worldview through its agents, the evil spirits through men. What about the newly free slave-girl? From that point on, the text does not mention her anymore. But as Kwon points out, “Luke is silent, but we can naturally surmise that she became a Christian.”⁶⁸ As the church in Philippi went on, one would assume that that slave-girl would be discipled, having been freed from that Python spirit.

The Terrifying Knowledge of Being Offered to a Loa/Evil Spirit

Nearly all migrant Haitian families in Florida have a history tangled with *loas* or *pwen* or both because they are seen as hereditary.⁶⁹ More than they are willing to admit, their parents or grandparents served these evil spirits, which are generational. They did this either willingly or unwillingly. As part of this study, the 85 youth and young adults were asked if their parents or grandparents served the *loas* prior to giving their lives to Christ, and if yes, do they feel associated with these evil spirits and how. The findings are shocking, showing the seriousness of the issue. Seventy percent of them said that at least one of their parents or grandparents have served *loas*, and they discovered this from their family members. Only 17% of them confessed that their parents informed them, though it was only bits and pieces. The remaining 13% said to not personally know anything about it, but that they knew at least a friend with such knowledge.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 208

⁶⁸ Kwon, 142

⁶⁹ Hebblethwaite and Bartley, p. 1.

Sherry Jacques had this to say: “I have heard from relatives back in Haiti that some of my family members have had a tight relationship with some *loas* or whatever. But both my father and mother do not want to talk to my siblings and I about it.”⁷⁰ On his part, Chandelere Accelon confessed this: “Growing up, my dad told me about these *loas* stuff, which I value even more now than when I was younger. Because it is good to hear it from him than anyone else.”⁷¹

These are just a sample of 87% of the participants who have knowledge that their families have had a relationship with one or multiple *loas*. Having that knowledge does not seem to bother them much, but, knowing that there is probably collateral damage from such a past relationship deeply bothers them. Forty-seven percent of the 85 youth and young adult participants painfully confessed that they feel and know they are somehow associated with this evil spirit. However, it gets more alarming when asked to describe how such association is being manifest. Some of the answers are breathtaking and heartbreaking at the same time. Consider the following:

Since my teenage years, I have had countless of nightmares, but they seem so real in which I see strange creatures. When I finally found a little strength within myself to ask my pastors and parents, they did not want to explain what was going on to me. All they were saying was for me to pray. I finally understood it for what it is, oppression from dark forces linked to the evil spirits my parents and grandparents used to serve. Maybe I am not the only one. These things must be discussed in church and at home.⁷²

Or this:

I do not feel associated with evil spirits, though I know my grandparents from my mother’s side were deep into Voodoo. However, I have a friend of mine who has been going through some violent times. She revealed to me that, in her sleep, she repeatedly seen herself in some extremely dark places with what appeared to be evil spirits telling her that she belongs to them. She fought through it, and her parents refused to talk about

⁷⁰ Sherry Jacques, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Orlando, Fl., January 7, 2019.

⁷¹ Chandelere Accelon, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Sarasota, Fl., January 16, 2019.

⁷² Marie-France Pierre, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Delray Beach, Fl., March 8, 2020.

it for a long time. When they finally did, they told her she was picked by a ‘*loa*’ as prize with whom her parents made a contract for protection and material possession. I do not understand why parents and pastors refuse to talk about these things. It is not honest, and it does not help us.⁷³

For their part, all 30 pastors that participated in this study confessed having faced this situation in their church among second-generation Haitians. One of them said this: “The way I see this is that once we give our lives to Christ, we have no business with *loas*. So, to me, there is nothing to talk about.”⁷⁴ By the way, ‘there is nothing to talk about’ was the overwhelming aspect of about 82% of the interviewed pastors. When answering these questions, some young adult participants expressed frustration, anger, and a sense of being abandoned by the church, and understandably so. The church has a moral and, more than anything else, a spiritual obligation to not only talk about these issues related to voodoo, but also live out a thoroughly biblical worldview to set free those who are still oppressed by evil spirits or *loas*.

Negative Impacts on their Daily Life

These things are happening to real people with real but negative consequences on their lives, some more devastating than others. When 47% of youth and young adults of second-generation Haitians reveal that they feel, and in some cases, know they are being oppressed by *loas*, this should catch the attention of pastors, church leaders, and parents alike. Their testimonies about oppression of dark forces are poignant, and point to the multiple layers of negative impacts affecting their daily lives. Psychologically, the impacts are immeasurable. One of the participants had this to say: “As a result of my frequent nightmares, I started developing some mental problems. Because for a long time, I was confused about whether this was real or

⁷³ Rosemene Louis-Jean, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL., May 7, 2019.

⁷⁴ Charles Monpoint, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, FL., June 9, 2019.

not. As I look back now, I realized that that had impacted me academically in high school through my first two years in college.”⁷⁵ Being psychologically impacted has far more effect on schooling and every other aspect of one’s daily lives from relationships to capacity to perform other daily activities. Only God knows what is going on in their minds and how such events are not just influencing their present lives but alarming their future. There is a lot at stake for churches to reconsider how we deal with this, and find a better approach, moving forward.

The Fear of Addressing the Issue of Demon Possession

What has been thus far described happens to second-generation Haitian believers in the most private places of their lives, in their sleep and minds. Was it not for their revelations, the reader would not know about it. However, the manifestation of such oppression from *loas* or evil spirits are not only private, but they are also made public, as it seems the *loas* take pleasure in humiliating people. One of the rare youth pastors who was part of this research recalled a frightening scene involving a second-generation Haitian believer in their church sanctuary during a prayer session. He said:

It was a Saturday morning during our normal time of prayer. Everyone was praying when we heard an unusual cry. As I open my eyes to see what it was, I saw this young lady who herself was one of the youth leaders rolling on the floor. I quickly understood it was a demon possession case. We prayed and God delivered her from that evil spirit. After the prayer, I along two other people brought her to her parents’ home because she was physically weak, and we also understood that a serious conversation was necessary for her total deliverance. But to my big surprise her parents who are also church members and even leaders, did not want to have it.⁷⁶

These straightforward words from a youth pastor should shock the church to wake up and start doing something different. Pastors and church leaders, for the most part, are seemingly not

⁷⁵ Marie-France Pierre, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Delray Beach, FL., March 8, 2020.

⁷⁶ Jacquelin Charles-Fils, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL., May 11, 2019.

willing to face their fear and address the situation as they should. To the question of how they deal with demon possession, about 80% of pastors referred to prayer as the only approach. One of them confidently said this: “I acknowledge that this issue is real. The way I deal with it is by casting out the evil spirit from the possessed person, in the mighty name of Jesus. Talking about it gives too much value to *loas* and voodoo.”⁷⁷ It is true that prayer must be our first response, but when faced with generational issues, specific teachings are needed to expose the different hurdles and how to overcome them. Dealing with generational issues requires, among others, exposing the lies that perpetuate spiritual oppression and the truth that breaks the cycle of oppression. Nobody can say it better than God himself when He said, “my people perish from a lack of knowledge [truth].”⁷⁸ As the lies are being exposed, the *loas* will lose their grip on people; and as the truth (a thoroughly biblical worldview) is being taught, the flock will experience a more expanded freedom.

The Implications on their Discipleship Development

The fear of not addressing voodoo in the church has multiple disruptive consequences on the mind, schooling, and daily activities of second-generation Haitian believers. Perhaps, the implications on their discipleship development are the most devastating, the top six of which will be considered here.

Partial or Total Loss of Confidence in Their Pastors

The findings of this study show that second-generation Haitian believers understand the difference between ‘loving’ their pastors and having ‘confidence’ in them. One hundred percent of youth and young adult participants expressed their love for their pastors, and that speaks of

⁷⁷ Prophete Emilcar, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL., May 5, 2019.

⁷⁸ Hosea 4:6.

their good intention. It also speaks of a bond they have developed over the years with their pastors. But they are not afraid to express their dissatisfaction with the lack of relevance of their pastors' teachings. It is their love for them that motivated many of them to stay under their pastors' teachings, though they were not equipped to face other worldviews. After years of discontent and being victims of worldview collisions, many have come to the regrettable place of either partial or total loss of confidence in their pastors. I could visibly see the souls' pain through their eyes and faces when talking about that. Consider this, for instance: "We all love him! But when it comes to his readiness to teach us to defend our faith, I can only speak for myself. I have no confidence in him when it comes to that."⁷⁹ Answering the same question, Jeannot Joseph was even more direct when he said. "Can I be totally honest with you? I cannot trust him [*his pastor*] for the kind of teaching I need for my spiritual growth. I still go to the church, but I am getting the spiritual nourishment somewhere else – online."⁸⁰ These reflect the thoughts of about 85% of youth and young adults regarding their loss of confidence in their pastors. The findings of David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins echo the same. Many twentysomethings confessed that "faith was never very deep; they were "in the building" but never really committed to following Christ."⁸¹ That is chilling! Because to be committed to following Christ means to be established in the biblical worldview through an apologetics discipleship model, which is non-existent for the most part.

⁷⁹ Sylvain Preval, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, FL., June 12, 2019.

⁸⁰ Jeannot Joseph, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL., October 10, 2019.

⁸¹ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 48.

Broken Discipleship Chain

What these 85% of youth and young adults are in essence saying is that they do not trust their pastors to train them in apologetics discipleship. Having lost faith in them – partially or totally – they have crippled down the possibility of disciple-making. Trust or confidence is the *sine qua non* condition for any learning process to begin taking place. Sitting across the table from all these youth and young adults and listening to their brutally honest answers on top of the privilege of seeing the unspoken in their eyes, shook me to the core. Thus, pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitian believers must be willing to look at themselves instead of labeling them as not interested in the things of God. Part of this assumption may prove to be true, but for the most part, I have seen God’s love in these youth and young adults, and a strong desire to be equipped.

Partial Loss of Confidence in God’s Word

The discipleship process is supposed to mold second-generation Haitian believers to become established in the biblical worldview. But when the trust between the two main actors in disciple-making is breached, the process, if it is not destroyed, cannot accomplish that for which it was designed. Unfortunately, this is the predicament in which some second-generation Haitians find themselves. Of the 85 youth and young adults interviewed, about 15% expressed doubt on the Bible being God’s Word because it has not been thoroughly taught to them in ways for them to grasp it. One of them revealed this: “I am at a point where I wonder if the Bible is the Word of God. I mean, that is what I heard in church for all my life, but it has not been logically explained to me. The frustrating part is that nobody answers my questions.”⁸² As Chatraw observed, ‘instead of looking to God for significance or meaning in life, many “have constructed

⁸² Philippe Guerrier, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL, November 22, 2019.

webs of meaning that provide almost all the significance they need.”⁸³ One may say that 15% is not a significant number, but even 1% would be all-too many given the dangerous path such wandering minds are poised to take.

Syncretism as an Option

Syncretism is seen throughout the Haitian community in Florida. Being widely accepted among Catholics and voodoo adepts, syncretism is unfortunately practiced by certain members of the Protestant movement. Because of a lack of understanding of the biblical worldview, many Haitian migrants in Florida are practicing syncretism, believing they and their families are at risk of being destroyed by a *pwen* that either they or their parents have bought from a voodoo priest. Because if the *pwen* is “left unchecked (or untied) they turn into voracious monsters that consume members of the kin group.”⁸⁴ About 10% of second-generation Haitians confessed that their parents, in some ways, participated in activities that signal some type of syncretism. Madeline Charles remembered a scene that took place a few years ago. Here are her own words: “My mom and I went to Haiti visiting some family members a few years ago. She [her mother] brought me to a voodoo place and told me that it was for the family’s protection.”⁸⁵ It is worth noting that that mother has been a Christian for over 20 years, and yet did not understand that the power of Jesus is all she needed. Another young man in his twenties said this: “My friend’s mother passed away some time ago, and it was devastating! Rumors were spreading around that she died following a voodoo spell. I remember my friend was contemplating going to a *hougan*

⁸³ Chatraw, 76.

⁸⁴ Terry Rey and Karen Richman, *The Somatics of Syncretism: Tying Body and Soul in Haitian Religion* (Studies Religion, 2010), 397. Accessed on March 5, 2022. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/abs/10.1177/0008429810373321>

⁸⁵ Madeline Charles, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, Fl., December 10, 2019.

or *gangan* or a voodoo priest to find answers and protection. I do not know if she did, but I would not be surprised if she did.”⁸⁶ At the rock bottom of this issue of syncretism is broken disciple-making models that fail to teach people, especially second-generation Haitians a thoroughly biblical worldview.

Drifting Away from Church

This research found that about 85% of second-generation Haitians lost confidence in their pastors and church leaders to train them, and 15% of them lost confidence in God’s Word. Combined, these two numbers indicate the dangerous path on which second-generation Haitians are traveling. These second-generation Haitian believers are drifting away from church for many reasons.⁸⁷ However, the underlying reason seems to be their frustrations with the church leaders’ inability to answer their questions. For instance, consider this from Maula Pierre in his late twenties: “When your questions are met with superficial answers or are ignored, it means you are not wanted in the church. Then, leaving is the only option left.”⁸⁸ Youth under eighteen years of age may not yet be able to leave the church, but some of them are thinking about it. Mirlande Dirogene who is a junior high student, revealed this: “I still come to church because of my parents. But once I leave my parents’ home, it will be a different story.”⁸⁹ We have 85% of youth and young adults as candidates for leaving the church; and if nothing is done, the churches of second-generation Haitian will soon be empty.

⁸⁶ Remy Augustin, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, FL., July 14, 2019.

⁸⁷ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 58.

⁸⁸ Maula Pierre, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Orlando, FL., July 13, 2019.

⁸⁹ Mirlande Dirogene, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, FL., July 12, 2019.

Unsubscribing to the Christian Faith

Churches with small numbers of youth and young adults among second-generation Haitians in Florida are trending downwards. These prodigals,⁹⁰ as Kinnaman and Hawkins call them, have been patiently waiting for a change in how we do church; their love for their pastors have kept them in the church through months and years of dissatisfaction. “Prodigals lose their faith, describing themselves as ‘no longer Christian.’”⁹¹ This study did not interview participants that were at that critical stage, but the overwhelming data collected showed 85% of youth and young adults were already engaged in that path. However, 33% of the 85 young participants confessed knowing at least one friend who was part of their church and who sees him/herself as “either holding firmly to ‘no faith’; or espousing a different faith entirely.”⁹² More often, these young people espouse other worldviews that seem to give them a sense of security when they are leading them further in spiritual darkness and oppression.

Consequences on Family Relationship

Second-generation Haitians are drifting away from the church and even from the Christian faith because of weakened disciple-making models that are unable to equip them for all kinds of merciless assaults launched against them by other worldviews. The immeasurable effects of apologetics discipleship have reached the family. Some parents do not know how to deal with their nomad and prodigal children and think that the best way is to push them away to save face in the eyes of church members. That is especially true when parents are leaders in the church, leaving parents with the odd choice of keeping their leadership role in the church and the

⁹⁰ Kinnaman and Hawkins, 58.

⁹¹ Ibid., 18.

⁹² Ibid., 50.

irreplaceable role of a father or mother. About 17% of the youth and young adult participants described some personal events regarding spiritual matters that ended up in fractured family relationships. Pauline recalled this: “I got pregnant when I was 19 while in my first year of college. I am not proud of it today, and I know it did hurt my parents. But I do not think any parent should break their relationship with their children over that. I ended up leaving their home and church because of church people’s judgment including the leaders.”⁹³ Consider this revelation:

I am a member of this church but there are things they do that I cannot understand. My best friend got pregnant while in high school. Her parents threw her out because they said, she was a shame to the family. But everyone knew it was because they wanted to hold on to their leadership position as deacon and deaconess. That is sad. But the saddest part is that she never came back to church, and her relationship with her parents has not been restored.”⁹⁴

These poignant revelations show how pastors and congregations are unwilling to talk to people about real issues and should compel them to reconsider their way.

Conclusions and Generalizations

Discipleship is not an easy process. Utilizing models that do not address the apologetic needs of second-generation Haitian believers is not helping equip them to address worldview conflicts. It requires trust on both sides of disciple-making for the process to even start. While it usually starts in most churches, it quickly stops because most second-generation Haitians realize that they cannot trust their pastors and church leaders. Sadly, this begins a spiral of devastating consequences that cripples the process of discipleship, or even shuts it down, reduces or destroys their confidence in God’s Word. This lack of understanding of a thoroughly biblical worldview

⁹³ Pauline Legrand, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, Fl., August 21, 2019.

⁹⁴ Chantal Lavictoire, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, Fl., August 15, 2019.

opens a door for syncretistic practices, which usually leads to church abandonment and later to the renouncement of the Christian faith. In this amalgam of consequences, the family relationship is not exempt. Many families are heartbroken, sorrowful over what took place. I do not want to fall into an oversimplistic causal fallacy because these factors are more complicated than they may appear, and that other parameters could be contributed to them. However, all of them point to inadequate disciple-making models not able to equip people, especially second-generation Haitian believers to face other worldviews. Thus, this should compel pastors, church leaders, and parents to reassess the current disciple-making models and thoughtfully consider and embrace a carefully engineered apologetics discipleship model.

CHAPTER 5

**ROAD TO A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES AMONG
SECOND-GENERATION HAITIANS IN FLORIDA**

Thus far, I have made the argument for an apologetics discipleship by presenting the need of postmodern Haitian for a thoroughly biblical worldview. I have pointed out a biblical basis for apologetics discipleship, presented the parameters as well as postulating the hypothesis for the reader's better understanding of this study. I have also delved into the matter of the Haitian culture which many equate to voodoo and its deep negative impacts on a wide range of factors that either cripple or destroy the process of discipleship among second-generation Haitians. These ramifications range from losing confidence in God's Word to drifting away from the church and unsubscribing from the biblical worldview. In this final chapter, the task before us is to lay down what could serve as a roadmap leading second-generation Haitians in Florida to become a vigorous community of disciples.

Proceeding towards this goal will lead to consider some of the factors that can help construct a relevant apologetics model to disciple second-generation Haitians in Florida to adequately face the worldviews conflict. These factors are related to the challenges of rightly training Haitian pastors both theologically and apologetically, the inclusion of apologetics in the curriculum of viable training avenues, and the importance of continued education for pastors of second-generation Haitian believers. Additionally, this approach will lead to the examination of two main components that actors in disciple-making in Florida can use as they seek to equip second-generation Haitian believers to defend their Christian faith.

Constructing a Relevant Apologetics Model to Disciple Second-Generation Haitians in Florida

Current discipleship models in use in most churches are letting second-generation Haitian believers down to a point where, as previously discussed, they are leaving the church in great numbers. Some are leaving the Christian faith altogether, and are even breaking down family relationships. Most would probably agree that an apologetics discipleship model is a must, but that is not enough. We need to put the theological bones together for a complete skeleton, and then put meat on it so they stand on their own. The proposed discipleship model addresses exposed gaps in other discipleship models which have failed second-generation Haitian believers. Thus, it equips them to face the threats other worldviews represent in their day-to-day battles. To be relevant, such discipleship model ought to include worldview apologetics, which provides a framework to help second-generation Haitian believers to defend and commend the Christian faith.⁹⁵ A relevant apologetics discipleship model also implies that disciple-makers are being trained to equip second-generation Haitian believers.

Challenges to Training Haitian Pastors Theologically and Apologetically

As previously mentioned, 50% of the Haitian pastors interviewed have had some theological training, but most of them were unable to clearly define what apologetics is all about. What is more, the remaining 50% of the Haitian pastors have had no training. We know the second half of them need theological training, but it is the overwhelming 90% of Haitian pastors who need apologetics training. Such an undertaking is challenging because it faces logistical and other barriers.

⁹⁵ Beilby, 17.

Theological Training

To theologically train these pastors requires that they recognize their need of it, which is, in so many respects, something extremely difficult. Many Haitian pastors are sincerely unaware of their inabilities to disciple second-generation Haitian believers. When asked to describe how prepared they are in helping their congregations to defend their faith against other worldviews, about 67% of the pastors pointed to the youth and young adults lack of interest in church. When the researcher gently reminded them that the question was about what they are doing rather than the attitude of the youth, many of them continued with the same line of thinking. One of them, with a frustrated voice, said this: “What you do not understand is that these young people think they know better than their pastors. They do not even show any interest in the church services.”⁹⁶ The last part of his statement is true, but the question should be about finding the underlying reason why second-generation Haitian believers are showing little to no interest in anything church.

Another pastor’s answer might shed light on that reason. He said, “Some of them [young people] think that you [pastors] have to go to college to teach God’s Word. They do not know that all you need is the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁷ Nobody can refute the claim that one needs the Holy Spirit to teach God’s Word. However, to claim that all one needs to teach is the Holy Spirit is fundamentally false. As Paul the apostle pointed out to his protégé Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”⁹⁸ Sadly, many Haitian pastors do not welcome the

⁹⁶ Jean-Marc Biennestin, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, August 22, 2019.

⁹⁷ Theodore Marcelin, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, May 20, 2019.

⁹⁸ 2 Timothy 2:15.

questioning of their youth, partly because it exposes their lack of training or absence thereof. Consider this for instance: “Many of our youth do not listen to God’s Word and left the church. Those who stay are asking questions that have nothing to do with the Bible.”⁹⁹ It is sad to point out that about all of these 67% pastors did not know what a worldview was, and to the question of what they would do differently to equip their congregations to defend their faith if they had greater resources at their disposal, nearly all said there is nothing they would do differently. They were confidently sincere in their answers, yet so deeply wrong. One can understand the challenging task for pastors without any formal theological training to answer theological questions. But when many pastors do not realize their lack of biblical knowledge and training, it is nearly impossible to help them because many of them do not admit their need for it.

Thankfully, there is some hope because this study found that 33% of Haitian pastors acknowledge their need for more training, which gives some solace. This one third of Haitian pastors described themselves as prepared through a variety of trainings, anywhere from a certificate in Bible school to a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies, to some have even gone to seminary. To the question of what they would do differently if they had more resources, these 33% Haitian pastors said they would have a Bible study for the youth where they could ask questions about the realities they are facing. Pastor Phillip Merizier said this: “I understand the youth do not show much interest in the church, but they are not the only one to be blamed. Part of it falls upon our shoulders because we have the responsibility to teach them God’s Word, and that also means we need to be able to answer their questions. So, I would definitely have a Bible study only for them.”¹⁰⁰ Many of them wish they had greater resources to help them equip second-generation Haitian believers. That is absolutely encouraging!

⁹⁹ Frederick Saint Martin, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Orlando, Fl., August 23, 2019.

Apologetical Training

Besides theological training which defends the doctrines of the Christian faith, equipping second-generation Haitian believers also requires apologetical training for Haitian pastors because they have a duty to defend biblical dogma.¹⁰¹ As James K. Bielby points out, dogmas are the “core Christian issues, the essentials of the faith. In other words, what apologetics defends are the notions that if removed from a system of beliefs would eliminate the sense in which that system could be called Christian.”¹⁰² The attacks on the dogmas are intensifying these days, and particularly affect second-generation Haitian believers, as previously demonstrated. The one-third of Haitian pastors who admitted their need for more training especially pointed out apologetics as a necessity in these postmodern times. One of them had this to say: “I cannot lie to myself; I greatly need training on the subject of apologetics if I am going to have a shot at helping our church members, especially our youth. I cannot continue to fail them in that area.”¹⁰³ Statements like this should encourage those who are preoccupied by this issue. It is a motivating force to provide the necessary training for our Haitian pastors if we are going to win the spiritual conflict of our times.

Though 67% of Haitian pastors do not concede needing training for different reasons, they should also be included in any effort to train Haitian pastors. A mobilization campaign is necessary to help them see why they need apologetics by presenting the hard fact that our youth and young adults are leaving the church and even the Christian faith. Presenting the training that

¹⁰⁰ Phillip Merizier, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Tampa, F., July 18, 2019.

¹⁰¹ Bielby, 19.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Smith Romain, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Fort-Myers, Fl., October 4, 2019.

way could soften their hearts to receive such a critical training, which should be done with simple terminology because this study found that about 15% of them have basic reading deficiencies. One of the challenges of training Haitian pastors is lack of time, because of 30 pastors interviewed, about 79% of them have another job and sometimes even two other jobs besides their ecclesiastic responsibilities. Thus, they do not have time for training, even if it would be available to them, which is very unfortunate. However, it is still possible to help them by bringing the training to their community instead of asking to travel to another city or county or state making it accessible and affordable. Besides the pastors, it would also be a plus to raise up another apologist in every congregation, someone other than the pastor, one who is trained and ordained by the church to teach.

Encouraging Viable Training Avenues to Include Apologetics in their Programs

Bringing theological and apologetical trainings to Haitian pastors in their communities at a very low cost or no cost at all is a short-term solution. But presenting the elements of an apologetics discipleship model must be a fight on two fronts: short term and long term, and both are important. The former, because of the urgency to train the existing pastors, and the latter, because action must be taken to train future ones to face what has clearly become one of the greatest threats to second-generation Haitian Christians in Florida. Viable training avenues such as Bible schools and seminaries will be encouraged to integrate apologetics in their curriculum. This is especially important for those training avenues where most Haitian pastors are trained to include apologetics in their programs. Because if those training avenues' goal are to prepare pastors and church leaders to equip their flock including second-generation Haitians, then it becomes clear that apologetics should also be part of that academic training.

It is rare to find young second-generation Haitian men going to Bible school right after high school for many reasons that I will not explore here. Thus, the majority of those who go to Bible school and seminary are married men with a family to take care of, and unable to go to some of the established training avenues in the United States, or they do not have enough proficiency in the English language to take online classes from these training avenues. Only a slight 7% of them frequented established training avenues. That left most aspirant pastors in the Haitian communities in Florida with one choice, that is attending training centers led by Haitian leaders for both proximity and language purposes. Having said that, these training centers must reassess their curriculum regarding emerging issues that Haitian pastors are facing in their congregations and make appropriate changes. They have a moral, spiritual, social, and most importantly a biblical obligation to do that.

Even among the 7% of Haitian pastors who were trained in some of the best Bible schools did not recall being trained apologetically. This further proves the urgency for Bible school and seminaries that do not yet have apologetics integrated in their programs to act accordingly in the effort to prepare future Haitian pastors, because “we must defend Christ in a way that fits with Christ’s message.”¹⁰⁴ It is inconceivable in the 21st century that these avenues that are training pastors would not have apologetics as an important component. Understandably so, many schools of ministry and Bible schools may be reluctant to add such a course in their curriculum because it entails more human and financial resources. But the positive outcomes for the church, and especially for second-generation Haitian believers, are too great to not consider and to not act upon. For many small training avenues, this will be a huge sacrifice, but it would

¹⁰⁴ Beilby, 22.

be worth it. Such an approach will help save the second-generation Haitians in Florida who are caught up in a collision of worldviews without any type of protection against such conflicts.

Continuing education for Haitian Pastors in Florida on Culture-Specific Apologetics

Postmodernism has been around for quite some time now, and Mike Featherstone cited a newspaper dated August 1975, “postmodernism is dead,” and that “post-post-modernism is now the thing.”¹⁰⁵ If back in 1975 some people thought it was already past postmodernism, it is even more so today. Cultures are shifting accordingly to new realities, needs and discoveries. The evolving technology is contributing to those rapid changes, and thus creating novel issues to grapple with. Thus, continuing education for Haitian pastors in Florida is critical to ensure that they have what it takes to defend and equip second-generation Haitians to stand firm in the face of incessant emergent issues of the day. This kind of response demands a clear comprehension of the issues, which is only possible by putting them under the microscope of a thoroughly biblical worldview.

Thankfully, about 33% of Haitian pastors expressed their commitment to continuing education in the framework of what was previously discussed in terms of accessibility and cost-friendly availability. In this, denominational leaders could play a role by providing that continued education to Haitian pastors who adhere to their denominational framework. Some of the well-known denominations have been working in that sense. There is a need for denominational training programs for pastors of second-generation immigrants, which primarily must be done by Haitians. One the greatest advantages of this resides in the fact that Haitian trainers better grasp the cultural specifics because they are critical, along with a solid knowledge of apologetics with its new methods.

¹⁰⁵ Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publication, 2007), 30.

Using Culturally Love as a Framework for Apologetics Discipleship

It is clear from the scriptures that various biblical figures such as Jesus and Paul the apostle have used apologetics discipleship in cross-cultural context in Samaria, Thessalonica, Berea, and Philippi. In Philippi, it had seen how Paul dealt with the issues of demonic oppression and exorcism; and how important it is to address all questions of the disciple. Whereas one can fail by using all these methods, love provides an unmatched framework for apologetics discipleship.

In an article published in the *Ecumenical Journal* entitled “Christ’s Love as the New Face of Christians Apologetics in India,” Kerio Wetsah pleads for a new form of apologetics by using love. Acknowledging some of the threats against Christianity and those involved in apologetics discipleship in India, Wetsah writes:

There have been visible examples of oppression against Christians and other minorities. Given that Christianity accounts for a minority in India, Christians have wondered whether they can survive, and hence have felt the need for apologetics. Yet, while they know that apologetics has to do with defending the faith, many have neglected the essence of Christian apologetics, which should come out of our conviction of Christ’s love.¹⁰⁶

Whether in China, or in the United States, and particularly among second-generation Haitians, the need for apologetics discipleship is forever increasing, and it must come from a place of conviction fueled by Christ’s love as it is applied to the cultural problems of the South Florida context. More often than we are willing to admit, apologetics taken in its theoretical sense, may not bring others to the biblical worldview. There must be another way of pointing people to a thorough biblical worldview, which Wetsah calls ‘the new face of apologetics.’ He

¹⁰⁶ Kerio Wetsah, “Christ’s Love as the New Face of Christian Apologetics in India,” *The Ecumenical Review*, vol 73, no. 3 (July 2021); 466; accessed February 24, 2022, [Christ’s Love as the New Face of Christian Apologetics in India - Wetsah - 2021 - The Ecumenical Review - Wiley Online Library \(liberty.edu\)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ecr.12500)

writes, “The new face of Christian apologetics does not show superiority or advantages but manifests the benefit of our faith in Christ to the world. If we can understand apologetics as the defense of the biblical message, then it is not hard to understand apologetics from the perspective of Christ’s love, as a thoroughly biblical worldview has Jesus at its center.”¹⁰⁷ Though Wetsah calls it the ‘new face’, there is nothing new in it because it is something, or rather someone who has been there since the dawn of times: Love. John the apostle writes, “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”¹⁰⁸ The biblical basis for apologetics discipleship among second-generation Haitian believers cannot exclude practical love because taken apart from it, apologetics discipleship cannot stand.

Second-generation Haitians share with their peers the feeling of not being loved and cared for especially when they messed up. The following words of Abigail Pierre, a youth leader can help us better understand what many second-generation Haitian perceive as a lack of love:

I have been in this church for about two decades and seen how our church leaders treat young people who, at some point, messed up in their lives. They [church leaders] are so quick to reject them, and, in some cases, push them to live the church with negative words and attitude towards them. As one of the youth leaders, it hurts me. But then I question their love for these young people because if they loved them, they would have been patient with them through teaching and prayer for their restoration.”¹⁰⁹

Many pastors, church leaders, and parents of second-generation Haitians tend to simply show the principled side of themselves instead of the loving one. Not that those principles should not be enforced, but that love must be the first response to people. Wetsah argues that “The hallmark of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 468.

¹⁰⁸ I John 4:16.

¹⁰⁹ Abigail Pierre, interview by Mesack Dieudonne, Bradenton, FL, October 6, 2019.

apologetics is not to create division and hatred, but to instill conviction: as Kirk puts it, “to persuade an observer of the validity of one’s case.”¹¹⁰ But how can one persuade an observer of the validity of their case if not making an appeal to the heart. While the well-constructed logical arguments appeal to the mind, the love exhibited by the argumentator is what appeals, touches, and softens the heart. When only the mind is touched, you have a deferred decision to embrace the biblical worldview. But when both the mind and heart are touched, people are moved to embrace freedom and life that Jesus offers. In that same vein Wetsah writes, “we need not limit apologetics to critical thinkers, debaters, theologians, and preachers. To be an apologist is to live out the love set by Christ (1 John 3:18). As Christians we must manifest Christ’s love not only in speech but more importantly in our attitude and conduct.”¹¹¹

Paul in Athens shows that to be true. Even though Paul was ‘greatly distressed’ upon seeing the Athenian idols because he hated seeing men giving the glory that exclusively belongs to God to idols, but his love for God and for the Athenians was stronger than the holy hatred of sin. His love for them armed him with patience to answer all their questions. In Jesus’s case with the Samaritan woman, one can unmistakably see the love of the Savior for that sinner as He was willing to put aside His Jewish norms to value the prospect disciple. In her *Unexpected Love*, Julie Zine Coleman offers some thoughts that showcase how much the Savior valued the sinner. She writes,

Her jaw dropped. She had never seen this man before in her life, and he knew of her whole sorry past? Who was this man? Heart thumping, she dared to lift her gaze to meet his, wholly expecting condemnation and censure. Instead, his eyes reflected a gentle understanding. Even though he somehow knew the worst, his purpose in revealing it did

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 469.

not seem so be reproachful. Instead, he seemed to be peering into her very soul, seeing straight to the aching neediness in her heart.¹¹²

Yes, the woman was edified in her understanding of the Scriptures, but it was mostly her heart that was melted by the Savior's love that compelled and propelled her to embrace Jesus's worldview and to invite the people in her village to meet with Jesus. The first revival in the New Testament was undergirded by the love of God! As in the case of the Samaritan woman, second-generation Haitians need to be loved even when their lives are not upright.

While second-generation Haitians espouse a great deal of the American culture, they are, however, in many respects, the product of a Haitian heritage. Thus, it is imperative to continue defining a new discipleship trajectory for second-generation Haitians.

Equipping Second-Generation Haitian Believers to Defend their Christian Faith

Second-generation Haitians have been the main victims of the merciless worldviews conflict, because of a lack of equipping. This lack of equipping can be seen in their misperception worldview collisions, and lack of grasping a thorough biblical worldview. This equipping provides protection against the assaults of other worldviews all the while dispenses second-generation Haitian believers with the ability to effectively share their Christian faith with their peers. The overarching goal of all that has been discussed and demonstrated thus far is to equip second-generation Haitian believers to defend their Christian faith. Multiple components can contribute to equipping second-generation Haitians, but we will only consider the need for the use of apologetics among them and encouraging them to use their mind in this culture of feeling.

¹¹² Julie Zine Coleman, *Unexpected Love: God's Heart Revealed in Jesus's Conversations with Women*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 133.

Need for the Use of Apologetics Among Second-Generation Haitians

One is trusting the Lord that Haitian pastors finally understand their need for an apologetics discipleship model, believing that Haitian pastors are growing more open to receiving the theological and apologetics trainings that one is so hopeful training avenues are willing to offer. Because when these individuals do their part, second-generation Haitian believers will greatly benefit from it and the contingent eternal implications. When Haitian pastors can teach a thorough biblical worldview, second-generation Haitian believers will get a firm grasp on it. Apologetics is more than just important for the church; it is a biblical mandate as expressed by Peter the apostle. He writes, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”¹¹³ It is worth noting that the first part of the mandate has to do with doctrine, which is the domain of theology, particularly the doctrine of sanctification. When syncretism is seen as a viable option to second-generation Haitian believers, it is hard to speak of sanctification. The second part of the mandate of Christian apologetics is the “task of defending and commending the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a Christlike, context-sensitive and audience-specific manner.”¹¹⁴ This comprehensive definition of Christian apologetics captures the critical need of sanctification and the ability to defend and assert the truthfulness of the biblical worldview. One of the most critical components in establishing an apologetics discipleship is to welcome and honestly answer questions, which deserves more attention.

¹¹³ | Peter 3:15-16.

¹¹⁴ Beilby, 31.

Critical Need to Relate to Disciples by Addressing Context-Sensitive Questions

The issue of addressing the questions of second-generation Haitians is critical to a robust faith and the establishment of thorough biblical worldview, which pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitians show little interest in doing, more than they are willing to admit. As previously noted, “Inquiry is the beginning of learning. A question about something is the root of understanding for those who are ignorant of it.”¹¹⁵ Thus, not taking time to address their questions is a disservice to apologetics discipleship, which risks destroying the desired outcome of equipping them to defend their Christian faith.

There are a variety of questions that pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitians, willingly or unwillingly, shy away from for various reasons. In his book *Questions Christians Aren't Supposed to Ask*, James V. Brownson shared his findings; and some of the most critical questions young people have are related to hypocrisy, spirituality, failures, hope, sexuality, and doubt, among others. It seems that the main question of second-generation Haitians and young people in general is related to hypocrisy. They ask, “If there is so much hypocrisy in the church, why should I believe and join it?”¹¹⁶ Or better yet, why should they still embrace such a worldview? Such questions are unfortunately left unanswered and leave the disciple or prospective disciple in the dark. In apologetics discipleship, the disciple-maker ought to be prepared to answer all questions regarding the biblical worldview as it stands out from other worldviews. This is not something new, the Bible is filled with evidence that showcase the importance of answering questions. However, only the examples of Paul and especially Jesus

¹¹⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*. Ed. By Joel C. Elowsky (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 119.

¹¹⁶ James V. Brownson, *Questions Christians Aren't Supposed to Ask*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021), 7.

will be examined here as they relate to how Haitian pastors ought to listen and be ready to answer the questions second-generation Haitians may have.

After the Greek philosophers heard Paul and his new ideas, some of them wondered, “What is this babbler trying to say?”¹¹⁷ One must assume that they uttered these words loud enough for Paul to hear them, though they did not directly address them to Paul. This was a way to insult Paul’s intelligence, but he did not let that bother him; and as he continued reasoning, the philosophers invited him to speak in the Areopagus. Their real question to Paul was this: “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.”¹¹⁸ This inquiry was an opportunity for Paul to explain his worldview, which Paul beautifully did. Though this is the only question the text reports, it is, however, inconceivable that such a high-level conversation between Paul and the Greek philosophers would involve just one question. It is highly plausible that many questions arose, and Paul answered them with the ease and clarity for which Paul is known. We know their questions were answered because at the end of that lengthy conversation, some of them believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan gives even more reasons to believe that answering worldview questions of the prospective disciple is critical to apologetics discipleship. Jesus started the conversation by asking the woman for some water to drink. Then what followed was a series of questions and answers about the Jewish norms by which there is no contact between Jews and Samaritans. The text mentions a total of four questions during the conversation, including one from Jesus – the initial one – and the remaining three from the

¹¹⁷ Acts 17:18

¹¹⁸ Acts 17:19-20

Samaritan woman. In between are explanations, teachings, and clarifications. All together, they led the woman to change her worldview by embracing Jesus's worldview. This kind of dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is what must take place between pastors, church leaders, and second-generation Haitians today.

Second-generation Haitians have lots of questions. For instance, they question the hypocrisy they claim seeing in the church as a reason to stay away from church. This is not a new issue. Brownson writes, "We are not the first ones to ask this question. It goes back to Jesus himself and is a perennial problem for religious groups. But the answer is not found in the avoidance of religion but rather in a deeper embrace of the teaching of Jesus himself, who warns against the appeal of the hypocrites and invites us into a deeper and more coherent way of living."¹¹⁹ In addition, church leaders have the moral obligation to address this issue biblically and thus not give second-generation Haitians another reason to flee from the Christian faith. Many pastors and church leaders of second-generation Haitians try to avoid questions about sexuality as young people see the church as being repressive. They also think that by questioning the origin of God for example, they are seen as unbelievers, and worse yet, enemies of the local church. Regarding expressing doubt, many second-generation Haitians are asking, "I have too many doubts. How can I be a Christian?"¹²⁰ Or, "Don't the moral failures of a significant number of Christian leaders call the whole of Christianity into question?"¹²¹ Questions like these and others are very pertinent and must be addressed. Not addressing the disciples' or prospective disciples' questions can be interpreted as either a lack of interest or a lack of ability, both of

¹¹⁹ Brownson, 10.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹²¹ Ibid., 34.

which leads to unsuccessful apologetics discipleship. If disciple makers cannot relate or refuse to relate to the disciples and meet them right where they are, how can one expect to be successful?

As John G. Stackhouse, Jr. points out,

Apologetics, first, ought to be a part of every program of Christian education, whether in the home or the church. Doubts about Christian affirmations arise naturally in the course of living in this world, whether about the reliability of the Bible as revelation, the goodness of the Christian sexual ethic, or the unique and supreme authority of Jesus Christ in a world of religious alternatives.¹²²

Stackhouse, Jr. is on point because second-generation Haitians have many questions to which there are no available answers. They cannot be told to just ‘pray for more faith,’ or ‘if you were a more devout Christian, you wouldn’t entertain such questions.’¹²³ Both Jesus and the apostle Paul give reasons to strongly believe that answering questions plays a significant role in an efficient apologetics discipleship. To relate to second-generation Haitians, Haitian pastors need to welcome their questions and be prepared to answer them. To defend their Christian faith, second-generation Haitian believers ought to understand the arguments other worldviews bring forth against the biblical worldview. As the process of apologetics discipleship progresses, they will have a safe place to ask their honest questions with the confidence that an answer will be provided. This dialogue will further strengthen second-generation Haitians to be unmovable in their Christian faith.

Using the Mind in a Culture of Feeling

Asking and answering questions is certainly an important exercise for anyone who is involved in apologetics discipleship. But such exercise fundamentally requires the use of the

¹²² John G. Stackhouse Jr., *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today* (New York, NY: Oxford Press, 2002), 118.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

mind, which is especially hard to do in a culture of feeling. I think it is safe to say that human culture on a global scale has become a culture of feeling, where people are not thinking logically and critically. As Joel Best asserts, “ The ability to think critically is important. Imagine a person incapable of critical thinking: this would be someone so suggestible (and vulnerable) that he or she takes every commercial’s advice to rush out and buy the product being advertised, and finds every politician convincing.”¹²⁴ J.P. Moreland, in that same vein, writes, “It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to recognize that our entire culture is in trouble. We are staring down the barrel of a loaded gun, and we can no longer afford to act like it’s loaded with blanks.”¹²⁵ Such assertions capture the predicament of most parents and many pastors of second-generation Haitian believers. Being taught through their schooling to question things in their environment, many second-generation Haitians are sharpening that set of skills, though not to the extent one would wish. Yet, their inquiring minds about life as it relates to the Christian faith are being shut down by parents and pastors who do not understand the importance of the use of the mind.

In the face of the fact that second-generation Haitians are leaving the church by a staggering number and many more are lined up to follow that same path, one should be deeply saddened but not surprised. Because when their parents and pastors cannot think critically about life, it could not have been otherwise. As Joel Best points out, “Instead of simply assuming that we already know what is true, critical thinking requires that we consider the possibility that our assumptions might be wrong. Ultimately, critical thinking is about evidence . Evidence is information that can help us judge whether a claim is true.”¹²⁶ Second-generation Haitians are

¹²⁴ Joel Best, *Is That True? : Critical Thinking for Sociologists* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 2.

¹²⁵ J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2012), 10.

being said to receive the Word by faith and believe that every claim made is true without any kind of evidence to back the claim.

In trying to grasp where the Christian mind got lost in the American culture, J.P. Moreland cites the “The emergence of anti-intellectualism,” which began in the middle of 1800s.¹²⁷ But this is even worse in the Christian Haitian communities in Florida and beyond, where many see the pursuit of an intellectual life as diabolical. Thus, when second-generation Haitian believers are asking questions, many see that as a sign of spiritual loss. Though one can see the emergence of some Haitian pastors using their minds, the plague of anti-intellectualism is endemic, and it immensely affects the church. Perhaps the most profound effect on the church is a deep misunderstanding of the relationship between faith and reason. Thus, we tend to kick reason out of the Christian faith and the church. Most Haitian pastors are asking second-generation Haitians to just believe the Word without providing evidence. As J.P. Moreland rightfully asserts, “biblically, faith is a power or skill to act in accordance with the nature of kingdom of God, a trust in what we have reason to believe is true.”¹²⁸ Obviously, when disciple-makers and parents of second-generation Haitians are sidelining reason, feeling takes center stage and becomes what motivates words and actions. Conversely, “sermons should target people’s thinking as much as their wills and feelings. Sunday school should be more effective in training believers in how to think carefully about their faith. Training in apologetics should be a regular part of discipleship.”¹²⁹ Not only should Haitian pastors answer the questions of second-

¹²⁶ Best, 3.

¹²⁷ Moreland, 11.

¹²⁸ Moreland, 13.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

generation Haitians, but they should also encourage them to use their minds to think critically, deciphering the claims of both the American and Haitian cultures. That road will lead to a vibrant community of disciples firmly ground in a thoroughly biblical worldview based upon reason and evidence, which will equip them to overcome the obstacles other worldviews throw at them. This apologetics discipleship model will lead to disciples that will, in turn, make disciples.

CHAPTER 6:

Summary and Conclusion

Any discipleship model that seeks to equip second-generation Haitian believers to be on the winning side of worldview conflict ought to include culture-specific apologetics. This is only possible when Haitian pastors are able to teach a thoroughly biblical worldview and help students sharpen their own foundational convictions to the point where they are able to answer questions that spontaneously arise out of their cultural context. From 115 interviews conducted, this study found that 50% of the Haitian pastors have some theological training and the other 50% of them have no theological training whatsoever. When it comes to apologetics, an overwhelming 90% of Haitian pastors do not have a clue of what the word apologetic even means, let alone to receiving apologetic training. Consequently, about 91% of second-generation Haitians are unequipped to stand the clash of worldviews. Many have left the church, and others are contemplating doing the same. The findings prove that they love their pastors but are not shying away from holding their pastors and church leaders responsible for this debacle.

These heartbreaking findings are exposing the hard truth about the weaknesses of current discipleship models' inability to disciple second-generation Haitians to face worldview conflicts because of a lack or absence of apologetics training. One can never overemphasize the needs of apologetics in discipling youth and young adults, given the constant threats they are being exposed to from other worldviews. They are left with no real protection in this daily spiritual cataclysm, and an increasing number of them are victims, which further explains the increasing need for an apologetics discipleship model. The underlying reason of unequipped second-generation Haitian believers is a lack and/or absence of theological and apologetic training of Haitian pastors and church leaders. Though Haitian disciple-makers are chiefly

responsible for the mass exodus of young people from the church, one must have a heart of compassion for those same pastors and church leaders. To say current discipleship models have failed them is an understatement.

The argument for an apologetics discipleship model is clearly stipulated in the Word of God. Thus, it is authentically biblical. Jesus, Paul, Peter and countless of others have specifically addressed precise worldview questions without avoiding teaching on the delicate problems of their day. To be credible, a discipleship model must consider the cultural sins and contemporary challenges.

This study has shown that the thoroughly syncretized Haitian Voodoo culture has permeated the church and that it demands a forceful response. While parents who have served the *loas* or had a *pwen* can be delivered from them once they sincerely accept the power of the gospel, it is totally different for second-generation Haitian believers. Deliverance begins with knowledge of the truth about their parents and grandparents' past relationship with those evil spirits and the power of Jesus that can totally free them from those bondages. All too often, Haitians parents are not willing to talk about these things, either because they are ashamed of them, or they still fear the *loas*' wrath. Beyond this, most pastors refuse to address this issue and lead second-generation Haitian believers to freedom in Jesus Christ because either some of them still believe they can be oppressed by evil spirits, or they do not understand the seriousness of the issue. All these realities stem from a lack of understanding of a thoroughly biblical worldview, which has tremendous consequences on youth and young adults. The researcher found that about 67% of second-generation Haitians either are suffering from the oppression of *loas* or 'evil spirits,' or they know a friend who is going through it. When 67% of young Haitians are being oppressed in their sleep and their lives are brutally disrupted by these tyrants, church leaders and

parents should respond with a healthy and appropriate deliverance solution that involves teaching.

Simultaneously, second-generation Haitian believers are dealing with a wide range of ideologies from postmodernism. Though these ideologies are presented as suggestions, there are in fact vicious attacks that many youth and young Haitian adults fall under. As the world is taken by the storm of sexual intimacy before marriage and same sex relationships and so many other issues, so are second-generation Haitian believers many of whom are victims. They are not only victims of postmodernism, but they seem to be victims of the inability of their church leaders to teach them a thoroughly biblical worldview, which would equip them to face these assaults. It is the role of the Haitian pastors to provide the spiritual guidance the youth and young adults need to be strong in their faith and victorious over these *loas* with whom they are entangled.

Unfortunately, many of the church leaders who are supposed to equip second-generation Haitian believers lack the necessary theological and apologetics training to teach them a sound Christian worldview. Thus, youth and young adults find other worldviews more attractive than the biblical worldview, and even model their lives according to these ideologies rather than desiring to be Christlike. This fact shows how terribly current discipleship models fail to prepare second-generation Haitians to overcome worldviews that essentially are vehicles of oppression. This study pointed out some consequences of the lack of training and equipping, but both the problems and solutions go beyond what have been considered. A thoroughly biblical worldview entails training the mind in appropriate biblical responses for complex cultural dilemmas. Most Haitian pastors lack this level of training. The truth is that postmodernism is weakening second-generation Haitian believers' faith in Jesus. Youth are embracing postmodern values and habits.

By not teaching a thoroughly biblical worldview, Haitian pastors unwillingly become infamous partners in this postmodernism migration out of the church.

Fortunately, there is a road church leaders and parents can take to change this sober course in which most Haitian pastors have unwittingly been a part. This road must begin with training Haitian pastors and church leaders in precise theological and doctrinal issues that are relevant to contemporary worldview battles. This first step is critically important because without it, the next step, which is apologetics training, cannot take place. If they are not able to teach and defend the doctrines of the Christian faith, there is no way they will be able to defend the dogma, or the core values of the biblical worldview. Consequently, helping Haitian pastors understand their need for training is a prerequisite because one is not ready to receive help without the acknowledgment of a need. One of the best ways of achieving that is by pointing out to the Haitian pastors the fact that their youth and young adults are leaving the church massively, which they cannot ignore. Then, let them know there is a way to stop the fatal bleeding, which they all desperately desire. This approach only offers a short-term solution, however, since the problem has been institutionalized. Strong measures are needed to uproot many centuries of anti-intellectualism in Christian Haitian communities. Viable training avenues can bring about a long-term solution by making apologetics an integral part of the pastoral and leadership training programs.

A vibrant Christian community of disciples who are able to face these postmodern times is possible when second-generation Haitians in Florida and beyond are being taught a thoroughly biblical worldview. Thus equipped, they will be able to stand grounded in their convictions based on both rational frameworks and spiritual deliverance strategies. Furthermore, second-generation Haitian believers' questions will be answered by their church leaders who will then in

turn challenge them to use their minds in a culture that is prone to follow feelings. The postmodern challenges facing 21st century second-generation Haitians is so ferocious that youth and young adults ought to be equipped with the armor of God. Any discipleship model that seeks to equip second-generation Haitian believers to be on the winning side of worldview conflict ought to include culture-specific apologetics. This is only possible when Haitian pastors are able to teach a thoroughly biblical worldview and help students sharpen their own foundational convictions to the point where they are able to answer questions that spontaneously arise out of their cultural context.

APPENDIX A:

A Needs Interview

Measuring A Church's Need for a Theological Apologetic

According to Pastors without Theological Training

- Explain in detail what you think apologetics is all about.
- As much as you can, describe the relationship between reason and faith.
- Explain what you do to encourage your congregation to think critically about their Christian faith.
- Being one among many worldviews, explain the degree to which you think the people in your congregation are equipped to defend their Christian faith.
- Spell out in clear terms what you have been doing to specifically equip the youth (ages 12 to 19) in your congregation to defend their Christian Faith.
- Describe how prepared you are in helping your congregation defend their faith against other worldviews.
- If you had greater resources at your disposal, what would you do differently to equip your congregation to defend their faith in Jesus?
- Explain what you are willing to do in order to help your congregation defend their Christian faith against other worldviews.
- Describe some of the most relevant threats that could potentially be detrimental to Haitian evangelicals in Florida.
- Given the current challenges, explain your readiness to teach people to defend their faith against coming issues not yet widespread.

- How have you approached the reality of young people being negatively impacted by their parents' past relationships with *loas* and *pwen*?
- Have you ever faced cases of demon possession in your congregation? If yes, how have you handled them?

APPENDIX B:

A Needs Interview

Measuring A Church's Need for a Theological Apologetic According to Haitian Pastors with Certain Seminary Education

- Explain in detail what you think apologetics is all about.
- As much as you can, describe the relationship between reason and faith.
- Explain what you do to encourage your congregation to think critically about their Christian faith.
- Explain how you were equipped apologetically during your theological training.
- To what degree would you say that your congregation has the appropriate tools to answer questions to skeptics.
- Explain the enthusiasm of your congregation for when you speak on defending the Christian faith in the face of other worldviews.
- If you had greater resources at your disposal, what would you do differently to equip your congregation?
- Spell out in clear terms what you have been doing to specifically equip the youth (ages 12 to 19) in your congregation to defend their Christian Faith.
- Describe how each of the following groups of your congregation shows interest in asking apologetical and philosophical questions:
 - a) Adults from 50 to 65 years of age
 - b) Adults from 30 to 49 years
 - c) College students from 19 to 29 years
 - d) High school students from 14 to 18 years
 - e) Middle school students from 11 to 13

- Describe some of the most relevant threats that could potentially be detrimental to Haitian evangelicals in Florida.
- Given the current challenges, explain your readiness to teach people to defend their faith against coming issues not yet widespread.
- How have you approached the reality of young people being negatively impacted by their parents' past relationships with *loas* and *pwen*?
- Have you ever faced cases of demon possession in your congregation? If yes, how have you handled them?

APPENDIX C:

A Needs Interview

Measuring A Church's Need for a Theological Apologetic

According to Haitian College Students

- Explain in detail what you think apologetics is all about.
- As much as you can, describe the relationship between reason and faith.
- Discuss the degree to which you were equipped by your pastors and other church leaders to face those challenges.
- Describe how you have defended or are defending your Christian faith in a college environment.
- Describe how effective your pastor has been in training his congregation to answer worldview questions.
- Explain how your Christian faith has been challenged in college either by your professors or your peers.
- Describe how worldviews other than Christianity have influenced you in college.
- What are your needs in order to be equipped to defend your faith in the Lord Jesus, and how would you illustrate them?
- Describe some of the most relevant threats that could potentially be detrimental to Haitian evangelicals in Florida.
- Given the current challenges, explain your pastor's readiness to teach people to defend their faith against coming issues not yet widespread.
- Have your parents or grandparents served the loas prior to giving their lives to Christ? If yes, do you feel associated with these evil spirits and how?

APPENDIX D:

A Needs Interview

Measuring A Church's Need for a Theological Apologetic According to Haitian High and Middle School Students

- Explain in detail what you think apologetics is all about.
- As much as you can, describe the relationship between reason and faith.
- Discuss the degree to which you were equipped by your pastors and other church leaders to face those challenges.
- Describe how you have defended or are defending your Christian faith in a school environment.
- Describe how effective your pastor has been in training his congregation to answer worldview questions.
- Explain how your Christian faith has been challenged in college either by your teachers or your peers.
- Describe how worldviews other than Christianity have influenced you in college.
- What are your needs in order to be equipped to defend your faith in the Lord Jesus, and how would you illustrate them?
- Describe some of the most relevant threats that could potentially be detrimental to Haitian evangelicals in Florida.
- Given the current challenges, explain your pastor's readiness to teach people to defend their faith against coming issues not yet widespread.
- Have your parents or grandparents served the loas prior to giving their lives to Christ? If yes, do you feel associated with these evil spirits and how?

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