

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Resolving the Issue of the Exodus of the Second Generation of Haitian Americans in Naples
Haitian Church of God

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

Frantz E. Machoule

Lynchburg, VA

June 2020

Copyright © 2020 by Frantz Elijah Machoule
All Rights Reserved

Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Dr. W. Ryan Steenburg

Mentor's Faculty

Dr. Jerry F. Knoblet

Reader's Faculty

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Frantz Machoule

Liberty University School of Divinity, 2020

Mentor: Dr. W. Ryan Steenburg

The thesis project was an examination of how the Haitian evangelical churches in Southwest Florida, specifically, Naples Haitian Church of God (NHCG), which have been operated for decades under the first generation, where the second generation of Haitian American has yet to experience change. The project addressed the components of that cultural gap that kept the church in a state of redundancy and, therefore, constituted an impediment to its growth. This examination conducted for Naples Haitian Church of God, located in Southwest Florida, gave a true biblical interpretation of what God has called the church to be in this generation. The study is relevant to the first generation of Haitians and the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans that had taken place. The problem is that the departure of the second-generation Haitian Americans at Naples Haitian Church of God has created a tension that needs to be resolved.

The results and the findings were insightful to the researcher and the local Haitian churches in establishing a different mindset between these two generations beyond cultural norms. There is a great need for the Haitian Evangelical Churches to come together as one in reconstructing a ministry model that will fit both generations. The researcher concluded that no matter how high the tension, there was still hope, and most importantly, the first generation needed to realize the reality they were in and bridge the gap with love, and a message that could redeem and not condemn the second generation.

Acknowledgment

This project would not have been possible without God, the source of my strength. I thank Him for not giving up on me; His strength was made perfect in my weaknesses. I am grateful to the Trinity. I love you, Lord!

So many people helped me accomplish this project. I am thankful to my mentor, my spiritual dad, Dr. Phil Phillips, who remained an anchor and a guide throughout this thesis project. I say a great thank you to Pastor Deranot Charles and his associates: Pastors Agnes Charles and Wilkert Eugene. I am grateful for my advisor, mentor Dr. W. Ryan Steenburg, for being such a great guide throughout this whole process. Another gesture of great thanks to my awesome Focus Group. Space is not enough to name you all, but you guys had made this project so easy for me to accomplish. Your insightful remarks during that Focus Group session set the tone for the remainder of the project. Another big thank you to my awesome friends: Alix Courageux and Olivier Sanon, who were one of the greatest supporters anybody could ask for throughout this project.

I am grateful to the love of my life, my number one cheerleader, Enouse Machoule, who saw my struggles throughout this project—all of my sleepless nights. To my three boys: Matthew, Micah, and Nathaniel, you all kept me going. I love you, dearly.

Lastly, my beautiful mother, Elina Geffrard, you know I love you, Mom, and my awesome mother-in-law, Berania Charles, and my father, Julien Machoule, I am grateful that you all are in my life.

To God be all the glory!

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Problem Statement	2
Example of the Problem	2
Understand the Core of the Problem.....	5
Basic Assumptions	7
Definition	9
Project Settings/Location of Project	10
Limitation and delimitation	10
The Significance of the Project	11
To Naples Haitian Church of God (NHCG).....	15
To the Local Churches.....	16
Chapter 2: Biblical and Theological Basis	17
The Church	18
The Genesis of the Church	19
The Metaphorical Use of the Word Church	22
The Church as the People of God.....	23
The Body of Christ.....	24
The Temple of the Holy Spirit	25
The Bride of Christ	27
Leadership and the Church	28
Leadership Model for the Church.....	30
Noah’s Leadership	32
Submitted Leadership of Abraham	33
Distinctive Leadership of Joseph	34
Transformational Leadership of Moses	35
Transformational Leadership	37
Concept of the Kingdom of God	40
The Kingdom of God and the Church.....	42
Components of the Kingdom of God.....	42
King.....	43
People.....	43
The Law and Territory	45
Culture and the church	46
Haiti and Religion	48
Summary	50
Chapter 3: Methodology	54
Methodology Revealed.....	55
Second Generation of Interview Participants	58
The Process	62
Implementation	54
Summary	65

Chapter 4: Description of the Project	68
Strategy	69
The Focus Group.....	71
First Generation of NHCG.....	72
View First Generation of Haitians	74
Data Collected	76
Result of Research	78
Other Results	83
Leadership in NHCG	86
Summary	89
Chapter 5: Conclusion	92
Current Realities	97
Unappreciated Value.....	98
Church Mandate	99
Authenticity	100
Theology Distancing.....	101
Leadership	102
Summary	103
Conclusion	105
Bibliography	103-110
IRB Approval Letter	111

Tables

1.1	Naples Haitian Church of God Leaders	74
1.2	Second Generation Haitian Americans' Responses	98

Abbreviations

NHCG: Naples Haitian Church of God

HEC: Haitian Evangelical Church

Chapter 1

Introduction

The thesis project was an examination of how the Haitian Evangelical Churches in Southwest Florida, especially Naples Haitian Church of God (NHCG), have operated for decades under the first-generation Haitian culture. In contrast, the second generation of Haitian Americans was yet to experience relevant change.¹ For decades, the problem of the second generation of Haitian Americans intensified to the point where many left the church with no intention of returning. The second generation of Haitian Americans has a thirst that is yet to be slaked. Hence, theological and biblical grounding is crucial for their spiritual growth.

This thesis project analyzed the components of that cultural gap, which kept the church in redundancy and, therefore, constituted an impediment to its growth. The first generation still wants to keep their culture very strong inside the church, which gives rise to tension with the second generation of Haitian Americans. The first generation does not want to compare their Haitian churches to others, which, however, was what happened in the past decades and resulted in stagnancy. According to Dr. Ron Webb, the senior pastor of Mt. Calvary Powerhouse Church in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, “Be careful not to envy someone else’s success or their material goods. Stop comparing the size of your congregations, and the level of your teachers, preachers, or singers. If you see someone walking in favor, compliment, and encourage them instead of fighting against them.”²

¹ Naples Haitian Church of God is a pseudonym for an actual church. The actual churches identity is being protected by the researcher.

² Ron Webb, *Leadership Behind the Scenes*, (Acclaim Press: Morley, OH, 2015) 53.

Problem Statement

There is an exodus taking place in the Haitian Evangelical Church, especially in Naples Haitian Church of God, that constitutes a major problem to the growth of the church. This raises some sweeping questions: What seems to be the major issues keeping the Haitian Evangelical Churches (HEC) from being productive for the Kingdom? Are the second-generation Haitian Americans exaggerating? How concerned should the first-generation Haitians be, regarding this issue? Is there a way of bridging the gap? These are just a few of the many questions that need to be answered throughout this project. The problem rests on the cultural mantra of the Haitian people, whereby they left Haiti but brought their culture with them. Attempting to keep your culture and live by the norms of that culture even when you are in a different country is not a disgrace, but the problem now is to what extent does culture have to be kept and still help the church? To better visualize and understand the problem, a quick story about Ketson will give a solid example of that fact.

Example of the Problem

Ketson is the son of a Haitian immigrant. He was born in Haiti and along with his two siblings born in Haiti as well. They came to the United States at an early age: one five and the other seven while Ketson was four years old. Ketson's father came to the United States in the hope of getting a better opportunity to find work and take care of his family. Ketson's father was a hard worker and brought his sons and his wife to the United States of America. Over the years, Ketson grew up like every other immigrant in the home of his respected father, who was the pastor of the church he attended. He spent his entire life in the church. He attended most church services and other meetings. When he reached his teenage years, Ketson started seeing things differently. At

the age of fourteen, he decided to get baptized, but mainly because he had seen some other older friends go through the process.

The issue of acculturation was real when it came to Ketson's parents. However, they still operated under the influence of the Haitian culture, which they had left behind in Haiti many years ago. Ketson's father tried to find a balance between his Haitian roots and adopting the new life in the United States and leaving behind the reality they once had. Even after living in the United States for more than twenty years, they kept the same norms and raised their children the same way. This brought a complete disparity between the parents' worldview and their children's because the latter had been Americanized. Ketson graduated high school and decided to stay in the same community for college. Still, it did not take him long to leave his home church where his father was the senior pastor and go to another church in the community where he felt he could be understood and, most importantly, be fed spiritually.

For years, Ketson adhered to different rules that HEC had at their disposal as regards ministry. Ketson had the right to stay because, looking at the situation, he could be the next senior pastor of the church, but he decided to leave, which shocked everybody. What really shocked his father was the fact that his son left his church and decided to attend another church that was in the same community where he started to be involved in ministry and make a difference in the lives of the young people in the community. Ketson knew he had a calling on his life, but he was also sure that if he did not leave, he would be unproductive, and it would take him years to do something significant for the Kingdom. A few things happened to Ketson while he went to that other church.

First, he was exposed to true biblical teaching. That teaching enabled him to see God as he had never seen Him before. God is more than the clothes we wear, the makeup, the accolades, and the head covering that some of the HEC wanted to maintain.

Second, the pluralistic society afforded him some exposure to some truth about the American culture that he was ignorant of. This allowed him to see things differently and understand the importance of culture inside society and the church.

Third, his exit from his church helped the researcher reassess the problem which other Haitians are confronted with and why there was always a tension between the first and the second generations that might eventually create a bigger problem for the third generation.

After years of communication with his dad, his dad attempted multiple times to encourage him to come back because of what he saw his son had accomplished. His dad realized how he had kept the ministry hostage by not allowing the younger people to grow spiritually, socially, and intellectually in the church. Failures had marred his years of ministry, and he never took a moment to realize and analyze why. Why were the second-generation Haitian Americans leaving the church? He realized that if he did not do something, he would soon have an empty church because the first generation had already begun fading away.

He now has a multiethnic church where his son is the senior pastor, and the young people have an insatiable thirst for God weekly. They also have in place an all-English service and Creole service, respectively, along with multiple life groups to help the church grow.

What Ketson experienced is so common to many HEC in the nation, especially in Southwest Florida, where the researcher lives. The departure of Ketson from the Naples Haitian Church of God is an issue that should concern the first-generation Haitian Americans in looking

for a solution to bridge that gap. Even though he was born in Haiti, it did not keep him from distancing himself from something that was not working anymore, where he felt he was held hostage in his own church.

Ketson also realized that even after he left for more than twelve years, the church operated the same way with no vision established for the people. Ketson's parents led their church in a state of separation without even realizing that a decision had to be made to keep both generations equipped for the Kingdom of God.

Understand the Core Problem

As it is clearly read in the story of this young man, there is a pressing danger in NHCG that needs to be addressed quickly. The young people in this church are spiritually dying, and they need spiritual food on a daily and weekly basis to grow in their spiritual race. The world makes sure to keep them entertained with the wrong motives and for the church to sit back and not do anything clearly shows the extent of the problem for the second-generation Haitian Americans.

The story of Ketson teaches a valuable lesson on what the second-generation Haitian Americans are facing today. Looking at the present situation makes the researcher realize that this problem is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed and a solution quickly found or proposed to the HEC. The second generation of Haitian Americans has a thirst that is yet to be quenched. Hence, theological and biblical grounding is crucial for their spiritual growth. This thesis project analyzed the components of that cultural gap that kept the church in redundancy and, therefore, constituted an impediment to its growth. The first generation still wants to keep their culture very strong inside the church, which gives rise to agitation with the second generation of Haitian Americans. The core of the problem once again is how the first generation of Haitians brings a

Haitian-minded culture into an American culture, where the two collide daily with little understanding of what needs to be done. Over the years, the researcher has spent some significant time analyzing and gathering information on the overall functioning of the Haitian churches, specifically Naples Haitian Church of God. There has been a great decline in the second generation in the HEC. This decline is because the first generation is somehow holding the church hostage in doing ministry in a way that is damaging the growth of the church, not only spiritually but numerically, especially when it comes to the younger generation.

The essence of how ministry is to be done in the right parameter or a biblical context with the right perspective is visibly missing. It is greatly affecting this generation of young people who are looking for something that will help them cope with the challenges that they are dealing with daily. The single answer to this question can noticeably be the lack of leadership. If leadership is appropriately defined in the HEC, it will be ideal to understand and know that it is the key to the success and failure of the church. The problem this project will address is the issue surrounding the first generation of Haitian Americans and the second generation, the same problem crippling the third generation of Haitian Americans. This issue is greater than it appears because the generation that is supposed to replace the old generation is leaving at a higher pace than before. The frustration is aggrandizing at a rapid rate, and the solution is yet to be found. It is often said among the HEC that the youth today is the church tomorrow, but looking at the right parameter will help understand that the second generation is the church of today. People or humankind are always looking for something. That one thing is what the second generation is looking for, which is a place to call home. A place they can feel accepted, challenged, and valued in order to live a holy life according to Scripture.

Basic Assumptions

Like any other project, this thesis project has some assumptions that need to be pointed out for a better understanding of the project.

First, when talking about the first generation and the second generation and slightly the third generation, a little explanation is very crucial to grasp this concept. The first generation of Haitians is typically the people who left Haiti when they were already old. This means that they were married with children in Haiti, and while they are here, they work very hard to provide for their family overseas and also get into all the legal requirements to migrate their family to the US. Some of them also have children born to them here in the US. The second-generation Haitians are those who are born in the US to the first generation, and those who came to the US at a very young age, say two to fifteen. The third generation, which is not part of the project, but can be slightly named, are the ones born in the United States by the second generation.

Second, the sole mission of the church is to reach out to the lost, and this mission has been the core of the church of Christ since the beginning and should not be extinct from the church.

Third, the church is to be the representative of Christ. Therefore, all cultural beliefs should not be a replacement for how God wants the church to function. The Bible, in its entirety, paints a clear picture of the church and how it should operate. It requires a total understanding and relationship with Jesus Christ, the only Head of the church. It should be the motto of all the churches. No church ever existed to proclaim its agenda; it is there solely to proclaim the Good News, putting Jesus at the center of it all.

Fourth, while culture is important, it should not be the driving force behind the ministry. Biblical literacy or Bible-centered church is crucial for the growth of the church.

Fifth, leadership is at the center of every organization, and this is no different from the church. God uses His leaders to do everything He does among His people.

Six, the Haitian Evangelical Churches can eliminate some of the frustrations or issues threatening the growth of the church by creating a friendly environment where the younger generations can be integrated into their leadership team. This will help in knowing why this gap exists between these two generations and getting better solutions to help the church move in the right direction.

Seven, the Haitian Evangelical Churches can create a right culture that is unique to them. If the church can have the right ethos, especially NHCG, this will eliminate many frustrations where the core belief of the church can be reestablished and rejuvenated through the Word of God.

Eight, more in-depth training on the importance of leadership would be very beneficial among Haitian Evangelical Churches. This will boost the spiritual life of the church and strengthen its well-needed growth immune system in doing ministry the right way.

Definition

The researcher has some uncommon terms that are unique to him and other Haitian Evangelical Churches. These terms will be used throughout the project.

Haitian Evangelical Church (HEC): Believers associated with Haitian churches, where their primary languages are is Creole and French.

Naples Haitian Church of God (NHCG): The church being studied, situated in Naples, Florida.

Creole: The native language that is spoken and understood by the Haitian community, specifically Haiti.

Southwest Florida: Southwest Florida is comprised of the following cities and counties: Bradenton, Manatee County; Cape Coral, Lee County; Fort Myers, Lee County; Naples, Collier County; North Port, Sarasota County; Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, and Sarasota, Sarasota County.

First-Generation: Haitian nationals who emigrated from Haiti in their adult age, typically married with children.

Second-Generation: Children born in the US from the first-generation Haitian or migrated to the US at an early age (12 years old).

Voodoo: The religion highly recognized by Haitian natives and highly practiced in Haiti and even here in the US.

Paradigm Shift: A way of thinking that can bring change in the culture or the Haitian Community.

Theological Distancing: Theological gap or distancing is a disparity that robs the local church of the opportunity of experiencing a true encounter with God in the Bible through a contextual point of view.

Project Setting/Location of Project

The project will be conducted in Naples, Florida, where many Haitian churches are located for the past decades. Looking at the Haitian population, it is constantly growing because more people are immigrating here in the US. Because of this large migration, there are many Haitian

churches now more than ever. Naples alone has about fifteen Haitian churches with the smallest one of about forty to the largest one of one thousand five hundred.

While the issue surrounds one Haitian evangelical church in Naples, the same issue seems to surround the other Haitian churches in southwest Florida. The problem is a very common problem, with all the Haitian churches not knowing how to get out of the situation. Since the researcher resides in Naples and attends a Haitian church, it makes it very interesting to set the project in this very area where analysis and a proposed solution can be of great advantage.

The issue that will be discussed further is a fascinating topic which the younger generation continually talks about in search of a solution. The researcher is aware that while change is hard, it is also necessary, and this is where the conversation starts with both the first and second generations finding common ground for a solution to help the body of Christ grow.

Limitation and Delimitation

This thesis project is to help the first generation understand that the second generation is the church of today and needs to reevaluate the model of their ministry and integrate the young generation so that the church can move in the right direction. While the researcher mentioned southwest Florida, the core of the project will concentrate on Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches. Being in Naples for over fifteen years makes it very interesting to see how things have changed over the years, allowing the younger generation to grow but not within the church. Many other ministries have deliberately engaged in resolving the issue while some ministries remain adamant about it.

The project is limited as follows: the limitation which the researcher has on the project is the various churches in the community. The project might have them feel a little out of place

because they might think that the researcher is talking about them. The project rests on the fact that the researcher has specifically chosen one church to do the study, although the problem is in the whole community. While the project would have been for entire southwest Florida, it is very much specific for NHCG, but the picture of every other Haitian evangelical church will be seen clearly.

The observation of the researcher brings him to an understanding of how ministry should be done and how the younger generation can benefit from a church that moves toward building and strengthening the body of Christ. From the information gathered and the conversations with various leaders and the second generation, the researcher saw that some of the Haitian evangelical churches want a solution but do not know where to begin.

The significance of the Project

This project has a great significance not only to the researcher but to the church and the hope that the second generation needs to move forward with an expected end. They have a special place in the life of the researcher. He was born and raised in Haiti. Growing up in the Haitian community allowed him to see things from many different angles.

In 2000, the researcher migrated to the US with his two brothers and one sister. Coming to a different culture made him understand the critical side of it, how each society shares a different philosophy of things, and how to adapt. Since the researcher was born and raised in Haiti, he has a clear and greater understanding of how the Haitian evangelical churches function. The researcher concluded, after being in the US for so long and examining the different sides of ministry inside the church, that if something were not done soon, there would be a devastating blow to the future of the Haitian churches.

From the start of his migration to the US, the researcher did not really pay attention to the issue that is now so vivid and prevalent among the Haitian evangelical churches. Since the researcher just arrived, he did not know how ministry was supposed to be done in the local church. Not having a profound knowledge of the Word crippled him from seeing the benefits of having a thriving church, primarily looking to strengthen the body of Christ. Being in the Haitian evangelical churches over the years created a sense of emergency that he never felt before. Due to the problem at hand, there can be a trace of bitterness in the heart of many, especially the second generation of Haitian Americans, leading to the third generation who they feel like they are neglected and left to look for their own God.

Before 2010, the researcher was fine with everything that was happening in the church, right until he was put in a position of leadership with no experience and training. He was the youth director before he was transitioned to be a worship leader with no formal training at all. With the responsibility of being a leader, it dawned on the researcher that to whom much is given; much is required (Luke 12:48). With this prestigious responsibility, it boiled deep inside the heart of the researcher to look for more. Even though each leader must be called by God, who always anoints His leaders, it is the responsibility of the leader to acquire knowledge to better feed the flock entrusted to them by God. The researcher often said, “Once you know your calling, you start living an inspiring life with intentionality to change.” In the summer of 2011, the researcher observed a pattern of redundancy in every ministry in NHCG and even the ones that he was part of. This triggered him to look for more information on how to do ministry effectively. The question always asked by the researcher was, “Why is this or that church thriving, and our own congregation is not?” This question was posed to the leaders in charge, but no valid or solid explanation was offered.

The researcher started attending conferences, seminars, and retreats at his own expense to learn more about ministry and how to be a better leader. Within these seminars and training, he gained quite a great knowledge and understanding of what ministry is. His perception of ministry changed tremendously. Sharing the findings with the leaders in charge was not received with great enthusiasm. It was instead received with a complaint, “Who are you to tell us what to do?” It was a down moment for him. It left him with no option than to leave the church. It is said that adversity builds character. These challenges helped the researcher to further his training and do more for the Kingdom.

In the fall of 2013, the researcher decided to enter Bible school with the help of his family. This was one of the greatest decisions he ever made. Liberty University has been a blessing to the researcher, opening his eyes to many things that would have taken him years to learn. Graduating in 2017 with a master’s in divinity, doors were open for him to be relevant and significant in what he was doing at his local church and around the community of Naples. Not everybody loves progress, and this was a lesson learned by the researcher after graduation because those who opposed change labeled him as the guy who thought he knew everything. From the beloved brother to the hated brother who thought he could bring change.

The researcher is very much aware that the first generation has yet to appreciate value. The first generation sees potential as a threat to their leadership, and most of them shy away from promoting someone capable unless that person acts the same way they do. This was what the researcher went through, and it is still an issue. It must be resolved sooner or later because it is important to have capable people who are anointed for the journey. Just like Apostle Paul stated in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust

to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”³ This is a great verse to help us understand that potential is important in the Kingdom. God is a God of knowledge, and creating us, He blessed us with great potential and gifts. Each gift needs to be adequately used for the body of Christ to function well and be productive.

The researcher did some serious talk with the leaders in charge, hoping they would see the clearer picture, but they failed to understand that the researcher was here to help. The researcher found another position in another church but decided to stay and help in saving the second generation of Haitian Americans perishing under a lack of leadership and the mistreatment of how they see them.

Upon graduation, the researcher was called to preach at youth crusades, revivals, Sunday services, and other venues to help bridge this gap that is so devastating to this generation. The younger generation had to deal with many setbacks, unnecessary religious routines that were culturally oriented rather than biblically driven.

The love that the researcher has for the local Haitian churches, especially Naples Haitian Church of God, is unmatched. He desires to see the Haitian evangelical churches thrive and leave that state of unproductivity and lead the people of God with divine power. The researcher could not help but dedicate his life to help this community that is so desperately in need of churches looking to represent the Kingdom of God at all costs.

To Naples Haitian Church of God

To see the struggle, the frustration of the second generation and even the third generation at Naples Haitian Church of God is very alarming. This project was beneficial, and a wakeup call

³ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New International Version.

for this congregation to realize and understand that there must be a paradigm shift in this new era. The project not only detailed the struggle and the tension between these two generations but also explained the necessity of finding an urgent solution to the situation.

The voice of the second generation is not to be ignored in this situation, and the more the first generation ignores their struggle, the more distant they are from ministry, which will eventually breed idleness in their lives. This thesis project analyzed the reason for the exodus and the frustration that are very common in the lives of this generation.

The researcher, being part of the congregation, understands the struggle far more than anybody else because he grew up in this culture. He oversees the Youth Bible study and sees the challenges they face daily. By working with them, the researcher better understands what they are facing and how to address the issue at hand. The researcher desires to see the Haitian evangelical churches thrive in this generation and leaders who are ready to embrace change and take on this journey of doing things in excellence. There is nothing more intriguing than having this project that portrays the life of the second generation in that congregation. The issue discussed in this thesis is unique to Naples Haitian Church of God and will help in analyzing the situation and moving forward with a sound plan.

To the Local Churches

Among the Haitian Evangelical Churches in Southwest Florida, it is very rare to find a well-balanced church that is focused on changing the cultural barriers that exist between these two generations. The Haitian Community has tremendously suffered from the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans, and it is not an issue that concerns just Naples Haitian Church of God but all the local churches that are in the vicinity. What is really missing is an awareness of

where the church is and where the church needs to be. Until there is a complete acknowledgment of that fact, this will render the body of Christ in the Haitian Evangelical Churches completely in opposition with the Word of God.

The project did not aim to bring a total solution to the Haitian Community but to open the eyes of those willing to change their mentality and adopt a new strategy to bridge the gap between these two generations. Once again, the research project was to examine the exodus of the second-generation Haitian Americans from the Haitian evangelical churches. An effective qualitative research method was very relevant to this project as it helped investigate the real issue of the problem, approach it, and find a solution.

The results in this project bring a better understanding from both sides of the issue, which helps the first generation see the danger surrounding this young generation in finding common ground where they all can coexist. The exodus of the second-generation Haitian American is disheartening because what they require is simply a chance to be heard and a place to be fed spiritually. The first-generation pastors and leaders are aware of the problem of the exodus of the second generation. This is an alarming issue for them and needed to be addressed. The results conclude that many issues need to be addressed to have both generations on common ground. These include the issues of language, leadership, acculturation, and the theological basis of the church that need to be put in evidence. Letting go of past problems is not going to be a smooth transition. However, a proper analysis of the needs of the second-generation will make the first-generation pastors or leaders work out an agreement within the church to save the church and the second generation. For the church to be one under the dominion of Christ, the Haitian evangelical churches must put all differences aside and allow God to work in them so that they can be the light and salt of this world.

Chapter 2

Theological and Biblical Basis

Before establishing a biblical and theological basis of the issue at hand, it is of utmost importance that we analyze and bring into light the mission of the church and its mandate. If the church is to carry its mission into the world, a true purpose needs to be defined so that a theological and biblical basis may be established. The church is to be the true representative of God on earth and will thrive only when it abides by the guidance of Jesus. The distinctive aspect of the church makes it clear that there is a call over the lives of the followers of Christ. They are a special people, called out of darkness to serve Him, as Apostle Peter says, “God’s people are holy, special, and mandated with a special cause to declare His glory to the nations” (2 Peter 2:9). The call that the people of God have on their lives is to be fruitful in what they do for the Kingdom by denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Him (Matthew 16:24). As the body of Christ, it is significant to have a heart that is grafted in the Word, pursuing the call that God has for the church, as a representative who is full of energy and willing to go the extra mile proclaiming the Gospel with joy.

What needs to take place is a conscious decision among the Haitian Evangelical Churches that a change is necessary and that change needs to be radical in a sense that it is rooted in biblical principles, not cultural norms. The issue of the HEC is not a lack of potential because all the potential is there with people willing to contribute toward building a stronger generation for Christ. Instead, it is an issue of willingness to bridge the gap. The comfort must be to a certain extent because familiarity breeds contempt, as the saying goes. If the Haitian Evangelical Churches lose the true message of the Gospel, it will only be considered a group or a religious society but not a

church.⁴ If fully understood, the church would be dynamic, replacing all intent of pursuing what culture deems right and leaning toward advancing the Kingdom of God. It is easy to get distracted and do what the crowd does. It does not really matter how long you have been in ministry; if your leadership is based on the approval of people, you will always suffer emotional distress. The Haitian Evangelical Churches need to re-strategize their plans, become Kingdom-focused, not program-focused and lead not with the norm of convenience to please people but with a resilient spirit that abides by the Word of God.

This chapter will detail the calling and mission of the church and its theological foundations on what Christ has done on the cross to redeem humanity. The mission of Jesus is very significant to the overall comprehension of the church. The church exists through the sacrificial work of Christ. This gives people hope that God loves them, no matter what. The message proclaimed by the church is a remedy to all who are willing to surrender to Jesus.

If the church is to be productive in this depraved world, spiritual leadership is a must for those God has entrusted such a prestigious calling. While the church can rejoice for having been delivered from the power of the enemy, it is important to know that spiritual leadership is essential to its growth.

The Church

The church is the present vehicle by which God has chosen to carry out His mandates. The church exists because the head, who is Christ, needs people to be His representative. The church is a group on a mission, called out by God to serve in this crooked world.⁵ The mission of the church in this era is to rediscover its biblical purpose. The church must be seen as an organism

⁴ John Hammett, *The Mission of the Church as a Mark of the Church*, JBTM 05:1 (Spring 2008), 34, access November 11, 2019.

⁵ Jonathan Falwell, *Innovative Church, Innovative leadership for the next generation church* (Nashville Publishing Group, 2008), 102

rather than an organization.⁶ While it is true that the church can function as an organization, its true nature is to be an organism. This organism pictures the church as a true, living, and divine entity representing the Kingdom of God. The sole purpose of the church is to be the representative of God that allows the world to see that Jesus is alive, and the Holy Spirit lives in them. This is where Haitian Evangelical Churches clash with the second generation of Haitian Americans. When culture is seen as a spiritual authority, it contradicts the position and effectiveness of the Word of God. Since nothing on earth can contradict the Word of God or stand against it, culture has to bow before the Word and allow the church to function and bear fruits in this perverted generation. When culture is not put in the right perspective, it becomes a barrier to growth, creates frustration and malaise. To understand the full capacity of what the mission of the church is, a brief survey of the church, according to the New Testament, is necessary.

The Genesis of the Church

While the church will be fully analyzed, it is necessary to find the genesis of the church to extrapolate the true meaning of the term better. Jonathan Falwell, the senior pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, in his book, *Innovate Church*, talks about the church as a group of people called out of this world to live for God.⁷ The word church itself comes from the Greek word “Ekklesia,” which means “the called-out ones,” stated in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17.”⁸ The word church also has a Hebrew word *qāhāl*. However, it is significant to know that this Hebrew word for the church does not have a strong technical name; it rather refers to any kind of gathering.⁹ We see Moses gather the people of Israel before the Lord in the book of Deuteronomy. The church, in

⁶ Ibid. 118.

⁷ Ibid. 102.

⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2013), 954.

⁹ Charles T. Grant, *The Nature of the Universal Church*, EMJ 07:1 (Summer 1998), 5, accessed November 12, 2019

its mission, is established by God, has a unique vision, and it is described as the people of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ The church, while under the dominion of Christ, has been called to be different and develop a strategy to grow. From the Old Testament, the people of Israel are the chosen people of God (Exodus 15:13); in the New Testament, Jesus has saved us from the wrath of God that we may share in His glory (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).¹¹ Through decades, the church has known a voluminous set of attacks. The people have been fighting for their lives; the death of the apostles shows the ever-surrounding danger that the church is facing, and the only way to stay standing is to rely on God. Local churches that have been operating under the guidance of their human-made rules will only survive for a certain amount of time, but the church that is built by God will forever stand to glorify Him. Adverse winds will come, but since the foundational structure is solid, their outcome will be great and, therefore, can resist all fiery arrows of the attack of Satan (Ephesians 6:11; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17).

The purpose of the church is truly an important matter, so we must put it in the right perspective if we are to know what it is supposed to do and how it is supposed to operate in this world and our communities. Just like it was mentioned earlier, the church exists for the sole purpose of proclaiming the Good News, which is the Gospel. The church is not fully operational when it fails to represent the full scope of the power of the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, declares: “I will build my church,” and not even the gates of hades will prevail against it (Matthew 15:18). These words speak of the magnitude and the capacity the universal church has. The power that resides in the church is unmatched, untraceable, and unalterable. Jesus clearly shows that human beings will partake in this magnificent organism, but they need to recognize that the full authority only comes from God. The church is to operate under

¹⁰ Ibid. 958.

¹¹ Ibid. 958.

the guidance of Christ and Christ alone. Talking about the universal church, Charles T. Grant states:

Another common designation of the universal church is that of the invisible church. Again, this term also reveals an essential truth about the nature of the universal church, namely, that there is no outward or visible sign of the church. By merely observing a group or a congregation of people, it is impossible to discern which of them belong to the universal church and which do not. In that sense, the church is invisible. But this invisibility should not be taken to imply that the universal church is, in some sense, unreal. The universal church is composed of visible (as well as invisible) members of the body of Christ and is no less real than a local company of believers.¹²

This statement depicts the true nature of the universal church, which will lead to the local church serving each community for the benefit of the Kingdom. If we are to talk about the universal and local church, it is significant to visualize the importance of the Pentecost, which can be considered the bedrock of the church when it first started. The weighty facets of the Pentecost make it hard to overlook because of what Peter on the day of Pentecost brings to us—the birth of the church in its most vivid way. Pentecost should not be seen as a regular day or a mere day; it is special in the sense that the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus in Acts 1:4-8 is the epitome of the Trinity in action.

The Pentecost was not realized by great oratory, loud shouting as some use in the churches today. It was not Jewish ritual; it was the power of God in the display because the apostles were in one accord, waiting on the promise of the Holy Spirit by Jesus.¹³ The effect and significance of the Pentecost are unique to the church today, and when the church grasps the full extent of what the Pentecost really means, hearts will be unsealed, minds will be unlocked, which will enable the church to do action in the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Pentecost is the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven

¹²Ibid. 15.

¹³ A. W. Lewis, *The Power of Pentecost*, BSAC 087:347 (Jul 1930), 354, accessed November 11, 2019.

¹⁴ Ibid. 356.

and taking His proper place on earth inside the church.¹⁵ Acts Chapter 2 continues and shows that when the Holy Spirit is in action, it is impossible not to see miraculous signs and wonders. From that day forth, it shows how the church has come into existence by God using Peter and what Jesus had declared previously in Matthew 15. The Pentecost has set forth a model on how the church should look. It is a unifying yet diverse entity. It can be said that on the day of Pentecost, many tongues spoke under the operation of the Holy Spirit. The different languages cannot be a sign of division; it is to show that while the local churches may be different, their main aim is to glorify God in all that they do. There is always power in diversity because our differences make us appreciate one another and make the body of Christ look divinely alive. While the members of the local church need to be washed by the blood of Jesus Christ and dwell under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is highly seen that the church is not perfect, but it is also true that through Christ, it is made perfect. Therefore, the church of Jesus Christ is a mixture of good people, having prevailing grace, and people with ill minds and corruption still venting in their lives.¹⁶ Not only Peter in Acts 2 but later in Acts 9, the Bible introduces us to Paul of Tarsus, who will one day be one of the most significant church planters and apostles ever to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. Jerusalem is, therefore, a very significant and powerful place in the genesis of the church.

The Metaphorical Use of the Word Church

Through the lens of the Bible, there are various metaphors used to describe the church, but there is still a level of confusion in society, describing what the church really is. The mention of

¹⁵ Merrill F. Unger, *The Significance of Pentecost*, BSAC 122:486 (Apr 1965), 169, accessed November 12, 2019.

¹⁶ Archibald Fleming, *The Church Essentially Spiritual*, BSAC 012:48 (Oct 1855), 728, accessed November 12, 2019.

the church by diverse groups with little specification adds to the confusion.¹⁷ For some, the church is the building with the equipment in it, composed of pastors, deacons, and members. It is very clear in the Bible that the church has been metaphorically identified as the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the bride of Christ. The temple of Jerusalem was the central location where Israel worshipped and offered sacrifices to the Lord. Many places in the Bible mention the church in the Old Testament, which is stated differently. There are numerous references, like Deuteronomy. 4:10, Joshua 9:2; however, there are just a few references to how the church was still active in the Old Testament. Edmund P. Clowney stated that “The great and definitive assembly of Israel was the assembly at Sinai. It was the actual gathering together of Israel ‘in the day of the assembly.’”¹⁸ The people that God has called His own and those to come into faith by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross have become the building blocks of the Kingdom of God. Apostle Peter makes it clear in his Sermon in Acts that the power of the church resides in the Holy Spirit and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This shows that the church is more than the regular building; it is a deep belief inside of each believer, recognizing that Christ died for their sins and now redeemed them through His blood, living for His glory and awaiting His glorious return. To fully grasp the theological meaning of the word church, it is vital to dive into the terms: People of God, Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Bride of Christ.

The Church as the People of God

Israel, in the Old Testament, was the people God chose to carry out His mandate and represent His kingdom. The church becomes proactive and alive in the New Testament. God, in

¹⁷ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2013, 950.

¹⁸ Edmund P. Clowney, *Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church*, WTJ 31:1 (Nov 1968), 33, accessed November 14, 2019.

His infinite love, cared for the church and described it as the apple of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:10). External circumcision in the Old Testament was the mark of the chosen people of God, but the New Testament brings a different side, where circumcision is a matter of the heart. God now requires people whose hearts are in alignment with His Word. This is what differentiates the people of God from the world (Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3; Acts 15).¹⁹

The Body of Christ

For generations, the body of Christ has been regarded as a complete representation of the church. The image of the church as the body of Christ is the focal point of the activity of Christ in the church now, as it was when Christ walked the earth. The image also brings the church as a connected unit under the headship of Christ.²⁰ The believers of the body of Christ are individual members or parts because everything was created through Him, for Him, and in Him (1 Corinthians 1:15-18).²¹ The image of the church as the body of Christ represents the catalyst of the activity of Christ in the midst of His people now, as it was when His physical ministry was on earth.²² The body of Christ is a group of believers coming together to honor God alone. Since the believers are interconnected in bringing Christ to the world, it is now imperative to the body of Christ to use the gift that God has bestowed upon them to strengthen the church. In 1 Corinthians 12, Apostle Paul took the time to show the church that the gifts given to them are for the edification of the saints. For the body of Christ to elevate to new heights, these gifts need to be adequately harnessed. Believers are to honor God with their gifts, knowing that it is not about them but about God, who allows them to use what He has already given them. The body of Christ needs to be unified under the authority of Christ.

¹⁹ Ibid. 959.

²⁰ Ibid. 959-960.

²¹ Ibid. 960.

²² Ibid. 959.

Since Christ is the head of the church, everything needs to flow from Him, and order must be established, not allowing the enemy to divide them like the Corinthians. This unifying body needs to work toward building the Kingdom of God because the barriers caused by ethnic and social norms have been removed through Jesus at the cross.²³ The bond, which the members of the body of Christ share, needs to be the locus of the local church, as they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Mark Dever, in his book, *What Is a Healthy Church?* states that “It’s a body, bound together by our individual decisions but also bound together by far more than a human decision—the person and work of Christ.”²⁴ The body of Christ is composed of many branches, and each branch is not so much more important than the other because each brings something unique that will somehow make the church alive. Each part is important to the overall spiritual growth of the church.

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament, God needed a place to dwell, a tabernacle, which represented the presence of God. God, in His ultimate purpose for humanity, had a desire for a relationship with His created beings. In the book of Genesis, the relationship was so beautiful that He walked with Adam in the cool of the day, but a tragic incident happened where God had to chase them out of His presence. Still, God sought to reconcile humanity with His divine purpose, which was previously established for them. John Vernon McGee, talking about the tabernacle, had these bold words to say:

The Tabernacle was merely a link in the chain from the sacrifice of Abel to the cross of Christ, which gave an approach for those then present to the presence of God. From Abel’s altar outside of Eden to God’s altar outside of Jerusalem, we find a continuous and unbroken line of sacrifices which made an approach to God.

²³ Ibid. 960.

²⁴ Mark Dever, *what is a healthy church*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2007., 26

Along the route, we find God meeting the situation by supplying the need. God became to His people just what they needed.²⁵

Now the Holy Spirit lives inside believers, making them aware of their sinful behaviors and conducting them to live a holy life. Millard Erickson quips, “The Spirit is in one sense also the sovereign of the Church.”²⁶ The Holy Spirit leads the church in the right direction and allows the church to function to its fullest. The believers being the temple, the Holy Spirit is a representation that the Spirit is indeed living and working in each believer, perfecting them into the likeness of Christ. Without the Holy Spirit, there will not be a moving church. Jesus in His own words told the disciples: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John14:16-17). The Holy Spirit assures that the members of the church use all their gifts for the benefits of the body of Christ, glorifying God. The Spirit of God gives the believers great assurance of their salvation and helps the church live a holy life. The Holy Spirit is the greatest agent working day in and day out, through the lives of the believers because if it were not for that agent of change, life for the believers would be in the wandering land. Even the prayer of the saints may lack substance, but the Holy Spirit gives strength through the weakness of the believer and gives the prayer significance before the throne (Romans 8:26). It is therefore evident that without the Holy Spirit, the church would be nonexistent.²⁷ The Holy Spirit is and will always be an active influence in the lives of the people of God.²⁸

²⁵ John Vernon McGee, *Theology of the Tabernacle Part 1*, BSAC 094:374 (Apr 1937), 160, accessed November 15, 2019.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 963.

²⁷ Arthur M. Climenhaga, *Spirit and Church*, ATJ 01:0 (NA 1968), 10, accessed November 15, 2019.

²⁸ Joseph R. Greene, *The Spirit in the Temple: Bridging the Gap between Old Testament Absence and New Testament Assumption*, ETS 55:4 (Dec 2012), 737, accessed November 15, 2019.

The Bride of Christ

Apostle Paul gives a clear answer to this aspect of the church by saying, “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2). The same way a husband is jealous for his wife, Christ is jealous for the church. The church is still standing because Christ has not ceased to love His church and therefore commends the church to be like-minded by loving Him in return. The bride is expected to be different and not adorn with the things of this world. The bride of Christ is to be productive and fruitful in everything.

The role of the bride (the church) is to make sure that whenever the husband (Jesus) comes, He finds the church flourishing, not compromising its call and clinging to fables. The gap that needs to be bridged between the first generation and the second-generation Haitian Americans is the recognition that the church is not private property but the bride of Christ. If the church is to be productive in this era, as the bride of Christ, it has to reject all cultural norms that hinder its growth and allow the second generation to be fed spiritually, knowing that the youth of today is the church of today, not tomorrow.

The best practice that can be beneficial to the second generation of Haitian Americans as the bride of Christ is the true spiritual food that can bring life to this dying generation and allow God to operate in their lives. While the cultural norms will continue to exist in the church, the truth is, this generation needs real God-given guidance to keep them from leaving the church and equip them for a better future, spiritually, socially, and academically. The concept of the bride puts a great responsibility on the shoulders of the church leaders to ensure that the church is cared for. This is not a private matter but a divine and relational matter between God and His people to live a holy life. While some people reject the Savior and will suffer judgment and be condemned

eternally, the bride of Christ will experience the beauty of relationship and live with Him eternally.

John Walvoord puts it very clearly when he asserts:

As indicated in some earlier discussion, the present work of Christ and the church is set forth in the figure of Christ as the Bridegroom and the church as the bride. The future aspect of this includes the consummation of the marriage union between Christ and His church. In keeping with the oriental symbolism, the church in its relation to Christ will follow the pattern of the customary marriage in Christ's day. The first phase of the marriage is an indication of the grace of God, for while the Bridegroom is altogether lovely, the bride has little to commend herself in natural or spiritual beauty. The transformation into a lovely bride is made possible by the grace of God.²⁹

These metaphors and many others show that the church is an organism; it is a divine moving entity, working toward representing the Kingdom of God in living a holy and effective life on earth. The problems encountered in the church, especially in Naples Haitian Church of God, is a real issue that endangers its growth.

Leadership and the Church

The synopsis of the church above gives an opportunity to analyze the responsibility of a pastor or a leader inside the local church. Everything rises and falls on leadership. The vocation of a pastor to lead the church is important because the pastor does not choose themselves but rather is chosen by God.³⁰ By calling pastors and leaders for the church, God allows some sinful men to partake in His glorious Kingdom, working under the dominion of His will, bringing the body of Christ together. This partnership is what can help the world to come under the dominion of Christ as a church living a holy life, separated from the norms of this world (Romans 12:2). The church now has a greater responsibility to represent the Kingdom of God and embrace the fullness of Christ through the teaching of the Gospel. The church aims to teach the believers to look for the

²⁹ John Walvoord, *The Future Work of Christ Part II: The Church in Heaven*, BSAC 123:490 (Apr 1966), 102, accessed November 15, 2019.

³⁰ Darrell W. Robinson, *Total Life Church, How to be a First Century Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1997), 57.

Kingdom as the primary goal by not letting the distraction of the world derail them in their purpose, which is always to honor Christ and seek Him first (Matthew 6:33).

If Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches need to reach their full potential, a biblical understanding is the only way to establish a clear path of where the church needs to go and how it can grow. This biblical understanding needs to go beyond the scope of culture and comfort to embrace a biblical-vision-oriented church that will transform this new generation for Christ by pursuing a spiritually-minded leadership path, where the Gospel is applied daily. Inside the Haitian congregations, the true biblical mandates have been missing, and what the leaders accept as biblical has put the church in an array of fights, which leads to idleness. The Bible is clear that the truth will set us free if we know it (John 8:32). The Haitian Evangelical Churches must revisit the map that allowed them to be shepherds in the first place and allow the truth to shape their ministries according to the Word of God.

Kevin Harney, who is an international speaker and author of many books, including *U-turn Church*, has some wise words regarding the local churches. He believes it is still possible to revive the local church. Kevin sees the necessity for the church to make a U-Turn. Thus, he writes, “A U-turn church is about the glory of God, the name of Jesus, the health of the bride (the church), and reaching a world in desperate need of a Savior. The only way a true U-turn fire will be ignited and continue to burn is when the zeal of God’s heart consumes us, and we long for what he longs for.”³¹ The church needs to reevaluate its structure and recognize that this is a ministry; it is not human-made, and it is about God. Unless the church sees God as the supreme authority, it will always operate under the influence of cultural norms. The researcher has evaluated the different programs and the functioning of Naples Haitian Church of God for over a decade. It is time to

³¹ Kevin G. Harney and Bob Bouwer, *The U-turn Church, New direction for health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 17

sound the alarm because the second-generation Haitians are suffering and spiritually dying slowly because they have nothing like a model other than their peers. In the light of Proverbs 22:6, it is important as parents to set an example in the home by living a Christ-like life in front of their children. Parents are called to live under the dominion of Christ, intertwined with the teachings received in the church (Genesis 18:19; Galatians 3: 29).

Holding on to the Haitian culture and how the church should be operated has forced the second-generation Haitians to exit the church. It is also obvious that the first generation is perishing for a lack of knowledge as they transfer or force their cultural agenda to the second generation (Hosea 4:6). A healthy church is characterized by growth, quality, renewal, significance, to name a few.³² To build the church and strengthen the body of Christ, a few things need to be put into place. This chapter will further detail the mission of the church, how the Haitian culture has become a danger to the second generation of Haitian youths, the type of spiritual leadership needed to bridge the gap, the tension of these two generations, the complexity of how the Gospel is implied among the Haitian Evangelical Churches and how the mandate of the Gospel can be fulfilled to bring the church under the authority of Christ.

Leadership Model for the Church

A proper survey of Scripture gives an in-depth analysis of what leadership should look like in the church. God has called many to lead. Their leadership needs to be solely based on God, who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrew 12:2). Leadership is defined by many writers in the following ways:

³² William W. Gasser, *What Is A Healthy Church?* JMAT 06:1 (spring 2002), 106, access November 17, 2019.

“Leadership is a process of labor, care and study to foster growth in those you lead. And in turn, true leaders go through a process of cultivating their minds in order to lead.”³³

“Leadership is the process of influencing others to reach a common goal. Influence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist.”³⁴

One thing that is unique in God calling someone to be in a position of leadership is that the person needs to grasp the importance of being a servant, he is, first of all, a servant of God, then a servant to the people.³⁵ The model of leadership that the body of Christ needs is one that is based on a biblical and theological turf, proven by God and ready to do what God has in mind for His people. David Murray says it clearly: “God’s Word is obviously the first source of teaching on Christian leadership. The Bible tells us that there are two fundamentals for a Christian leader: spiritual life and moral life. Before anyone can become a Christian leader, he must first become a Christian; he must be born again (John 3:3, 10).³⁶ There can be no spiritual leadership without a direct connection to the divine source, God. Since we are in a society that is changing day in and day out, the church ought to have a plan and be on the alert.”³⁷

The entire Bible is full of many examples of the leadership of many people whom God chose to have an impact and be a model to the body of Christ. When looking at Adam as the first-ever created being by God, Adam failed to carry the mandate that God so meticulously communicated to him. Adam was the representative of the human race, and his test was a test for

³³ Mercurius Phillips, *Leaderflip, Leading in Changing Times with Unchanging Principles* (Pittstown: NJ Writes, 2017), 15.

³⁴ Richard Parrott, *Leadership Character: A Matter of Trust*, ATJ 33:0 (NA 2001), 23, accessed November 17, 2019.

³⁵ David Murray, *An Introduction to Christian Leadership*, PRJ 03:2 (July 2011), 318, accessed November 17, 2019.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 322.

³⁷ Charles R. MacDonald, *Pastoral Leadership in the Church*, CENQ 13:1 (spring 1970), 33, accessed November 17, 2019.

all humanity.³⁸ Adam did not, in his divine connection with God, keep what God gave him to do. He succumbed to eating the fruit which was given to him by Eve. Without even asking Eve of the choice she made, he failed, and humankind now experiences the failure of the very first leader that God placed in the garden. Though Adam's failure brought a damaging outcome to humanity, God did not cease to raise other leaders. True Christian leadership that God wants the body of Christ to emulate is the one that is willing to move forward with the plans of God even when people seem to ridicule the plan. There is a divine direction that keeps them going, no matter how bad the insults get. A true model of Christian leadership brings discipline in the life of the leader, strength to the heart, and encourages the mind to lead with passion.

Noah's Leadership

That leadership model is found in the life of Noah starting in Genesis Chapter 6 when he built the ark that God instructed him to do to be saved from the perverted generation whom God told to come out of their perversion. According to some theologians, it took Noah 120 days to build the ark. It seems such a staggering number to build something like that, despite the ridicule, the joke, the sweat that Noah had to deal with. His leadership shows the church that once you are in connection to the God who called you, it is imperative that you keep your focus on the calling. The distinctiveness of Christian leadership is what makes the body of Christ unique and different than any other leadership on the face of the planet. Since the leadership of the Christian is not based on self but rather on the God of the universe, the responsibility of the Christian leader is to bring honor to God in everything that is said and done.

Christian leadership is so distinctive in the sense that no Christian leader is the star or the number one option; it is God who bestows the gift on the leader. Hence, it requires that a leader be

³⁸ Ernest Pickering, *The Nature of Covenant Theology*, CENQ 03:4 (Winter 1960), 2, accessed November 17, 2019.

humble in everything.³⁹ The leader always puts God first, allowing Him to work in their life daily, perfecting them into the likeness of Christ. This is an important concept to grasp because if it is not fully understood, it can lead to self-exaltation. Crawford Loritts understands this concept in acknowledging the seriousness of that call from God when he asserts, “And though leadership is crucial, it was never meant to be a status symbol or a personal statement of worth and value. The one who leads is no more important than the person who faithfully serves in obscurity. We have all been created in the image of God and given work to do. It is not the position that adds value to us as people—we were created with value and worth.”⁴⁰ That is why it is very critical that a leader goes into a series of tests before God puts them in a position of trust. In other words, your test as a leader is a prerequisite before trust. God must test you before He can trust you, even though He knows your heart. Though the heart of man is evil, God is still working toward bringing humankind together under His will so they can partake with Him in His wonderful plan for the world. That is why God has given everyone the one important ingredient that is not deserved by anyone, which is grace. Grace, taking into full consideration, is always far more than enough.⁴¹ Grace allows the leader to operate even when their hearts need repair. God is still open to giving people a second chance, and leaders are part of the plan as well. A leader is never self-sufficient but always relies on God to lead the way because the leader sets the example for the followers in giving them a plan and opportunity to participate in the work of the Kingdom.

Submitted Leadership of Abraham

Abraham was also a great leader called out of his own country to leave and serve the God he did not have any acknowledge of. The calling of Abraham shows the willingness to serve God

³⁹ William D. Lawrence, *Distinctive of Christian Leadership*, BSAC 144:575 (July 1987), 317, accessed November 17, 2019.

⁴⁰ Crawford W. Loritts, Jr, *Leadership as an Identity* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2001), 22

⁴¹ Andy Stanley, *The Grace of God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010) Chap. 1, Kindle.

and leave everything behind in complete submission to God. A true leader understands that when God calls, the outcome will be great, the road may be stiff because before the promotion comes submission and a divine process that needs to take place. God is a God of relationship, and this is shown in how He chose Abraham, and through that relationship, Andy Stanley observes that

When God initiated His relationship with Abram, he began with a promise—a promise Abram did not deserve or ask for. This was all God’s idea. The Lord did not issue Abraham a set of behaviors to adhere to. The Ten Commandments wouldn’t appear for several generations. He simply asked Abram to receive promises. This invitation to Abram to trust Him was how God initiated their relationship.⁴²

This details how Abraham completely submitted himself under the authority of God so that he could be a vessel. This shows that each leader called by God must embrace the agenda of God by forsaking their own plan and letting God lead the way. If a leader does not understand the power of submission in their calling, they will soon lead themselves toward self-destruction. One other thing that is unique with God is that, since He is the source, He never lacks resources, meaning after each leader is gone, He always has the next one in line. That is why leaders must not think so highly of themselves because the same God who establishes them can also wave them off His list.

Distinctive Leadership of Joseph

Joseph was also one of the great leaders chosen by God. Even after he was sold into slavery (Genesis 37:18-36), God was still with him because of his integrity of heart and willingness to obey God, no matter the price. This is the catalyst of a leader: to obey, submit, and allow God to control every area of their life. The plan of God was so wonderfully orchestrated in the life of Joseph that not a single step on his way was not ordered by God. The predicament of Joseph was nothing else than God preparing him to take on the promise in Genesis 49. The call that God has on the lives of the leaders requires a process. With every promise, there is a process. The process

⁴² Stanley, *The grace of God*, Chap.2.

is not always pleasant, but in the long run, it brings a promise (Jeremiah 29:11). The process allows God to prune the leader from every rust capable of destroying the gift, which can lead to a prideful behavior. Wise Solomon says that pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling (Proverb 16:18).

Transformational Leadership of Moses

One other Old Testament leader that needs a close look is Moses. God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. God used Moses as a bridge to prepare the next generation, which would be led by Joshua. Moses is the emancipator to the people of Israel. God called Moses out of a burning bush in Exodus Chapter Three, where God spoke with Moses. Moses refused to go. His excuse was that he was a man who lacked the eloquence of a good speaker. While it was strange for Moses to be pulling back from the call, this should not be seen as a strange reaction because, with further analysis, it is very intimidating for the God of the universe to call a mere man to carry out His mandate.

The call of God is so great that it makes the leader back off. Once the person understands that it is never about their intellectual capacity, it gives God room to operate. Moses was such a great leader that he displayed a Christ-like type of character. Moses did anything to save the people he was serving. Carl Amerding, elaborating on Moses as the man of God, has this to say:

On the morrow, after he had charged the people with having ‘sinned a great sin,’ he returned unto the LORD, and said, ‘Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold, yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.’ Had he so desired, he could have allowed the divine wrath to take its course (Exodus 32:10), and he, the lone survivor, would have become the head of a great nation. But Moses was too great for that. He would rather die in their stead. Nothing could be more Christlike. Here is the very essence of true greatness.⁴³

⁴³ Carl Armerding, Moses, *the Man of God*, BSAC 116:464 (October 1959), 353, accessed November 19, 2019.

The dedication of Moses to lead the people is so alarming that it gives all leaders a model to follow. Each leader should model after this great man of God. It is also significant to see Moses as a mentor. Moses mentored Joshua, knowing that he might be prominent right now, but he was not eternal. This is the concept that all leaders should have. The ability of Joshua to be the successor of Moses is a great example of multiplication in leadership. A leader is never a leader until they can reproduce. In Joshua Chapter One, God spoke of Joshua by saying, “Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses” (Joshua 1:1). The Bible clearly shows the importance of reproduction in leadership. The story of Moses as a leader exemplifies the extent of the importance of mentorship in the lives of the leaders. It is a way of ensuring that ministry will be standing when their lives on this earth are over. The biblical model of mentorship can be found in other leaders in the Hebrew Bible, for example, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, to name a few.

Turning to the New Testament, we see Jesus as the greatest example of leadership and mentorship. He first called the disciples in (Matthew 4:18-22), whom He led and equipped for the journey. The call of Peter is in Mark 1:16-20. Jesus asked Peter and Andrew to follow Him, so He could make them fishers of men. He called them with a vision because He had a vision for them. Once He calls a leader, that leader needs to be certain of why Jesus calls and why the calling is important. The vision that Jesus had for the disciples was very critical. John Chapter Six gives a great perspective. Jesus was very thorough with the disciples, and that was the reason He was with the crowd. He fed the crowd, talked to them, and sent them away. With the disciples, however, He sat with them and trained them. The quantity did not impress Jesus, and with the seventy, He was sure to ask them why they followed Him. Since some who followed Jesus were there just for the fun ride, they decided to leave. The disciples, who knew that there was purpose in following a

leader with a vision, understood that vision was the key that could unlock potential and required a life of discipleship.

Jesus did not only call the disciples to follow Him, but He also empowered them to carry His mandates, not just in the future but now (Matthew 10:1,8). Jesus aimed to let the disciples know that empowerment was important because, without power, they would not be able to do what He did. The leadership of Jesus shows that the ability of a leader to lead is key to organizational growth. Blackbaby observes, “The greatness of an organization is directly proportional to the greatness of its leader.”⁴⁴ Any success that an organization can experience relies on the ability of the leader and their team. While the leader is important, the team is even more important because, without a supportive team, the work will not be done properly. The power that the leader possesses needs to be in balance with the empowerment that the team must succeed. Jesus was a clear example when he sent the disciples out where they were able to heal the sick and cast out demons, but their power was connected to the source. The command of Jesus before He left them was to go to the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:19). It was to embrace the ultimate call for which He came and died.

Transformational leadership

If there is a leadership model for the church, there must be transformational leadership as well so that the church can reach new heights. Without transformational leadership, the church will be left in an array of confusion and will not experience growth. This gives the church the tools necessary to move forward with a well-detailed vision that will equip every entity in the church. Thomas Scarborough pens an ideal definition of what transformational leadership is, and he states: “Christian Transformational Leadership is a major leadership theory whereby the Christian leader,

⁴⁴ Henry and Richard Blackbaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 51.

most simply, seeks to influence (or transform) followers on the basis of his or her vision and character.”⁴⁵ The transformational leader challenges the followers, values their abilities, and continues to invest in them so that the ministry does not become burdensome. The life of Jesus showed a tremendous leadership ability to transform lives—taking them from nothing to something. Jesus did not hold on to His position as an end to a means, but He showed leadership to be more than just a position. Dr. Crawford Loritts put it this way, “Our motivation should be the glory of God, we should love Him more than anything, and all we do should be an expression of that love relationship.”⁴⁶ Leaders of this generation should separate themselves from other secular leaders because while secular leaders help people achieve their respective goals set by their former bosses, the focus of a spiritual leader is to lead the people to achieve the agenda of God.⁴⁷

Therefore, the transformational leader is to point people to seek the will of God and carry His agenda. For a better perspective of leadership, the word of Apostle Paul is critical here when he says, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17). This is a great reminder that the priority of the leader is very important, and if a leader fails to determine the God-given priorities, they spend their time on extraneous and unproductive projects.⁴⁸ Each follower needs to have the desire to emulate their leader, and this gives rise to the potential that allows the follower to do more than they think they are capable of doing. Through transformational leadership, even when culture is so prevalent and authoritative, the leader finds ways to rise above culture and take transformative actions. The elevation above

⁴⁵ Thomas O. Scarborough, *Defining Christian Transformational Leadership*, CONSPECTUS 10:1 (September 2010), 58, accessed November 19, 2019.

⁴⁶ Loritts, *Leadership as an Identity*, 23-24.

⁴⁷ Blackbaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 33.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 247.

culture is the conviction that the leader needs to make an impact in the world. Leading with conviction and confidence is the driving force that should be behind the agenda of the leader. Albert Mohler has this to say regarding conviction: “Convictions are not merely beliefs we hold; they are those beliefs that hold us in their grip. We would now know who we are, but for these bedrock beliefs, and without them, we would not know how to lead.”⁴⁹

Many examples of Jesus showed that He was willing to go beyond the norm of culture to accomplish something that was never done before. He ate with tax collectors in Mark 2:13-17. He conversed with a Samaritan woman in John 4, and He healed people on the Sabbath, which was not permitted according to the Jewish customs. His electrifying mood was contagious; wherever Jesus set His foot, He was greeted by a crowd. This demonstrates that His messages and who He was brought a positive change to many. While Jesus was hated by many, He was not intimidated by their assault and hate. He was on a mission to do something that nobody else had done before.

The other facets of transformational leadership are to change and strengthen the character of the followers and make them more confident in their abilities to do their jobs, of course, conscious that we can do nothing apart from God, the true vine (John 15:5). Just like Jesus did, transformational leadership is concerned about the performance and development of the followers.⁵⁰ The transformational leader desires to help the followers forsake anything that can transcend to self-interest in order to achieve greater goods.⁵¹ The agenda of a real Christian leader is to choose the agenda of God before his agenda. This exemplary life helps followers make better decisions, knowing that their leaders are leading them in the right direction. Transformational

⁴⁹ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead, Principles for Leadership That Matters*, (Bloomington: Bethany House, 2012), 21.

⁵⁰ Richard Parrott, *Transformational Leadership: Theory and Reflections*, ATJ 32:0 (NA 2000), 65, accessed November 20, 2019.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 65.

leadership always has a clear vision that details everything that needs to be done to make the journey not too bumpy. That is why it is very pivotal for transformational leaders to grasp the importance of influence, persuasiveness, and strategy.⁵² To know the importance of transformational leadership is also to grasp the concept of the Kingdom of God and its vital significance in the church.

The Concept of the Kingdom of God

Reading the New Testament Gospels gives the reader the centrality of the Kingdom of God. It allows the reader to see and know the concept of the Kingdom and the work of Jesus. Specifically, Jesus came into the world to save humanity. The life of Jesus was concentrated on establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, which could also be traced in Our Lord's Prayer. In that prayer, Jesus stated, "Your kingdom come as it is in heaven." His focus was for His followers to experience the magnificent plan of God for them, leading them into the marvelous light through the Kingdom. To know the essence of the Kingdom is to know and search for God in all that is done on earth as His beloved bride.

Stephen Wellum opined on the Kingdom of God, stating that "Basically, the kingdom of God refers to God's kingly rule, and it is especially tied to God's saving reign."⁵³ While it is very much clear in the Gospels that Jesus came to die for humanity, it is also very prevalent that Jesus' mission was to always establish His kingdom on earth in the heart of His followers. Carl F. Henry purports:

Mark 1:14–15 summarizes Jesus' preaching as the proclamation of God's kingdom: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" The waiting period was over, and God was in a climactic way initiating his royal salvific work

⁵² Thomas O. Scarborough, *Deconstructing 'Transformational' in Christian Transformational Leadership*, CONSPECTUS 11:1 (March 2011), 169-171, accessed November 20, 2019.

⁵³ Stephen J Wellum, *Reflecting on the Kingdom of God*, SBJT 12:1 (Spring 2008), 2, accessed November 23, 2019.

on earth. Luke 4:21 tells of Jesus beginning his ministry by reading Isaiah 61 and declaring that passage vitally fulfilled. Jesus' miraculous works are depicted as manifestations of the kingdom of God (Matt 11:5; cf. Isa 35:5–6). Jesus' teaching was centered in the inbreaking kingdom of God, which will bring all other kingdoms to a standstill. That kingdom was already present and manifest in his teaching, his works, and above all, his person.⁵⁴

The Kingdom of God is seen to be the central message of Christ according to the Gospels, where He takes the time to show that a full knowledge of the Kingdom of God enables the believer to know and serve Christ with more consistency. The concepts of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven seem two different realities, but they are the same concept. In the synoptic Gospels, Matthew prefers the Kingdom of Heaven while Mark and Luke prefer the Kingdom of God, but Matthew seems to be using both terms interchangeably in Matthew 19:23-24.

The Old Testament sheds some light on the concept of the Kingdom of God as well. While the central tenet of Jesus' teaching is the Kingdom of God, its presence in the Old Testament may be problematic for some. Martin J Selman, elaborating on the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, has this in mind when he says: "The Kingdom of God may therefore be regarded as a comprehensive Old Testament scheme, and the teaching of Jesus as a genuine and natural development of it."⁵⁵ This clearly shows Jesus, in the synoptic Gospels, continues something that was already taught, but He is doing it more uniquely and profoundly. John Walwoord says this regarding the kingdom of God. While surveying the Old Testament, he states:

Likewise, the kingdom of Israel becomes a phase of the larger unfolding of God's purpose and the Messianic kingdom is just another form of redemptive purpose.... "The kingdom of God is therefore primarily a soteriological concept.... It is not the sovereignty of God as such." ... "However, beginning with the 'Protevangelium' (Gen 3:15), the theme of redemption runs throughout the Old Testament; and the vision of God's reign in the future will see the restoration of the knowledge of God and obedience to his will restored in all the earth (Isa 2:1–4)." In other words, the main idea of the

⁵⁴ Carl F. H Henry, *Reflections on the Kingdom of God*, JETS 35:1 (Mar 1992) 41, accessed November 23, 2019.

⁵⁵ Martin J. Selman, *The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament*, TYNBUL 40:2 (NA 1989) 162, accessed November 23, 2019.

Kingdom of God is the unfolding of the plan of redemption rather than the sovereignty of God.⁵⁶

Either reading the Old or New Testament, the theme of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven is present to reveal the plan of God for humanity. If the concept of the Kingdom is fully understood, the follower of Christ will not only experience the Kingdom now but also the Kingdom to come.

The Kingdom of God and the Church

When talking about the Kingdom of God and the church, it is vital to understand the two entities fully. The church is seen to be birthed through the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom has a bigger role in how the church is viewed.

The local church is the biggest representative of the Kingdom of God. It has the responsibility of proclaiming the Good News. Since a kingdom has a king that is above everything, it is crucial to reinforce the important concept of the Kingdom of God by emphasizing that Jesus is the King of the Kingdom, where God is the Ruler of all and the Holy Spirit leads with discernment. Dwelling under the rule of the Kingdom of God allows the church to live life to the fullest (John 10:10). In all, the church is the Kingdom of God on earth, where Jesus is King over everything.

Components of the Kingdom of God

There are four basic elements that a kingdom needs to be legitimate: it has a king, people, laws, and territory. These four elements are part of the Kingdom of God. While it might look like an earthly kingdom, these are the very elements that the Kingdom of God is comprised of.

⁵⁶ John F. Walwood, *A Review of "Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God"* BSAC 110:437 (January 1953), 2-3, accessed November 23, 2019.

King

A king is very important for the overall functioning of a kingdom, and God is King over everything; He created the heavens and the earth. The king brings order and dominion in the establishment of the kingdom. The Gospel of John declares this when it says: “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt” (John 12:15). This king is none other than Jesus, the promise that the Old Testament prophets announced years before. King Jesus, in His earthly ministry, reveals the glory of God on earth by bringing everyone under the dominion of God. The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, where He was recognized as King, is an example of the entrance of a king. To exhibit His glory, the King, on entering Jerusalem, showed His humility by choosing to ride on a donkey.⁵⁷ The mission of King Jesus was to unify all people under one banner, which is the Kingdom of God. Unity is paramount in the development of the Kingdom, and this is accomplished through the people serving the King.

People

When God created the heavens and earth, He had a special plan in mind by creating man in His own image (Genesis 1:26-28). Since God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit, are one, the creation of man in the image God should be a representative of heaven on earth. The people, being part of this Kingdom, should reflect the kingdom mentality, where their lives are a replica of the King. Everybody in this Kingdom should also understand that the King is kind, loving, and compassionate for His people, and they should also live as such. While He is King, He has made Himself known to all by allowing people from every race and nation to understand that Jesus died for them all. James McGoldrick asserts that “He is a God who is separate from the creation but ever-present within it. He is an intelligent being who has revealed Himself and made

⁵⁷ Jey J. Kanagaraj, *Jesus the King, Merkabah Mysticism and the Gospel of John*, TYNBUL 47:2 (NA 1996), 353, accessed November 25, 2019.

it possible for His creatures to know Him.”⁵⁸ The revelation of God is found throughout His creation; His fingerprint is in everything that is under the heaven. The people are all the representatives of the Kingdom and should abide by the kingship of Jesus by living in unity, love, and acceptance. No one in this Kingdom is more important than the other. Everyone is given the same privilege and opportunity. Since God is a loving God, He demands that His people under His Kingdom display His love in all that they do, especially toward Him as the Creator. A. William Lewis, reflecting on the love of God, has this to say:

Man is saved when the love of God enters his soul. The heart is said to be the focus of the emotions, the center of the soul, the door into the spiritual life. Christ says, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me.' 'If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.'" Such a man is saved with the salvation of God.⁵⁹

Because of the love of God, all are invited in the Kingdom with no exception. The life of Jesus as King, who died on the cross, is a sign that all people of all nations, races, color are invited to be part of the Kingdom with no distinction. The Kingdom of God invites everyone to partake in His marvelous life more specifically in the reign to come when all will live with Jesus eternally if we accept His call to live separate for Him and Him alone. The Kingdom of God is available with no exclusion, and that is the beauty of the message of the cross, announcing that Jesus is the King of kings. The culture of the Kingdom of God is solely founded on the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus, therefore, is the foundation of the faith of the people of God. Everyone is welcome to be a part of the Kingdom by abiding by its rule and laws.

⁵⁸ James E. McGoldrick, *The Christlikeness of God*, RAR 07:2 (spring 1998), 68, accessed November 25, 2019.

⁵⁹ William Lewis, *God's Love Is Saving the World*, BSAC 086:343 (July 1929), 278, accessed November 25, 2019.

The Law and Territory

Not only does the Kingdom of God have a king who is Jesus, but it also has people who are led by the law of God in their territory. There is no flaw in the law of God; it is perfect in all its way (Psalm 19:7). The law of God gives each person following Christ the opportunity to live in righteousness. Yet, the people do not obtain righteousness by the law but through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the King of kings. The territory that was given to His people was to establish their dominion, living life the way it was intended for humanity to live. God, from the beginning of the world, put man into a territory, more specifically in the garden, and gave them dominion to operate. With the territory given to man along with dominion, God was very meticulous by telling them that while they might enjoy everything in the garden, there was one thing that they should not eat, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17).

The law of the Lord can be referred to as the Word of God that is living and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrew 4:12). To walk by the law of the Kingdom of God is to walk according to the Word of God, which exactly empowers the believer to live the life that God intended for them to live—living in obedience to Jesus the King. Peter Adams understands the power of the Word of God and its effectiveness in doing ministry. He says: “Confidence in the power of God’s words is fundamental to Christian spirituality, as it is also fundamental to Christian ministry. If God’s words are powerful and effective, then we must hear them and receive God’s sustaining and transformative power. If God’s words are powerful and effective, then we must make good use of them to achieve effective ministry.”⁶⁰ To achieve something of significance, all cultural norms need to be put aside, and the Kingdom of God put in the first position.

⁶⁰ Peter Adam, *God’s Powerful Words: Five Principles of Biblical Spirituality in Isaiah 55*, SBJT 10:4 (winter 2006), 28, accessed November 27, 2019

Culture and Church

For the church to thrive in this present age, a proper understanding of culture needs to be put in evidence. The culture and the Kingdom play a critical part in the overall development of the church. Leith Anderson elaborated on the 21st-century church and its culture by saying:

If one concludes that culture is an enemy of the gospel, the church will withdraw from the culture, adopt a we/they mentality, implement a fortress type of ministry, and passionately promote separatism. Many Christians have never thought through this question, but they live out this conclusion. Fear of contact and contamination by the culture forces them into increasingly exclusive relationships, always identifying with those who are most alike while trying to avoid those who are different.⁶¹

Culture in the church cannot be ignored, and seeing the words of Leith helps to understand that culture is not sinful since it was there in the beginning before the fall. The Godhead has a pattern or a way of doing things. The problem is distinguishing the sin in the culture and the sin in the person.⁶²

If a separation between culture and the church is not made, the issue of which one has authority will eventually cause strife and schism. The nature of the church once again needs to be understood from the biblical descriptions of the church and its mission. The Bible describes the church as the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the bride of Christ. It is also necessary that we fully grasp the importance of leadership and the concept of the Kingdom of God. A proper understanding of each of these concepts will help in assimilating the direction where the church needs to go and how it should carry out its vision.

⁶¹ Leith Anderson, *Theological Issues of 21st-Century Ministry* BSAC 151:602 (April 1994), 132, accessed November 27, 2019.

⁶² *Ibid.* 133.

Haiti and Religion

Before we delve into this topic, let us highlight some important facts that concern Haiti, which will be useful to the study at hand. Haiti is not a very big island, but it has a unique place in the heart of the researcher, which sometimes devolves to a bittersweet experience.

The researcher grew up in Haiti and migrated to the US at twenty-two and a half years old. Thus, the researcher is no stranger to the religious beliefs of Haitians and the history of Haiti as a whole. Haiti is often referred to as the poorest country in the Hemisphere, situated in the Caribbean. The official language is French, but Creole is mostly spoken by Haitians, which is some type of combination between French, African languages, Spanish and English.⁶³ Haiti is a mountainous country, after gaining her independence in 1804, Haiti failed to keep balance on many areas that could have benefited her people. One important fact is that 95% of the population is African descent, and 5% are whites or Caucasians. Or what Haitians call mulattos.⁶⁴

The situation of Haitians is very complex in the sense that most of the Haitians living in Haiti deal with the traumatic life of misery, insecurity, lack of good health, sanitary situation, and many more. The country is divided by the poor and the rich, and the crime rate is skyrocketing, leaving the population in constant fear. The fight that the Haitian people are fighting is a common fight between the blacks and the mulattos, which makes it very hard for the country to experience change. The researcher was born and raised in Haiti, and this constant schism is not new, it is just so repetitive because the blacks believe that the source of the problem is the mulattos controlling the country since they have power and money. Now the population has to bend under their authority. The mulattos are the rulers since they have the financial means, but the blacks are the

⁶³ William Seabrook, *The magic Island*, (New York: Brace and Company, 2016), 285.

⁶⁴ Culture, <https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti.html>.

oppressed ones, trying to survive day by day. This tension has been there since generations, and the country is heading more into poverty

Frequently, religion can involve spirits and gods, but it is not always factual.⁶⁵ Religion is a very important part of the lives of the people in Haiti. While there may be many many other religions, the Roman Catholic is very dominant in the culture. In the past, Roman Catholics had about 90 percent of Haiti Christians, but it has to about 70 percent, which is still a force to be reckoned with.⁶⁶ Being a Catholic allows serving what the Haitians call “lwa” which is spirits. But some Haitians prefer not to mix it up and remain purely Catholics. That “lwa” or spirit is what is commonly known as voodoo and voodoo in its greatest sense has overtaken the country. It is highly recognizable in Haiti. In fact, it is recognized as a religion. The identity of voodoo can be very well be defined by the people born and raised in Haiti.

There is no doubt that Roman Catholicism, the original religion of Haiti, is very relevant as the number one religion; however, a quick analysis of voodoo makes it very challenging to accept that Roman Catholicism is the official religion of the country. Catholicism was adopted in Haiti back in 1806 after one of the greatest revolutionary leaders named Jean Jacques Dessalines was assassinated. It was then clearly stated in the constitution by Petion and Christophe.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Michael Dash notes that “The fact that the principal schools in Haiti were run by religious orders and were staffed by French priests reinforced the Francophile attitudes of the educated and encouraged prejudices against the religion of the masses. After having been the religion of the colonizer, Catholicism became profoundly associated with neocolonial mulatto elite

⁶⁵ Winfred Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths, a Christian Introduction to World Religions*. (Downers Groves: Ivpres, 2012), 25.

⁶⁶ [https://www. https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti](https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti) (accessed February 21, 2020)

⁶⁷ Michael Dash, *Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean* (Road West: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), 52 ProQuest Ebrary.

as an unprogressive vestige of the colonial past.” Even with the majority of the populace being Catholics, the question of voodoo as more predominant than Catholicism is still a matter of concern. More so, a vast majority of them are being caught up in the paradoxical dilemma of being Catholics and voodooists.

Summary

Looking at the overall aspect of what the church is, the challenges surrounding the Haitian Evangelical Churches need a different philosophy to bring Scripture-based culture into the church. With the many issues that the HEC are dealing with, a Word-based church is very significant for the overall growth of the church in the Haitian Community. Naples Haitian Church of God needs to recapture the truth of what the Word of God teaches regarding the Kingdom of God and how the church should represent the Kingdom in what it does, specifically, not pushing people away. What needs to take place right now is a genuine return to the basic teaching of Jesus on what a disciple is and how the cross is the sole reason for the church’s existence. The existence of the church is not a human-made accomplishment but that of Jesus Himself, who died on Calvary for humanity.

If NHCG needs sustainability, there must be a turn around to what holds the faith of many, which is the living Word of God. What HEC deals with now is a total schism with the younger generation where the sole and main issue is a lack of biblical truth, which the younger generation needs to live by. The biblical truth is nothing else than the teaching of Jesus that needs to be preeminent. That is the reason a convinced leader with the right vision will lead Naples Haitian Church of God in the right direction. The words of Albert Mohler are very clear when he declares: “Convictional leaders propel action precisely because they are driven by deep convictions, and their passion for these convictions is transferred to followers who join in concerted action to do

what they know to be right.”⁶⁸ This is the truth at the highest level with the only issue that the HEC, or especially NHCG, has this truth moving in a different direction.

The HEC churches do have conviction, but it is based on a cultural preeminence rather than the solid teaching of Jesus. The church has been experiencing an emotional connection with God, while the divine relationship is floating on shallow water. It seems clear that their visions are different than what they ought to be. They ought to have a vision geared toward building the body of Christ with strong biblical teaching and a heart to gain more for Christ.

Just like an understanding of kingdom culture has been established previously, it is of utmost importance that NHCG should reevaluate their vision to carry the agenda of God. What has been going on for years in the HEC is that they create their own agenda with an attitude of allowing their culture to dictate to them what to do and what not to do while disregarding the truth of Scripture. What happens is a twist of what should have been versus what is. What should have been taught in the churches—the true revelation of the Word of God—was not taught. Instead, the culture has dictated to them to do without mastering the vision that God has for the church. It is a total reversal of telling God to bless their agenda while it should have been them pulling the agenda of God and asking Him for direction. It is impossible to ask God to bless an agenda that is not found in His Word. Since God is the Creator of everything, it is legitimate that He has total control over it as well. Once God has dominion over the affairs of the church, the church will become a vessel He can use. NHCG should understand that the exodus that they are suffering is multifold in the sense that it is more than what they believe it is. The exodus should be viewed by the HEC as a spiritual dilemma rather than a physical exodus because it is more than a language barrier or age differences; it is somehow rooted in a spiritual foundation. You can only keep certain norms for a

⁶⁸ Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 26.

certain amount of time. Eventually, the church will realize that they are not honoring the plan of God. This will be detrimental to the body of Christ and will cause people to suffer and even quit the church. That is exactly what is happening at NHCG. Once the teaching of Jesus is not preeminent and the agenda of God is not prevalent amid the church, then the question of leadership needs to be analyzed.

Since the issue of NHCG is multifold, leadership must be reviewed as the core of the problem. The question of where the church is going has to be raised. It is of vital importance to say that vision without discipline leads to self-destruction. The HEC might have a vision, but with no discipline, their vision might not be spiritually driven but culturally driven. The leadership of NHCG is now facing a great task: How do we lead effectively, embracing a biblical model for the church? Leadership is at the core of each institution, and if the church needs to experience growth, it needs to be biblically based, not culturally based. The centrality of their conviction should be based on the Word of God. The leaders in NHCG need to be connected to the source (John 15:5). The production and the effectiveness of any ministry, especially NHCG, can only be achieved if they abide by the precepts of the Word of God. It is not about culture or about the feel-good situation that always rationalizes what can work; a leader needs to trust ultimately in God, stay connected with the Word of God, and follow His agenda. Apostle Paul showed that the Kingdom of God should be a primary focus for the church. He himself preached it wholeheartedly. The center of his message was the risen Christ, which was also the center of his theology.⁶⁹

What the leaders at NHCG need to concentrate on right now is the reconstruction of their leadership team and the implementation of a new leadership model that will embrace the new generation by training them in ministry. One of the main aspects of the kingdom is to make

⁶⁹ Brian J. Vickers, *The Kingdom of Heaven in Paul's Gospel*, SBJT 12:1 (Spring 2008) 53, accessed November 27, 2019.

disciples of all nations. That is reproduction. The strategy in place right now needs to be analyzed and adjusted to answer how they can get the second generation involved and see them as contributors to the Kingdom, not as a threat. The new leadership model for the HEC, specifically NHCG, should be a way to develop new leaders by being inclusive rather than exclusive in their terms. The second generation needs a place of worship, and their needs are nothing other than a biblically sound environment where they feel valued, challenged, and equipped to work in the Kingdom by making other disciples.

This chapter aimed to depict the true meaning of the church and why it exists and how the church can be productive. If NHCG can grasp the significance of the church as the body of Christ, there will be a shift in the leaders' mindsets, who may commit themselves to follow Christ and not Haitian tradition. The cultural norms of this generation will keep people in bondage, while the teaching of Christ will bring light to the needy soul.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The scope of the project is very sensitive, and it took the researcher quite some time to come up with a well-organized methodology so that the overall aspect of the project be well presented and beneficial to the community at hand. The researcher was very optimistic when he started this project, and he compiled all the necessary documents and identified the participants to be part of the research. This process gave the researcher many resources to complete the project. The researcher through various aspects had the opportunity to analyze the different problems pertaining the clash between the first generation of Haitians and the second generation of Haitian Americans in the community and how the discovery played a major part on the Haitian churches and how they operate, particularly, Naples Haitian Church of God. The researcher sought to fully understand, on a deeper level, the issues surrounding the first generation and the second generation of Haitian Americans, which are seen to be detrimental to the overall health of the local Haitian churches

The researcher is very well aware that a thorough diagnosis needs to be done to detect the problem then find a solution to it before it becomes a more dangerous disease. Such a deterioration will affect not just the second generation that is leaving the church but also the first generation that is stuck in redundancy, keeping the local churches hostage to their cultural norms. It is very troublesome to see the first generation, whose only attention is on cultural norms, ignoring the gift that God has bestowed not just on them but also the generation after them. The failure to recognize greatness in other people working with you is a failure to see how God can maneuver in the lives of everyone.

The immigrant churches need to be more open to change. Unwillingness to accept change will cause the next generation to leave and go to other churches. One of the biggest challenges that the researcher found in his research is the fact that they are now not leaving to go to other churches, but they are leaving the church with no intention of coming back. In other words, they are de-churching, leaving their faith hanging on a balance, not knowing what the outcome will be for their future. This chapter will detail how the research was conducted for a better view of the problem at hand, and its development will elucidate where the research took place and who contributed toward accomplishing the goal.

Methodology Revealed

The focus of this project required such a meticulous work because everything needed to be well organized for a smooth landing. Putting the dots together was one of the most rewarding things that the researcher had done in a long time. A project of this magnitude required a detailed, oriented mindset, and the people needed to be part of it must be well versed in the topic as well. The researcher had to be very active in putting the focus group together as one of the most important pieces in this project. The methodology was one thing, but getting the people of caliber was another challenge that the researcher encountered but finished by getting the people necessary to get it done. Many books were researched, and many conversations took place for this project to know how to address the problem in question better.

This research shows the concern that the researcher has for the Haitian Evangelical Churches, but an emphasis on Naples Haitian Church of God where the problem is prevalent and the cause of regress in their growth are the focal points. Over the years, the concern of the researcher has grown exponentially and therefore requires urgent action. The researcher uses a Focus Group to get the answers needed to finish the project.

The researcher uses questions to guide him through the Focus Group. These questions serve as the primary questions with additional follow-up questions derived from the participants' responses. Questions one and three are mainly asked to facilitate a broader conversation.

1. What is the cause and effect of the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans from the church?

2. Does culture play a role in the Haitian Evangelical Churches?

3. Is leadership to be blamed for that imbalance in the church? This imbalance is related to how leaders of the first generation of Haitians communicate to the younger generation, most importantly, from a biblical standpoint.

4. Can these two generations really co-exist in the evangelical church? These two generations are the first generation of Haitians, coming directly from Haiti, and they were thirty and above. They barely spoke English, and they mostly aimed to work and take care of their family. The second-generation Haitian Americans are the ones born here or who came here at a very early age around the elementary school.

5. What can the second generation learn from the first generation, and vice versa?

6. Does the Haitian Evangelical Church show a willingness to change, or do they see the necessity to change?

7. Is the spiritual life of the younger generation affected by the spiritual leadership of their senior pastor?

8. How would the youth and the community benefit from that change? (The change is seeing the second generation of Haitian Americans involved more in the church and being spiritually fed, lest they leave and go to other churches and some of them end up losing their faith. We need to see the youth become more involved in the community by preaching and working in

the body of Christ. We must create a culture where the second generation of Haitian Americans feels valued and spiritually fed to live a Spirit-filled life.)

9. What needs to be done now to resolve the issue and bring the required change?

10. Would the change benefit both generations or just the younger generation?

Before answering these questions, the researcher had to dig deep to get his perspective straight on how to get the best answers from these questions. An in-depth look into the Haitian Evangelical Churches and a better understanding of how they functioned gave rise to the choice of this methodology and afforded us effective answers from the participants.

It is hard to find some facts on Haitian churches in Naples because most of the documents are related to South Florida, especially in Miami, where most Haitians dwell. Through the Focus Group interview, the researcher learned many facts regarding the Haitian Evangelical Churches in Naples, FL. The issue of the second generation of Haitian Americans leaving the church is an important topic that needs considerable attention.

The first thing that needs to be considered is the fact that most of the first generation of Haitians came to America with the same concept of the church back home, and they emulated the same strategy they had employed in Haiti without any modification. The minds of these pastors who migrated here in Florida were set on planting churches, but they totally ignored the reality of the American culture, in which they now live. The way millennials or generation Z understands church now is far more different than how the Haitians had it back in their homeland. There must be a paradigm shift where the first generation will have to work to meet the younger generation halfway. In the next chapter, we will see where the disconnection comes from. Marie Berthonia Antoine makes some very significant insightful remarks in her dissertation: “The nation’s youngest adults are by many measures much less religious than everyone else. About 39% of young people

between the ages of 18 and 29 believe in a higher power but not in God or the bible. Younger Americans of that age bracket are less likely to attend church regularly. Only 17% attend church services at least once a week”⁷⁰ The first generation needs to grasp the concept of acculturation, which can help them get the right perspective on how to help the younger generation move forward in the right direction.

It is very common in Naples to see many churches in many storefronts, and sometimes three churches can be in the same storefront about a few feet away from the other. Haitian Evangelical Churches in Naples are becoming more numerous since other pastors refuse to collaborate, they rather open their own local churches. The researcher is well aware of this situation. He has lived in Naples for twenty years now, and it has always been a common practice. The researcher has also experienced that scenario in his own church, Naples Haitian Church of God, where two members decided to go elsewhere and form their own congregation.

The Second Generation of Interviewee Participants

Since the researcher guaranteed confidentiality, all participants’ names are not real, their names here are pseudonyms—the actual name of each participant is protected by the researcher.

The participants were chosen to participate in the Focus Group interview that took place in February 2020. The group was put in place because they were part of the Haitian Evangelical Churches who had left or were still in the process of leaving. They were chosen for the fact that some of them were serving at other churches or doing ministry at other churches. It was important for the researcher to know the reason behind their exit. The second group of participants from the Focus Group was still in the evangelical churches. They stayed in ministry because they were leading a group or so, and did not perceive how they could leave and start anew elsewhere. These

⁷⁰ Marie Berthonia Antoine, *The Attrition of Young Adults in Haitian Churches* (Ph.D. Dissertation William James College, Newton, 2019), 23, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

participants grieved over the situation as well. They desired to leave after a thorough analysis from the Focus Group.

The last group from the Focus Group is the group that is working on a transition to go somewhere else. These individuals are not fully active at NHCG. They visit other churches so they can make a decision that will benefit their journey through experiencing different leadership styles, as mentioned by them. Below are the names and brief background information for everyone who participated in the Focus Group. For confidentiality, the names are pseudonyms.

Jean Joseph is a youth leader. He was raised in the Haitian church, and now, he has been battling with deciding to either stay or leave. He has been asking, “Is it getting better?” Jean is from a church where, in the last twenty-plus years, things were done in the most Haitian way, with little or no room for the younger generation to evolve. Now, Jean has seen the issue and its effect firsthand, especially the exodus in Naples Haitian Church of God. He is still in the Haitian church, but if change does not occur, he will soon move on.

Jessica Gerant is another prominent leader in this community where for years, she has been inspired to help the younger generation. Just like many others, she has thought highly about the second generation. Now, she has seen the need for a change so that the second generation can find a place to call home. She currently attends a Haitian church, but her heart has been yearning for another church where she will be transitioning to soon.

Marie Desir is such a great instrument to the body of Christ; unfortunately, her heart has been disconnected from the Haitian church. She has concluded that her soul is at a different place and closer to God, and so she has decided to leave the Haitian church and attend a multi-cultural church, where she can be fed spiritually.

Laurette Antoine is a woman of integrity. She has been part of a Haitian church for years. Upon moving away to college, Laurette experienced a different vibe of worship and what it means to be fed spiritually. Even though she attends a Haitian church right now, she has finally decided to make a move. It is not just that she is not getting spiritual nourishment, but, as a mother, she needs something for her children that can sustain them for life.

Ricky Smith is another young Haitian leader. He is very energetic and works with the youth. In recent years, Ricky has distanced himself from ministry because he sees he is not receiving anything that can fuel his drive to feed another one spiritually. As a young leader, he must take proactive steps in maintaining a youth ministry, but the leaders see things differently. Now, he occasionally comes to ministry, and he is in the process of leaving for another place.

Moise Jean Robert, a loquacious man with a very optimistic character, has reached a point where he finally recognizes that change needs to occur. He usually advocates for the first generation, but as the years go by, he sees that the cause of the exodus is none other than the first generation. He concludes that the first generation refuses to collaborate and explore options that will lead the second generation to an expected end.

Eunice Jeune is a very young lady that the researcher has come to appreciate more and more. Through the years, while the researcher questions the existence of the church, especially the treatment that the second generation receives, this young lady sees things on a bigger scale. In 2014, she started to voice her concern through various ministries at the church where changes needed to happen, but she was viewed as a troublemaker. She is now near her exit. The only thing keeping her there is her love for a group that she is leading. She sees herself in the Haitian church for a few more years then will likely exit. Even though she is still there, she goes to another church because she says that her soul needs spiritual food that will keep her connected to her Savior.

Anamaria Auguste is a very young leader that suffered for many years and now sees that there must be more to who God is. She is now contemplating other options by visiting other churches and getting exposed to the very truth of the Gospel, which changed her perspective. While her body is in the Haitian church, her spirit is in another place.

Loraine Beauplan is such a great person. As a leader, she always pursues excellence; however, she is at the brink of a breakup with the Haitian church because her heart is not there anymore. From what she observed, she saw that nothing would change, and since nothing would change, she decided to leave everything behind and find another church.

Rose Leon is such a great woman of God and a great leader to the community and Naples Haitian Church of God, just like the others. Her work ethic is a force to be reckoned with, and her level of preparation is excellent. She is also one of many who see the issue and recognize that things need to change. Her dedication toward the body of Christ is a great example for many to follow.

Micah Nicolas is a very energetic and outgoing man who, over the years, has been exposed to other churches. He observes how they break the Word of God and the different activities that they have for the second generation. He now sees things at a different level, where he is more likely to go to an American church rather than coming to a Haitian church. The reason is simple: he needs a place where he feels at home and not judged.

Crystal Riley is another young lady that loves the Lord dearly, but she has come to a point where she no longer finds herself in the Haitian church anymore. She is currently there, but her honest answer is, "It is only a matter of time before I find another home church."

Matthew Gray was another talented leader that left the Haitian church for quite some time. He was very involved in the Haitian community and still is, but he no longer attends a Haitian

church. He says that he has never felt at peace like that in his life, where he is free to worship God in a non-critical way.

Alexandra Bryant is another talented singer and very active in the Haitian community; however, she no longer attends Haitian church. She has found peace by attending a new church where she enjoys going to church again, knowing that her soul has found rest in God.

Nathaniel Faustin is another young man thriving to get better at everything in life, especially being a Christian. As a former committee member of the youth group, he is very concerned with the direction that the church is going. He went to college and was exposed to different types of Bible studies, small groups, etc. He is now at a multi-cultural church where he serves and is being trained in ministry to help the youth.

The last one is Eric Jones. Eric was such a talent and very useful to the Haitian community, but he made the hard decision to leave for his spiritual life and his family as well. He said that going to Haitian church back in the day was sometimes a type of punishment. Self-sanctified people had unfair expectations from others. He found God in a deeper way by leaving the Haitian church and now serves Him with purpose

The process

Due to the nature of the topic and the importance of how it is for the HEC, it requires a process that is well balanced to get the best of it. From the start of the doctorate, the researcher has had one goal in mind: to elaborate on how the second generation has often complained about what they need to do to be productive to the body of Christ. This has prompted the researcher to be more attentive, cognizant of the fact that it has been an issue for decades. The process requires choosing participants capable of answering questions and also willing to share their points of view on the problem and understand the roots of the problem. Right of the cuff, the participants were told

regarding the scope of the research, and the researcher has clearly mentioned to them that the purpose of the research is to bring more understanding on the issue of why the Haitian Evangelical Church is losing the second generation of Haitian Americans. It was not an easy process for the researcher, and most of the participants insisted on confidentiality as a condition for their participation. Through the IRB, the researcher had confirmed to all participants that their names would not be displayed in the research project, but each participant would be given a pseudonym name to make the project more interesting to read rather than using participant one or two and so on.

The researcher understood the importance of this project, and once it was approved by the IRB, it was time to complete the list of the participants. The researcher emailed the participants, explaining to them what was needed from them to be part of the Focus Group. Most participants were also approached face to face to get them accustomed to what they journeyed in. This was a very well-organized plan from the researcher. It did not take the participants more than two days to respond.

The day of the Focus Group brought excitement because the participants had never been part of a project like that where they got an opportunity to express themselves on the issue and also hear other participants as to why this problem existed in the Haitian Evangelical Churches and more so at NHCG. The Focus Group was able to go in-depth, detailing the core problem of that exodus and giving a few pointers as to what should be done to avoid more schism in the body of Christ.

Each participant was given a consent form to sign on the day of the Focus Group interview. All participants were aware that the form was going to be available for them to sign and other information given to them prior to the group interview. The detailing of the result will be shared

in the upcoming chapter. The intervention of the participants showed how they were all eager to see what the next few years would bring in terms of a change in leadership style from the first generation of Haitians. Obviously, the few hours the Focus Group discussed the roots of the problems and tried to find solutions to such a dilemma showed a very interesting side of the second generation of Haitian Americans. They still love the Haitian churches, even though they are not there anymore.

Implementation

To implement change, there must be a willingness and an awareness of the leaders to know that change is necessary. No matter how long the first-generation ignores the changes that need to take place, it is not going to go away. It requires a selfless heart to grow in the right direction. To bring both generations together, there must be both genuine conversations and forgiveness because both generations hold a grudge against each other. The first generation believes that the second generation is disrespectful in the sense that they are leaving the church without acknowledging that they were the ones who paved the way. On the other hand, the second generation believes that the first generation has kept them hostage, making it difficult for the second generation to move forward and grow in their faith. This, in turn, aroused the resentment of the second generation toward the first generation. Surveys were not given out for this study; rather, questions were the main route that the researcher took to accomplish this project with the Focus Group.

Both generations can benefit from each other, but it is of utmost importance that the first generation accepts that time has changed, and their leadership style will not survive in this new era. The second generation must also understand that instead of striving with the first generation, it is better to look elsewhere for a church where they feel fed spiritually, emotionally, and

physically. No one can force somebody to grow, and while change is inevitable, growth is optional. So, to grow, you must be willing; otherwise, it will not happen.

Summary

The issue that the first generation of Haitians needs to embrace is nothing else than a transformative mindset that gives them light to comprehend the second generation beyond their cultural norms. The Haitian Evangelical Churches will suffer great losses unless they recognize that they need to bridge that gap that separates them from the first generation. A better understanding of the culture in the USA will help them develop an attitude of tolerance to accept the second generation as they experience the love of God. The reluctance from the first generation of Haitians to collaborate with the second generation of Haitian Americans is deeply rooted in their own philosophy. Hence, the change cannot occur as long as they are stuck in their own thought. For the first generation of Haitians, disagreement is a sign of disrespect, and it gives them the feeling that they are not strong enough. Therefore, they react instead of responding. Reaction is emotional, but response is convictional. True conviction comes from the Holy Spirit, teaching us right from wrong. The words of Michael Fullan state this fact very well: “We are more likely to learn something from people who disagree with us than we are from people who agree. But we tend to hang around with and over listen to people who agree with us, and we prefer to avoid and under listen to those who don’t.”⁷¹ Avoiding disagreement is how the Haitian evangelicals deal with the things that are not in their favor. In other words, if one is to coexist with the first generation of Haitians, that person needs to become immune to change and always agree with their decisions.

⁷¹ Michael Fullan, *Leading in a Culture of Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 42. ProQuest Ebrary.

There is yet to be an appreciation of differences amid the HEC because differences are always seen as an opposition, not an opportunity to change. What has been seen so far from the first generation of Haitians is a clogged mindset that is yet to take them to the next level in ministry. For their ministry to thrive, they should separate with mediocrity and embrace change; it is challenging but rewarding. That change will occur when the first generation recognizes that the difference in language is very important and so decipher and find a solution for it. The first generation is to abandon their old ways or try to learn English so they can better communicate with the second generation. Pride has kept them from moving forward, which is why their philosophy is that the second generation should cope with what they want, not the other way around. Most first-generation Haitians see positions as an end to a means but ignore the fact that positions are there because there is a job to be fulfilled. A true understanding of this matter will help leaders go back to the true meaning of the church. Towns Elmer explains what the church is when he exclaims:

The Church can be identified first as “an assembly” from the root meaning of the word *ekklesiā*. Second, an implicit definition of the Church is suggested by at least six descriptive pictures or metaphors in Scripture: (1) the body of Christ, (2) the building of God, (3) the bride of Christ, (4) the flock of God, (5) the garden of God, and (6) the family of God.¹⁹ The author’s working definition is: “An assembly of baptized believers, in whom Christ dwells, under the discipline of the Word of God, organized to carry out the Great Commission, administering the ordinances, and evidenced by spiritual gifts.”²⁰ Implied in this definition is growth, for when a church carries out the great commission to make disciples, baptize them and instruct them in Christ’s words. This process brings new people to a church, causing it to grow.⁷²

If the first generation of Haitians can go back and thoroughly recapture what the church is all about, it will lead them to a total revolution on how they do things, and it will bring change inside out. It is critical here to see that real change needs to happen in the heart of the leaders, then

⁷² Elmer Towns, *The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology*, JETS 29:1 (Mar 1986), 37-38, accessed March 6, 2020.

it will flow to the congregation. The real change has not occurred because the hearts of the HEC have not been totally surrendered. What needs to be understood here is that God only uses what has been given to Him. Whatever you bring to God is what He will use to bless you. Once the leaders of Naples Haitian Church of God decide to surrender to God totally, not their cultural inclinations, then change can happen with a new theology of transformation, not division.

The ongoing fight seen in the previous chapters shows the unwillingness of the first generation to understand the power of contextualization to the second generation. Contextualization plays a significant part in how the first generation of Haitians should help the second generation in creating an atmosphere of trust, where they can understand the Gospel and lead a life that is Christ-centered, not culture-centered. On the importance of contextualization, Dean Flemming stated:

Any adequate understanding of contextualization should not only prescribe what should be done, as if we were initiating something new. It should also describe what has been and is being done, recognizing that it has to do with something that has been ingrained in the Christian mission through the ages. I take contextualization, then, to refer to the dynamic and comprehensive process by which the gospel is incarnated within a concrete historical or cultural situation. This happens in such a way that the gospel both comes to authentic expression in the local context and at the same time prophetically transforms the context. Contextualization seeks to enable the people of God to live out the gospel in obedience to Christ within their own cultures and circumstances.⁷³

Contextualization, in this sense, is one of the many things that will give the second generation something to live for. One of the things that the first generation can do is contextualize what they are preaching, so the second generation of Haitian Americans can continue to rely on and live according to the Word.

⁷³ Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament, patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 19.

Chapter 4

Description of the Project

This project has a unique purpose of resolving or bringing a solution to the issue that the first generation of Haitians and the second generation of Haitian Americans are having in the Haitian Evangelical Churches, especially Naples Haitian Church of God. The researcher intends to discover the roots of this problem and see how it can be resolved to bridge that gap that is so detrimental to the body of Christ. The information gathered through the Focus Group was the starting point of identifying the problem and some well-needed insights that were necessary to move forward and allow the second generation to live out their faith as God intended them. This project was a great adventure to the researcher because he spent numerous months, days, and hours researching the topic. He also had preliminary talks with various leaders in the community to grasp a better understanding of what was at stake in figuring out how to resolve the issue of the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans in the Haitian churches, especially in Naples Haitian Church of God.

Since the researcher worked with the Haitian youth in the community for more than fifteen years, he had many opportunities to tackle the issues and see the root causes. While this behavior is observed in NHCG, it is a pervasive issue surrounding the Haitian Evangelical Churches in general. Few seek to bridge the gap, while most of them stick to a plan that brings more frustration and challenges to the second generation.

The church has been established by God to win souls, not to veer the young people off their divine purpose. The words of Warren Venhetloo state this very well: “All soul-winning efforts can be classified in one or two ways: God-instituted or man-instituted. God has instituted the church for His work in this dispensation; all other agencies and organizations are man-instituted and must

maintain proper relationships with that which God has begun and continues using.”⁷⁴ This clearly explains that the sole purpose of the church is to abide by the authority of Christ, win souls, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Strategy

To arrive at some important data for this research project, the researcher used qualitative research, which consisted of a straightforward and effective method that gave the results that were needed to accomplish the project. One thing that is certain about qualitative research is that it is systematic. This means it seeks answers to questions by examining different types of social settings and the individuals who deal with the issue on a day to day basis.⁷⁵ The strategy used was very common to many other research projects done in the past that helped to decipher the roots of the problem and possible solutions.

This is a very meticulous project which brought many people together to establish a common goal on the problem and see how the issue can be resolved so that other generations do not suffer from similar church decline. The main interview was a Focus Group interview. The researcher gathered about sixteen participants all together to discuss the issue. The researcher came to the Focus Group and interviews with an open mind to best facilitate the conversations more productively. While the Focus Group interview was key to the overall completion of the project, it is significant to note that some personal conversations with certain individuals who were affected by the problem provided insight as well. Being able to see the issue escalating over the years, being able to see the pain in the eyes of the second generation of Haitian Americans, is something that the researcher thought about in profound ways. Before the Focus Group interview, the personal

⁷⁴ Warren Vanhetloo, *This Local Church and Service Agencies*, CENQ 04:3 (Fall 1961), 47(47-50), accessed March 13, 2020.

⁷⁵ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research, a multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 57.

encounters the researcher had with some of the concerned youths were very interesting. These conversations contributed to the information that led to the Focus Group interview.

While the project specifically focused on Naples Haitian Church of God, it is very clear that the data collected from the various participants through personal interaction proved to impact how the researcher formulated the open-ended questions to get more answers and tackle the issue on a deeper level. The research strategy used was very specific because while many Haitian Evangelical Churches have similar problems, the questions were asked as a general question. Still, the aim was not only to get a general point of view of the issue but to pinpoint the different other areas where the second generation of Haitian Americans can be affected not just on a spiritual level but on a personal level as well. Even with being a part of the Haitian Evangelical Churches for years, the researcher felt like he should approach the topic with little known facts because he was trying to learn rather than being instructive to the group. This was a great learning experience for the researcher. It allowed him to see things in a more vivid way than he had ever seen before. Due to how vocal the researcher typically was on the topic, other people thought he was loquacious and prideful, to the point of even being treated as an outsider in his congregation. It was, however, more like the determination that he had to find not just the roots of the problem but also what could be done to resolve the exodus.

Quite a few assumptions entered this project, especially conducting the group interview, which was one of the most crucial steps to completing it. The reason was the fact that the researcher knew the problem existed and had become very detrimental to the local church. The problem also created a repulsive taste among the second generation of Haitian Americans on how they were treated.

The Focus Group

The scope of the project is very sensitive, and it took the researcher quite some time to come up with a well-organized methodology so that the overall aspect of the project would be well presented and beneficial to the community at hand. The study started back in August 2019 when the researcher was compiling all the necessary documents and identifying the participants to be part of the research. This process gave the researcher many resources to complete the project.

Having been part of a Haitian Evangelical Church for about forty-two years gives the researcher enough evidence to decipher this problem more tactically. The problem indeed has been in existence, but not everyone wants to talk about it. The exodus mentioned previously is a very sensitive subject because some evangelical leaders think that the second generation is just scouting for an excuse to escape and go to other churches. The Focus Group interview sheds light on the fact that the exodus is rooted in a deeper problem. Something must be done so that the Haitian Evangelical Churches can exist beyond the first generation.

The selection of interviewees was very selective. The group was comprised of leaders and people who had recently started in leadership. Most importantly, they were all second-generation Haitian Americans. Some are still trying to cope with life in the Haitian Evangelical Churches, others exited, and some are in transition now. The ones that are still there are strategizing their escape plans; their hearts are no longer fully there. This creates tension in their lives as to what to do next.

The researcher developed questions ranging from leadership issues, spirituality, to personal issues the participants encountered in their local churches. Most of the participants shared their personal experiences freely. There were about sixteen participants there in the Focus Group. The

hurt in their voices was prevalent when they took the time to elaborate on the problem. Participants shared how they were able to handle the situation for many years while they were in the Haitian Evangelical Churches. One participant mentioned that the first generation ignored the second generation and acted like they had little knowledge of what the second generation went through daily. The consensus of the Focus Group was that it could only take one person to summon the courage and bring the problem to the open so that a solution for the exodus could be found.

The researcher conducted only one focus group interview. The aim was to conduct two focus groups, but the amount of information obtained from the first interview proved to be sufficient. The way everyone shared their experiences, either on a personal level or communally, gave evidence that the researcher had garnered enough information needed to go the next step with his project. The participants who were invited and selected to participate were not just second-generation Haitian Americans. The group included very informed individuals who had spent significant time around first-generation Haitians their entire lives because they are, in fact, Haitians as well. The participants acknowledged that the first generation functioned uniquely: their mindset and their philosophy were very significant in how they did church, and they were not willing to try anything new. This was an important piece of the interview, learning more about the first generation.

First Generation at Naples Haitian Church of God

Naples Haitian Church of God was chosen as the specific ministry context to conduct the study. As previously stated in this research, the real name of the church and the participants will remain anonymous for the sake of confidentiality. There are approximately 300 members at Naples Haitian Church of God, and approximately 170 of the members are the second generation. Out of

the first generation, the ages range from forty-six and above. The chart below gives a better picture of membership at the church. The ages of the three pastors of Naples Haitian Church of God range from mid-fifties to the late sixties. While the first generation is mostly concentrated on holding on to their position until their last breath, it gives NHCG an imbalance of leadership.

Church Name	Pastors	Membership	First Generation	Second Generation
	Jean Cetoute	Overall membership		
	Alexis Fritz			
	Claude Gerant		300	142

Other individuals come to the church less frequently to maintain affiliation. The attendance is sporadic, some monthly but most quarterly. These members are first-generation Haitians that bring their children with them. A unique feature is that the first-generation pastors are all in their fifties and late sixties. This feature is very critical to consider if the church expects to exist beyond their present situation. The researcher discusses this as he details the issues surrounding the evangelical churches. The first generation does not have any visible transition plan. Another way to state this fact is: the first generation lacks vision because ministry is treated more like a position than a transition. The research has clearly demonstrated that leaders of the Haitian Evangelical

Churches must look at leadership as a transition because no matter how influential one may be right now, life is not promised to anyone. The best thing to do as leaders is to implement a plan where tomorrow is secure and to leave a legacy.

View on First Generation Haitians

The researcher had the opportunity to sit with these second-generation Haitian Americans and talk to multiple first-generation leaders regarding the problem of the exodus. The problem at hand is very serious and is indeed detrimental to the local churches, most importantly, to NHCG. One first-generation leader shared that while he had been in a leadership position for more than twenty-five years, he saw that the second generation was hard to cooperate with. Through further conversation, he was able to see the bigger picture, and he did blame the exodus on the first generation of Haitians because they were reluctant to see the other side of the equation. The Focus Group had some very significant views regarding the first generation, which allowed the researcher to gain more insight into the matter.

One of the members of the Focus Group, Rose Leon, a member of NHCG, was very open to sharing the struggle that she had encountered for years inside the church. She said that she was victimized, looked down upon by so many, and treated as a little girl, which put a cap on her growth. As the years went by, she started to believe that she would not make a difference no matter what age she became. She believed she would always be treated as a little girl. “One thing that needs to be noted here,” said one participant, “is that the first generation tends to believe that since one was born and raised in the church, one cannot bring any significance to the church. The philosophy behind it is that the first generation raised the second generation, and whatever the second generation thinks they know, the first generation taught them.” This can be related to the

declaration of Nathanael in the book of John 1:46, “And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’” For her, even though she was a leader working with the youth, she felt like her word did not have any weight because she was a long-time member. The leaders, however, were always willing to embrace other people who came from outside the church. The participants agreed that one of the reasons for such a frail behavior was that the leaders of NHC did not understand the importance of leadership and training leaders.

Eric Jones, a participant, shared a similar issue with another participant named Rose. Both participants from the Focus Group were born in a Christian home and are pastors’ progenitors. His perspective on how the first generation perceived the second generation was very deep. He shared some personal experiences with the Focus Group that gave more insight into the whole problem at hand. The participant said: “One of the first things that first-generation Haitians want you to do, especially as the son or daughter of the pastor, is to understand that there are only three things that are pivotal until you reach a certain age, where you can make your own decision.” He specifically meant the age when you are out of the house. The three things are the three Ls common in the Haitian Christian household. In Creole, it goes like this: “Legliz, Lakay, Lekol,” which translates in English as Church, home, and school. That was the only thing he knew his entire life, and he had thought that it was normal. When he went to college and started to experience other things and another church, he realized the danger of those years spent in the church. They were not foundational because everything was geared toward the first generation. He concluded by saying, “Pleasing the first generation is the norm, and the struggle to be raised in the Haitian Church is as real as it can get, and there is no way for growth to happen.” After many years of challenges and trying to incorporate change, he needed to decide whether to confront or conform to the cultural norms. He did confront it and eventually moved to another church.

The mindset of the first generation is hard to understand because of many barriers. These barriers exist because they are stuck in their old cultural ways, which cannot move the church to new heights. A prominent first-generation leader, Pastor Amos, had a very satisfying conversation with the researcher and was very open and sincere. He told the researcher that it was time to blame them because they had been reluctant to help the second generation of Haitian Americans see that they were now the future of the church. He acknowledged that if something were not done soon, they would soon have an empty church because their time was almost up, and they needed to find a successor and leave a legacy.

The tension surrounding this problem of exodus is real and will cause a drought in the church soon if the first generation of Haitians does not realize the need for change. They will soon realize that all these years they have been doing ministry, they have been holding to a position but never to a vision.

Data Gathered

The Focus Group took place in February 2020, and the researcher had sixteen people. The Focus Group had one of the best discussions that the researcher had been part of for quite a while. The participants went into deep details of the struggle with the first-generation Haitians, especially the struggle at Naples Haitian Church of God. The Focus Group interview lasted more than three hours. The researcher provided refreshments. It was a time of great reflection to hear that they all were pained by this problem that the Haitian Evangelical Churches have been going through. While the questions were general, they were all questions that were geared toward the problem encountered at Naples Haitian Church of God. This problem was also the same problem encountered in most of the other Haitian churches and the people who attended those churches.

The researcher previously concluded that NHCG was where these issues were more prominent, but during the interview, it became evident that the problem was bigger than just a single church. It was spreading all over Southwest Florida. The researcher asked many questions to explore the reason for the exodus.

The problem is that the second generation is exiting the church, but the leaders have failed to ask themselves the reason why. A great amount of time was spent on that part alone, making sure that everyone understood the root of the problem. To fight a war, it is important to identify the enemy. While the researcher conducted this up-close Focus Group interview, he also conducted some personal interviews, which opened more doors on how broad the topic was and how to approach the topic better as well. The researcher had some personal conversations with most of the interviewees prior to the Focus Group so he could be more prepared to conduct the interview. The success of the focus group interview is nothing else than the people willing to share their personal experiences with the Haitian Evangelical Church or other existing crises, which may likely get worse if nothing is done.

The researcher took a very good approach to how the questions were asked, and a simple question ended up opening more conversations, which facilitated a more dynamic atmosphere. Everyone felt safe in sharing their personal experiences. One of the most important things that the researcher knows about the Haitian people is that they are personal, and to get them to open up about issues can be hard. It took the researcher some time to help everyone know that the reason for being in the Focus Group was not only to expose the issue of the exodus of the second generation but also to determine what can be done to stop it. The introduction by the researcher set the tone for everyone to relax. It made the atmosphere conducive for interaction. First-generation Haitians have been taught to be more reserved, but the researcher found that it was not

the case for the second generation of Haitian Americans. The second-generation Haitians want to be heard and are ready to make an impact and leave a legacy, instead of living a life of complacency.

The ages of the participants were very important. The research included not only young leaders but a mixture of ages with the second generation of people starting from seventeen years to see how they perceived the issue at hand. Most of the participants were young professionals and ready to make an impact. From the preacher's kid to just a lay member, this group was unique in how they each saw the problem and, most importantly, the heart they had for the Haitian church. The millennials were very open and shared everything to let their voices be heard. Through the interview, there was ample evidence that they had been hurt, and the hurt came from the people they least expected.

The short conversation the researcher had with the first-generation leader was very informative. Although he was very skeptical at first, he ended up being very open and recognized the issue from a different angle now. "It is very important to note that it is not that we do not see the issue of the exit," said the first-generation leader, "it is more like we think that the problem is going to take care of itself." He was very frank with the researcher, and in the end, he understood what was at stake and how this was crucial for the church. He also understood this as the cause for many congregations to die a slow death of unproductivity and spiritual decline.

Results of Research

The observations leading to the results of the research showed that there were similarities as well as differences from the first generation of Haitian Americans and the second generation of Haitian Americans. There were many observations that the researcher deemed fit to share in this

chapter that might help Naples Haitian Church of God and many other local churches to have a better idea of how this problem could impact their congregation.

To begin, the researchers observed that the first generation needed to understand that the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans was a very critical issue that was not to be taken lightly. The observation made was that the first generation relied more on the older generation to do church while neglecting the second generation. All sixteen participants agreed that the threat of the exodus was as real as it could get, and the evangelical leaders needed to have a paradigm shift; otherwise, they might not have a church in the future. The issue was bigger than just a building; it was the souls of people being in danger now. For now, it was not really an issue for the first generation to see the second generation leave the church. As a matter of fact, for the first generation, it was a lose-lose situation. Whenever the second generation left the church, the first generation thought they would come back. There was no approach as to how to deal with that. None of the participants who had left their churches had ever received any call to see why they left. Here is a little story of one of the participants that had left his church and suddenly bumped into a leader in a shopping mall.

As a young man, Ricky Smith, a participant, was looking for a place where he would feel accepted and where he could put his gift to work for the Kingdom. At first, it was great at his former church, but through the years, he came face to face with dire situations where growth was not happening, either personal or at a spiritual level. He had to decide for his spiritual life, and the best decision for him to make was to leave the Haitian church and go somewhere else. About a year after leaving that Haitian church, while he was at a shopping mall, he met a leader of his previous church. The leader of his previous church was happy to see him, but one thing he was concerned about was the fact that he told Ricky that he was happy to see him. However, the leader

questioned Ricky about why he left the church. Ricky was very alarmed when he said that because the leader concluded that Ricky had abandoned his faith for pleasures of this world. Ricky was sure to respond by saying that he did not leave the church; he decided to go to another church.

This mentality is very common among the first-generation Haitians, and during the Focus Group, they all agreed that the best way to leave a Haitian church was to leave the city entirely. Because the moment one left the church and went to another church in that same city, for them, that person was a traitor. There would never be a conversation as to why you left, but the main thing would be that you should have stayed, no matter what, because they would consider it a sign of betrayal to leave a congregation to go to another one in that same proximity. It would never be about spiritual life but an emotional attachment.

Another observation from the Focus Group was the need for a broader view of how the church should look. Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches had this in common: a narrow mind about the mission of the church. It was very common to see that church for the first-generation Haitian was more inside the four walls. Naples Haitian Church of God did not have a vision that was broad enough to grasp the importance of Matthew 28 when Jesus said to go and make disciples. The participants agreed that the first-generation church was a stagnant church where they expected people to come but had not made any effort to be missional. The core of the church of God was to make disciples, and the mandate that the church had was to make disciples in any possible way. No church could be exempt from that, but the approach of the Haitian Evangelical Churches, especially NHCG, needed to be reorganized, knowing that the church was never meant to be an activity-driven church but a purpose-driven church. Until the local church recognized that they needed to be the feet of Jesus, they would always be in redundancy.

There was another observation very critical for all of them; namely, they still loved the church. The ones that had left the church and the ones still there and the ones planning on leaving the Haitian church did not have anything to do with hating on other people or leaders. They all agreed that if there were any type of change to facilitate growth and equip the younger generation, they would reconsider staying. The whole Focus Group showed that their love for Naples Haitian Church of God and the Evangelical Churches, in general, would never fade away. There might be tons of differences, but their love for the church would always be there. It was still an issue that both generations could not see eye to eye and get any resolution. The second generation was tired of arguing with the first generation, and they just need to see a visual map of where the church was going and if there was any type of plan for them to grow with the church. When those things were not put as an immediate option, it brought them frustration, to the point of leaving.

Another observation was the issue of culture, which was prominent in the church. At Naples Haitian Church of God, everything was done based on the culture that the first-generation Haitian were raised in. It was a common denominator to most Haitian churches in southwest Florida that culture led the Haitian churches. In Haitian culture, one prominent thing was a position as well as the traditional way of doing things. What the participants acknowledged was that NHCG and other Haitian Evangelical Churches had that in common where things were done the Haitian way. Nothing was taught from a biblical standpoint but rather from a cultural standpoint. That was the reason the participants greatly elaborated on it. They were in common accord on the issue that culture had greatly replaced the biblical teaching at the Haitian churches. No participant asked for the removal of the Haitian culture in their blood because no matter what church they went to, the Haitian blood would still flow in their veins. The issue was that when someone could not differentiate a church protocol with what the Bible says, it would absolutely bring conflict. The

best way for second-generation Haitian Americans to avoid this type of conflict was to accept this phrase, very common in Haitian culture: “You do what I tell you to do because I say so.” The researcher suffered for many years with this issue until he brought it into a member meeting.

One other observation that caused the exodus was a theological understanding that could not be reconciled with the reality of the second generation of Haitian Americans. The participants that had left the church and those visiting other churches now had experienced things differently and were exposed to another view on how God saw them. They concluded that they were never really exposed to a true, theological understanding of the Word of God. The issue could be very simple and complex at the same time when looking at it and how it could be approached. The ones that were trained were minimal, and the ones who were trained were trained conservatively. Hence, they were afraid of exploring different venues to preach the Word and expose the truth. The researcher, through his research, observed that the diversity that the second generation had been exposed to had given them a broader view of Scripture, which the first generation had never had. Their way of seeing the Bible was more literal than contextual. What the second generation found it very hard to reconcile the preaching of the first generation to their actual lives. The researcher, through the interview of the Focus Group, observed that it was an issue of training because the first generation only did what was handed down to them from the beginning. They had never opened themselves to receive more training.

“Do you think the preaching of the first generation of Haitians brings spiritual growth or spiritual decline in the lives of the second-generation Haitian Americans?” the researcher had asked. Through the theological point of view of the preaching of the first generation, Moise Jean Robert, another participant, observed thus:

I believe, from a cultural standpoint, Haitians do not like to talk about their flaws. They’d much rather hide it to the detriment of the collective good. This reality has translated into

the church and worse into the preaching ministry. One of the things that have contributed to youth decline or worse even, to them leaving the Haitian church is that preaching has become inauthentic and watered-down. There is a dichotomy between what is preached and what's practiced. That alone is a drive-out factor. Young people are looking for role models, but sadly, the traditional Haitian church barely answers that call. Inauthenticity has led them to distrust the church leadership and the message they preach.⁷⁶

His response was in accord with the view of the entire Focus Group. Moise concluded:

Do not think Preaching alone can stop this hemorrhage of youth decline and/or de-churching in the Haitian church; there has to be a programmatic framework which caters to the youth's needs and seeks to involve them while building strong biblical foundations using technology, modern teaching techniques and new strategies to keep them grounded in the Word and the church as an institution. While I agree the preaching has not been helping much, but I will also concede that keeping youths in the church in this 21st century is very challenging and demanding. That's why the church needs to be as competitive as the world in devising new strategic plans to keep its youth committed and involved.⁷⁷

Other Results

One distinct thing about the first generation is that they are hard workers. The parents of the researcher are great examples of how Haitians are hard workers. The same philosophy of working hard has led them to do church the same way in pursuing their dreams, which is to work hard and give a better life to their families in Haiti and those around them here in the US. This same work ethic has also been instilled into their children because a young man or woman coming from Haiti knows exactly the sacrifices their parents made for them to be here. There will be two distinct things between the first and the second generation here. The first generation will commit more into working because they have families, and learning English is the least of their concerns. They are afraid of change; they can be at a job for years and never explore other options as to what is out there or maybe another job that can pay more. They can also learn a trade that may bring

⁷⁶ *Interview with focus group*, February 7, 2020.

⁷⁷ *Interview with focus group*, February 7, 2020.

more revenue, but very rarely does any first-generation Haitian do that because they feel they content with where they are. The adaption of the first generation of Haitians is far more complex than it appears. Patricia Vanderkooy adds an important aspect of their adaption. She attests that “As measured according to the assimilation paradigm, Haitians have not adapted to the American context: they maintain ethnic associations and churches, speak Creole, and resist categorizations as African-Americans.”⁷⁸

On the other hand, the second generation will do what it takes to master the language and escape the reality created by their first-generation parents and lead a life that is distant from the first generation. The distant life does not mean a life alienated from the Haitian root, but it is a life that is set to exemplify American life, in a sense. The second generation feels like if they can master the language, they will not fall prey into just working but create a legacy, something that will last for generations. While the first generation might struggle to adapt to the culture, they encourage their children to go to school and better themselves. One thing that the Haitians pride themselves in is the sense of satisfaction they feel when their offspring graduate from college and begin to do better for themselves. They are proud parents when their children are medical doctors, nurses, lawyers, etc. which is, by the way, the top three professions that a Haitian parent wants to see their children achieve.

While parents expect their children to achieve great things, the language factor is one other thing that remains an issue. Xing Yu elaborates thus on language:

When people from their state, the common interest of the state is generated in the process of linguistic communication. Linguistic communication is essential for the formation of the state. This is because a state is a community larger in scale than a tribe in which people need to communicate with each other in the method different from what of the

⁷⁸ Patricia N Vanderkooy, *Life Pathways of Haitian-American Young Adults in South Florida* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida International University, Florida, 2011), 12, accessed February 23, 2020. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

communication performed by people within a tribe. That is, within a state, people often communicate with each other beyond the scope of face-to-face contact.⁷⁹

Xing Yu proves that language is an important component in the life of an individual and a nation. For a culture to exist, there must be a common language that links the people together. The thorough emphasis of the first generation on language is an important criterion as to why they are the way they are. The first thing that needs to be considered is that Creole is the language that the first generation is most comfortable speaking. Learning to speak another language as adults can be a lot challenging. Language keeps a culture alive, but the issue of adaption is also vital in getting to know what needs to take place for the first generation to be on the same page with the second generation. The issue at hand on how to resolve the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans is much more complex because it requires deciphering the language barrier and the willingness of a change mentality. With the issue of language, it is common that landing to another country brings challenges, which first off is a language issue. While language can be a factor, it does not have to keep one from progressing or being astute in one's area of expertise. It is critical here to grasp the concept of language. It can shape the perspective of immigrants about life. Kristyl Williams Kepley states vividly: "At the very least, linguistic heritage separates and defines immigrants in ways that are generally less acute in the children of immigrants, in large part because each subsequent generation generally moves farther away from the dowry of culture and language brought by immigrating parents, and closer to the currency offered by the host culture."⁸⁰ While the first generation is leaning toward holding on to the former language, Creole, the second

⁷⁹ Xing Yu, *Language and State: An Inquiry into the Progress of Civilization* (Lanham: University Press America, 2013), 14, ProQuest Ebrary.

⁸⁰ Kristyl Williams Kepley, *The Modeling of an Ecology Language: Haitian Creole among First and Second Generation Haitian College Students in South Florida*. (Florida Atlantic University, FL, 2011), 8, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

generation is clung to the host language, English, which will benefit them in life, especially their future. That is the reason the identity of the second generation is always to see themselves as African Americans rather than Haitian Americans. On the issue of language, Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut cap it all off by affirming that:

Immigrants arriving in a foreign land face a significant dilemma, one whose resolution lies at the very core of the process of acculturation. On the one hand, the languages they bring are closely linked to their sense of self-worth and national pride. On the other hand, these languages clash with their imperatives of a new environment that dictate abandonment of their cultural baggage and learning a new means of communication. Language assimilation is demanded of foreigners not only instrumental reasons but for symbolic ones as well. It signals their willingness to seek admission into the circles of their new country. Leaving past loyalties behind. Precisely because a common language lies at the core of national identity, host societies oppose the rise of refractory groups that persist in the use of foreign tongues.⁸¹

Leadership in Naples Haitian Church of God

Lastly, the participants observed that leadership was such an important piece of why the problem existed. Through the result of the Focus Group, one significant question was considered to be critical to Naples Haitian Church of God and even Haitian Evangelical churches: “Do the Haitian Evangelical Churches believe in transformational leadership or how do they view leadership?” The issue of leadership when analyzing the different facets of how the second generation of Haitian Americans was leaving the church was considered a matter of grave concern. The leadership of most of these leaders was a distorted style of leadership, which required a total change of mind; knowing that to lead is first to know how to manage oneself. With the said style of leadership, it would necessarily produce an unhealthy emotional leader. Peter Scazzero, on the topic of healthy emotional leadership, stated clearly that “The emotionally unhealthy leader is

⁸¹ Alejandro Portes, Rubén G. Rumbaut, and Ruben G Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (London: University Of California Press, 2001), 113, ProQuest Ebrary.

someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a “being with God” sufficient to sustain their “doing for God.”⁸² This type of leadership was deemed an erosion to the church, where quantity should override quality. The clash would usually come in where the second generation was more educated and trained compared to the first generation.

In the following pages, there will be a layout of all the answers gotten from the group interview that shed light brighter on the issue and how that issue can be resolved. With a thorough analysis made toward this issue, there are more questions asked than answers given. The leadership of the first generation of Haitians or, more precisely, the Haitian Evangelical Churches cannot rely on self-knowledge because self-knowledge is destructible. If the leaders of Naples Haitian Church of God would read the Bible with an eye of transformation, they would soon realize that there is no self-made man. The only self-made man or self-made leader is Jesus. Everyone that has had the opportunity to attain a certain level of leadership in life has a sponsor. Brian Tracy expresses this same sentiment when he says:

Nobody comes into the world a natural leader. Even Alexander the great studied (from the age of eight) to become a leader. The study of great leaders of the past and present is one of the fastest and surest ways to develop leadership qualities. The more you study what constitutes effective leadership, the more likely you will be to internalize the same values and behaviors. These values and behaviors will then be externalized in your actions and in your results.⁸³

There is always the right way to do something, and those who have been there before us have the knowledge that people can use to make themselves effective leaders who are not led by their emotions but character and the Holy Spirit. Great leadership is rare, and the rarity is caused by the lack of awareness. Once awareness is part of the agenda of the first generation of Haitians,

⁸² Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 25.

⁸³ Brian Tracy, *Leadership* (Brodway: Amaca, 2014), 7, ProQuest Ebrary.

then change can gradually happen, but operating in a state of unconsciousness leads to self-destruction. The frustration that the second generation has is a desperate lack of a place they can feel needed, valued, and strengthened in their faith to serve God better.

What is happening at Naples Church of God and the surrounding areas is a lack of transformational leadership. Thus, there is a great need for the leaders of NHCG to be conscious that change needs to occur. This is part of the challenges that the first generation of Haitians encounters day in and day out. To be transformational leaders, there must be a willingness to preach a theology of transformation, not obstruction. The perfect example that can be shown is Jesus and how He exemplified transformational leadership by trusting and empowering His followers. Marry Ellen Drushal clearly states:

The Lord also appointed 70 others to leadership positions (Luke 10:1–2) and sent them out two by two as his advance party. This connotes his trust in these people and his confidence in their abilities and training to do as he had modelled and instructed. Belief in the abilities of people, interactive communication regarding the corporate task, trust in their interdependence, and respect for their capabilities are all participative management attributes (Theory Z) which Jesus used in establishing the church and furthering the Kingdom. Jesus was a transformational leader who allowed and encouraged the disciples to question everything around them (Matthew 13:36; 20:17). House and Singh (1987) describe transformational leaders as having three behavioral dimensions: charismatic leadership, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Effective leaders create a synergy between themselves and others that produces trust, empathy and motivation toward higher levels of accomplishment through participation.⁸⁴

This shows that the transformational leader is responsible for empowering and delegating people to bring balance in what needs to be done. As it is now, the first generation must bring change, and then nobody will be left hanging. Once the change happens, growth will take place. When talking about growth, it is important to note that growth is personal and communal because for people to experience communal growth, there must be personal growth. Just like it was

⁸⁴ Mary Ellen Drushal, *Implementing Theory Z in the Church: Managing People as Jesus Did*, ATJ 20:0 (NA 1988), 49-50, accessed March 4, 2020.

necessary for the early church, especially in the book of Acts, the first generation needs to know that church growth is a very vital part in building the Kingdom of God. While the growth of the church can be numerical, geographical, and spiritual, it remains essential to know that a spiritual awakening must take place, which means church growth is not just quantitative but also qualitative.

Allison A. Trites, on church growth, states:

Luke presented a balanced picture of church growth that included numerical, geographical, and spiritual growth. To Luke, the Christian faith was truly an evangelistic faith, in which believers are to reach out to others and draw them to Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is also a missionary faith, attempting to cross national and cultural barriers to bring the gospel to every individual. And certainly, the Christian faith is concerned with the edification and spiritual development of God's people. Luke's symmetrical picture of the early church gives careful attention to each of these factors.⁸⁵

Summary

The Focus Group concluded that the first-generation Haitian churches needed to understand that there was a necessity to sharpen their leadership skills so that the church could co-exist beyond their years on earth. There must be procedures and training in place so that they could be better equipped to lead the people of God because the church needed more leaders, not managers. The researcher saw the necessity for the first-generation, Haitian leaders to leave a legacy instead of holding on to positions that had kept them from seeing ministry as an opportunity to bring people closer to God and not be authoritative and push the second generation away. The love that the second generation had for Naples Haitian Church of God was tremendously exceptional. It was also concluded that the second-generation Haitian Americans were so much attached to the Haitian church. Still, their attachment was linked to some degree of race or the culture that was ingrained in them from an early age. Apart from the culture they shared, their philosophy on ministry was miles away. The second generation was leaving the church because

⁸⁵ Allison A. Trites, *Church Growth in the Book of Acts*, BSAC 145:578 (Apr 1988), 167 accessed March 4, 2020.

the first generation had refused to see that the second generation genuinely needed a Joshua that would lead them beyond the years of Moses. The first-generation Haitians, for decades, had been reluctant to respond to the crisis and understand that they were the hands and the feet of Jesus. The researcher worked for years at Naples Haitian Church of God. That experience highlighted an area that was very critical to mention, namely, education.

The researcher observed that once education could be geared toward ministry, a lot of things could work out better. Before now, anyone holding a degree in ministry, who came along to contribute toward a ministry led by the first generation, was seen as a threat. It was more or less a common trend inside the Haitian Evangelical Churches, though it might not be generalized. However, it should be addressed.

Many churches in Haiti have been through something similar, where capable young people who are ready to work for the Kingdom have been pushed aside because of what they bring or can bring to the table. Leaders in charge see these upcoming young leaders as a threat to the ministry instead of training them to be better leaders. The first generation fails to acknowledge that when a young person goes to school for ministry, it is for the betterment of the church and will benefit the church in the long run. Not all the evangelical churches have this mindset, but the researcher has experienced similar issues at Naples Haitian Church of God. At various meetings, he has been challenged by leaders of the congregation that education is not a pass to tell people how things should be run in ministry.

The exodus that the first-generation Haitians are experiencing right now is a problem that needs to be resolved to have a strong church that can serve the community for the sake of the second generation. While the first-generation advocates for the second generation to have a

mindset similar to theirs, it is the proper time to acknowledge that change needs to happen in a state of reconciliation and not division.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The researcher from the start of this project had in mind to accommodate the many facets of the exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans in Naples Haitian Church of God. The researcher found some insightful information, and the Focus Group played a key role in the project; it provided answers to the root of the problem. The exodus of the second generation of Haitian Americans needs to be a wakeup call to many Haitian Evangelical Churches. If they do not survey the root of the problem and initiate change, the Haitian Evangelical Churches will suffer a great loss.

This chapter will present the findings, the different lessons learned throughout this project, and how these results can be implemented and the change that needs to occur so that the issue can be resolved. However, the results and findings of this project prove that there is more work to be done than what has been accomplished. At first, it seems like an issue that can easily be deciphered with a quick fix, but through the research journey and the Focus Group interview, it is evident that the root of the problem is much deeper. The concern of the Focus Group is very vivid in the sense that the second generation no longer has a place in the Haitian Evangelical Churches, especially Naples Haitian Church of God, where the study is done. This is a very alarming situation to deal with. It is alarming because the leaders of Naples Haitian Church of God and most of the Haitian Evangelical Churches choose preference over purpose. Through the findings of the researcher, it is critical here to understand that over the years at Naples Haitian Church of God, preferences have always been the norm, but there has to be a total paradigm shift to discover that sober situation.

The first generation of Haitians has been leading the church through a “what I knew then” approach. This approach cannot translate into the reality the second generation is living right now.

The first generation of Haitians has been hypnotized by their cultural norms, which they use to operate the church authoritatively. In this way, the love of God is scarce, and it closes the door of fellowship to the second generation. The second generation is afraid to come to a church where preference prevails over purpose or vision. The state of sanctification and being close to God for the first generation is a very distant approach to how the second generation comprehends it. For the first generation, the second generation must be at every activity at the church during the week to be considered sanctified or close to God.

The researcher even recalled the years when he had to wake up at 5:00 am to go to school but was obliged to go to a week of revival that ended at 10 pm. Missing a day to do some other things was considered living in sin and not revering God. Over the years, this routine in the Haitian household and the Haitian Evangelical Churches became the norm, and failure to do so was considered a fall from grace.

The first generation mostly operates by preference. Looking at the mission of the church, if it does not return to its original purpose, whatever the body of Christ is engaged in will lead to deception and self-destruction. Coming to church does not need to be a painful experience, and one of the participants in the Focus Group said something very significant. She mentioned that people were skeptical about going to a Haitian church because of little expectation that there would be a word to nourish their thirsty souls. This could take little effort for the second generation of Haitian Americans in Naples Haitian Church of God to visualize that detrimental side of growth to the church. They lean on preference because it has been the norm from generation, and because of that, they are stuck in their old ways. There must be a change of mindset that will show them that for change to happen, a movement must take place. Preferences help one lead with emotions and feelings, while purpose helps one lead with knowledge and submission to God.

The issue of the exodus is complex and needs to be taken into great consideration by drawing a well-planned strategy. This will allow both generations to bridge the gap. A true solution is yet to come by because the first-generation Haitian Americans perceive the second-generation Haitian Americans as the problem and refuse to collaborate. They do not see that they all need each other to build the body of Christ. The mind of the leaders at Naples Haitian Church of God is to hold on to their position, which leads to unprecedented issues that are not even related to the second-generation Haitian Americans.

A simple and crucial element that is missing in Naples Haitian Church of God, and one that can be related to Haitian Evangelical Churches everywhere, is a clear vision. Vision is the anchor that keeps the ministry moving in the right direction. Without a clear vision, it is impossible to find direction.

This was an area that the Focus Group had much to say. They felt the leaders did not have a concrete vision of where they were going with a strategic plan that would benefit them in the long run. Another finding was their lack of vision, which brought disorder in the body of Christ, where sometimes, instead of responding to something, they would react to it. The reason the first generation would react instead of respond was that they believed a position was more important than vision. Thus, anybody perceived to have a vision was considered a threat to their position.

Position is what keeps them in ministry because first-generation Haitian Americans strongly believe that position allows them to be who they are. Once they feel that their positions may be taken away from them, they become aggressive. They always forget that they might be skillful on how they camouflage themselves, but someday, their flaws might be exposed. According to the answers of the participants, the way the first generation is leading the local churches is very detrimental to the body of Christ. Through the questions and answers that were

given by the participants, the researcher gleaned some important information and asked them how they felt about leaving Naples Haitian Church of God or the Haitian Evangelical Churches. The questions were: “Will you stay now? Is the preaching relevant to your lives? Has culture always been a problem for the growth of the church? Do you see change happening, or will there ever be change?”

The researcher noted the answers with yes or no. Many of the participants voiced their opinions on whether they would stay or leave the church. The questions above were given some sound answers, which allowed the researcher to come up with the table below. All the answers to the questions noted on the table were mostly unanimous. The first generation was really pushing the second generation away by how they ran the church. Their answers showed that there was some fear among the second generation that the first generation Haitian might soon come to a serious roadblock, and the outcome might be detrimental. Here is the table below with yes or no answers.

NAME	LEAVE	STAY	PREACHING	CULTURE ISSUES	CHANGE
Jean Joseph	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Jessica Gerant	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Marie Desir	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Laurette Antoine	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Moise Jean	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Robert					
Eunice Jeune	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Anamaria Auguste	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Loraine Beauplan	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Rose Leon	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Micah Nicolas	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Crystal Riley	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Matthew Gray	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Nathaniel Faustin	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Alexandria	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Bryant					
Eric Jones	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Ricky Smith	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

As seen in the table above, the unanimous answers for all the sixteen participants proved to be a wakeup call to the first-generation Haitian Americans. The second generation felt like the church was held in hostage, preventing the body of Christ from spiritual growth. The researcher determined that the findings among the participants were in common accord. No one showed any willingness to visit the church once in a while. They agreed that the preaching was not relevant to their current situation, which was discussed earlier. There was the issue of culture, which further emphasized on the exodus of the second-generation Haitian Americans. It was considered an ongoing issue that might last decades if some measures were not taken and procedures put in place. The findings proved that the second-generation Haitian Americans acknowledged that change needed to occur, so the local church, especially Naples Haitian church of God, could exist beyond the cultural norms of how it used to be.

The result of this study will help Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches analyze their current state as a church and see what needs to be done in order to bridge this gap that exists between the first and the second generation. This result certainly brings a level of awareness to the researcher and the Focus Group that the church should have a different attitude regarding growth that can be beneficial to the second generation.

Current Realities

Through the findings and results, the first generation of Haitian needs to be conscious of the current reality. The current reality is that the first generation has acknowledged that an exodus has taken place, and it is still taking place right now. The reality of the exodus was downplayed for many years by the first generation because they were optimistic that no matter how the second generation saw the Haitian Evangelical Church, they would still come back. The researcher himself had held a similar expectation; twenty years plus now, it rather keeps getting worse.

On many occasions, the researcher has encountered issues that he thought were reversible and could easily change. Through the years, the researcher has found out that the reality of how ministry needs to be approached at Naples Haitian Church of God is thousands of years away and has become a constant fight. The first-generation Haitian Americans would rather see people change to their agenda than change to help the community explore ways they can keep the second generation. It is unfortunate to see that the mindset of the first-generation Haitians and those of NHCG is still in the embryonic stage that requires a level of understanding to move forward. There are a few realities that need to be acknowledged.

Unappreciated Value

The reality of this issue is that Naples Haitian Church of God and the surrounding Haitian Churches do not fully comprehend and appreciate value. They only value one if one accepts to abide by their agenda, even when it is not useful to the body of Christ. Before 2012, the researcher knew a little about ministry. Then he went to the seminary; it was then that things did not make sense, and he started seeing things differently. Church was always a part of the life of the researcher, and it was a common trend for the researcher to go to church weekly. From Monday to Sunday, there were activities, and some people, if following the schedule of the church, would be there every single day. Being active is very instrumental for the growth of the church, but when activities replace vision, then there is a problem. The researcher understood that the activities of the local church were a great way to keep people engaged in the body of Christ. However, when there was no change in the lives of the congregants, it should call for a thorough analysis of the causes of the continuous decline.

It did not take the researcher many years after 2012 to finally understand that the Haitian Evangelical Churches and Naples Haitian Church of God had dragged the body of Christ into redundancy. There was no noticeable growth but stagnancy. In 2014, the researcher started to give a new direction to the ministry that he was leading, knowing that being in a leadership position was an opportunity given by God to accomplish something significant. Once change started to happen, people started seeing things differently because now they had a better sense of understanding of where they were going and how they should do what God called them to do. Little did the researcher know that it would backfire on him because bringing change or preaching excellence in doing ministry for God was a threat rather than a growth process for the church. Moise Jean Robert, a participant of the Focus Group, was a great witness to that because he also joined the researcher on this journey. He served in ministry in his previous church and knew that ministry would not survive if there was not an adaptation to a system that could establish a solid vision. The leaders became furious with the researcher and Moise Jean Robert and other people that were not able to follow their agenda of stagnancy.

The second generation loves what their culture taught them and still hold to many things that help in keeping their value system. But churches need to separate their value system from the cultural standpoint from the mandate Jesus gave the church.

Church Mandate

While the church is an organism, it is also an organization that needs to have a great system in place to succeed. This is another reality that is yet to be grasped by the Haitian Evangelical Churches. The reality of having a plan in place to lead the church is pivotal for its growth. A plan allows the local church to be active in carrying out the mandate of the great commission. It can open their minds to see the Gospel outside of the four walls. Naples Haitian Church of God, as

well as the Haitian Evangelical Churches in the community, lacks a concrete plan. The community does not know that a church exists there, and these churches have not taken advantage of social media to reach out to them. God has called the church to be His voice. The church needs to do more than praying to get to that stage. Actions must be taken, and the church must be proactive by preaching the Word in a contextual way that will embrace people and direct them to the Kingdom of God. It is of utmost importance that the mandate of Jesus to make disciples be a reality in Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches. The Haitian Evangelical Churches possess the ability to reach the world for Christ; let them harness that ability. The church leaders should be willing to step out of their comfort zone and be different.

Authenticity

The first-generation Haitian Americans always see themselves as perfect people. This makes it hard for the second generation to cope with the need for authenticity from the first generation. The first generation tends to believe that mistakes are not allowed as a child of God. This belief brings fear among the second generation that if they ever mess up, their life is over, and grace is not available. The second generation of Haitian Americans has indicated through the Focus Group that the message the first generation has been preaching has been an “I never-made-a-mistake gospel.” A simple example would be getting a girl pregnant, and the only solution is marriage, after which you will be put into a disciplinary state. Then finding out that the pastor who disciplined you did the same thing and even worse. He never disclosed such information and could not even help you cope with your pain but saw you as a sinner that would never find grace.

The second generation often sees their leaders as all perfect pastors who are immune to sin or anything that can damage them physically or spiritually. The second generation knows that if

they ever mess up that they will automatically be put into quarantine. Mistakes are a part of life, and they acknowledge that the first generation expects them to leave a perfect life. However, the second generation wants to be encouraged that their fall is not their end; they can still rise, aided by grace. Through the Focus Group, it is clear that authenticity is nonexistent in the first-generation Haitian Americans. The researcher himself perceives that displaying one's mistakes as a leader can make people reject you; hence, the first-generation Haitians adopt a fabricated life of perfection and consciously chooses to ignore the fact that all human beings have flaws. It is important to know that admitting our weaknesses does not equal incompetence; it is authenticity. It takes a level of maturity to build a culture of trust that allows a leader to lead with confidence.

Theological Distancing

The researcher defines theological gap or distancing as a disparity that prevents the local Haitian church from experiencing a true encounter with God in the Bible, from a contextual point of view. The reason is that at Naples Haitian Church of God and local Haitian churches, there is more of a selective theology rather than constructive theology. Selective theology tends to take a passage or a verse and makes a doctrine that sometimes brings condemnation to the members rather than redemption. Constructive theology leans more on the overall understanding of the whole text didactically, which finds divine truth rather than pre-understanding when approaching the sacred text. This is a reality that is yet to be seen. As a matter of fact, selective theology is prominent because it is rooted in the pre-knowledge of how the Gospel was handed down to many Haitian evangelical pastors rather than proper theological training that opens up one's heart to the lead of the Holy Spirit. The second generation of Haitian Americans now understands that most of the Haitian pastors create a theological interpretation of a biblical text based solely on what they

think is correct without extracting the Rhema of how it should apply in their lives and the young adults. This creates tension. One of the participants of the Focus Group insists that she is still part of Naples Haitian Church of God because she has a passion for the young people, which she is mentoring now. According to her, she comes to the church just for worship and goes to another multi-cultural church weekly to get fed spiritually. She is not alone in this because even the daughter of the pastor has continuously done that. All the participants agree that this reality is so vivid among the first generation of Haitians, especially these other two participants.

Leadership

The researcher is back at it again with leadership as the core of the church and how valuable a leader is to the body of Christ. This is probably by far the most current reality that is facing the Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches. This reality is often overlooked because anybody can be in a leadership position while the true meaning of leadership is not truly defined to the body of Christ.

The researcher was once invited to a leadership meeting, and amazingly, he saw other people that he did not know were leaders. A few of the members of the leadership meeting said the senior pastor allowed anyone to attend as long as they were part of the worship team or any group. This caught the researcher off guard because he never knew that being a custodian or a musician automatically qualified one as a leader. Not that the people did not have leadership capacity, but leadership should be a special gift to the church in so many ways that it could not be taken lightly. The reason this reality was not checked was that leadership in the Haitian Evangelical Churches was yet fully grasped. Dr. Myles Munroe stated some crucial truth regarding leadership when he asserted that:

The contemporary crisis of character in leadership is alarming because, to a great extent, leaders determine the direction, security and prosperity of cultures, societies, and nations.

The following concepts demonstrate the central role of leadership in human society. Nothing happens without leadership, nothing succeeds without leadership, nothing is altered or transformed without leadership, nothing develops without leadership, nothing advances without leadership, nothing improves without leadership and nothing is corrected without leadership. Leadership is therefore key to human preservation, growth, and change. No matter what decision a society or nation finds itself in, it did not arrive there by accident. Someone led them there.⁸⁶

Leadership is always a process, never a destination because the moment someone begins to think that they have arrived at their destination as a leader, the group becomes stagnant, growth happens, and change never occurs.

Summary

Implementing a new strategy will help in halting this exodus that has continued to cause numerical and spiritual decline in the church. This needs to be analyzed not just on a physical level but on a spiritual level as well. These are a few implementation strategies that will help in bridging this gap.

First, create a culture of trust. Trust is an issue from the start, and to eradicate this trust issue, there has to be a level of humility where both generations can coexist as long as both trust each other to develop a strategic plan that will benefit the body of Christ.

The second strategy would be to develop leaders that will strengthen the core of the ministries inside Naples Haitian Church of God and the Haitian Evangelical Churches. Leadership development is one of the main keys to growth, and when leadership development is not prioritized, complacency takes place, and change never occurs. Leadership development ensures the overall health of the church, even when the foundation looks shaky. The evangelical leaders need to understand that leadership is not a one-person show. The mindset must be to prepare

⁸⁶ Myles Munroe, *The power of Character in Leadership* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2014), 11-12.

leaders that will lead with conviction rather than frustration. Leaders of the Haitian Evangelical Churches and Naples Haitian church of God need to focus on leaving a legacy rather than a church full of conspiracy. The legacy is possible once the leaders know that they need to lead “hands-through” and not “hands-on.” A leader does not need to be in everything but develops other leaders and empowers them to lead their respective ministries with integrity and character.

Third, creating ministries geared toward the second generation helps them to build a stronger relationship with God. These ministries should be a refreshing place where they can come and express themselves freely in their own language, without being obligated to imitate the agenda of the first-generation. The second generation just needs to serve God in a context more relevant to them.

Last, create a multi-cultural service where they can come and worship God freely. While the ministry created for them will help during the weekdays, there is a need for their own service, where they can worship freely and hear the Word more suitably in their own language because the language barrier has always been an issue. Additionally, they need the Word to help them connect to God. This requires the leaders of Naples Haitian Church of God and other local Haitian churches to understand that the local Haitian church is evolving in a pluralistic world in which the young leaders need to emerge and strengthen the body of Christ.

The church in its original state was established by God, and it is often said that the church of God will never be shaken or destroyed. People often forget that the universal church and the local church are different. The researcher has made it clear that although the universal church cannot be shaken, the local church still has work to do to strengthen the body of Christ. The question of the exodus of the second-generation Haitian Americans in Naples Haitian Church of God and the common trend in the local Haitian Churches is a real issue that cannot be ignored.

The qualitative research has fulfilled its purpose in accomplishing this project by collecting meaningful information toward an expected end.

Conclusion

Naples Haitian Church of God has been called to be the voice of Christ, carrying its mandate by preaching the Word to the lost and establishing a strong community where people come to be fed with the Word of God. NHCG, along with the Haitian Evangelical Churches, is to be a channel of hope, building the faith of this new generation so that they become the conscience and centerpiece of the depraved world. The mission of the universal church should not be separated from the local church; it should be a continuation of what Jesus had done as He gave us the mandate to go and be light to this dark world.

Naples Haitian Church of God is responsible for bridging the gap that has existed and still exists in the church. The onus of getting rid of the problem and creating a culture of trust where both generations can coexist falls on the NHCG. They have to put their differences aside when each generation feels entitled to their own rights and strike a compromise as the church of God. The church must grow above the pursuit of self-gratification and attain a communal success that will lead the church to where God wants it to be. No matter how bad the differences are—cultural issues, theological distancing, leadership issues, trust, lack of authenticity, value appreciation—it is urgently important that both the first-generation Haitians and the second-generation Haitian Americans abate or eradicate their differences and work toward the same goal. Christ offered His body so that the church does not live in separation but in divine restoration.

Bibliography

- [https://www. https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti](https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti) (accessed on February 21, 2020).
- <https://www.migrationpolicy.org>, (accessed February 21, 2020).
- Adam, Peter, God's Powerful Words: Five Principles of Biblical Spirituality in Isaiah 55, SBJT 10:4 (winter 2006), 28, (26-36).
- Anderson, Leith, Theological Issues of 21st-Century Ministry BSAC 151:602 (April 1994), 131-39: Accessed November 24, 2019. <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/693>
- Armerding, Carl, Moses, the Man of God, BSAC 116:464 (October 1959), 353 (350-356) (accessed November 19, 2019).
- Antoine, Marie Berthonia, The Attrition of Young Adults in Haitian Churches (Ph.D. Dissertation, William James College, Newton, 2019), 23, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Blackbaby, Henry and Richard, Spiritual Leadership (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 51.
- Campbell, James, M. The Church and the Kingdom, BSAC 051:201 (January 1894), 133-134 (131-142) accessed November 25, 2019.
- Climenhaga, Arthur M., Spirit and Church, ATJ 01:0 (NA 1968): 8-17 (accessed November 8, 2019) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1>.
- Clitandre, Nadage T and Edwidge Danticat: The Haitian Diasporic Imaginary (Virginia Press, 2018), 49.
- Claythorne, Jennifer, Assimilation to Black America: How the Identity Choices of Haitian Immigrants and Haitian American Students Are Impacted by Racial and Economic Segregation (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Florida, FL, 2006), 57, (accessed February 23, 2020). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Clowney, Edmund P., Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church, WTJ 31:1 (November 1968), 33 (22-81), (accessed November 14, 2019).
- Corduan, Winfred, Neighboring Faiths, a Christian Introduction to World Religions. (Downers Groves: Ivpress, 2012), 25.
- Culture, <https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Haiti.html>.

- Dash, Michael, Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean (Road West: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), 52 ProQuest Ebrary.
- Dever, Mark, What Is a Healthy Church? Wheaton: Crossway, 2007, 26
- Drushal, Mary Ellen, Implementing Theory Z in the Church: Managing People as Jesus Did, ATJ 20:0 (NA 1988): 47-62. (Accessed March 4, 2020.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/20>.
- Dupuy, Alex and Franck Laraque, The Prophet and Power: Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the International Community, and Haiti (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 63.
- Erickson, Millard J., Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2013), 954.
- Falwell, Jonathan, Innovative Church, Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church (Nashville Publishing Group, 2008) 102.
- Fleming, Archibald, the Church Essentially Spiritual, BSAC 012:48 (October 1855): 724-38. (Accessed November 12, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/140>.
- Flemming, Dean, Contextualization in the New Testament, Patterns for Theology and Mission (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 19.
- Fullan, Michael, Leading in a Culture of Change (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 42. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Gasser, William W., What Is a Healthy Church? JMAT 06:1 (spring 2002): 105-21. (Accessed November 17, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1717>.
- Grant, Charles T, The Nature of the Universal Church, EMJ 07:1 (Summer 1998): 3-29. (Accessed November 12, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1182>.
- Greene, Joseph R., The Spirit in the Temple: Bridging the Gap between Old Testament Absence and New Testament Assumption, ETS 55:4 (December 2012), 737, (717-42), (accessed November 15, 2019).
- Hammett, John, The Mission of the Church as A Mark of the Church, JBTM 05:1 (spring 2008): 31-40. (Accessed October 4, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1432>.
- Harney, Kevin Gand Bob Bouwer, The U-turn Church, New Direction for Health and Growth (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 17.

- Henry, Carl F., Reflections on the Kingdom of God, JETS 35:1 (March 1992): 39-49. (Accessed November 23, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1599>.
- Kanagaraj, Jey J, Jesus the King, Merkabah Mysticism and the Gospel of John, TYNBUL 47:2 (NA 1996): 349-366. (Accessed November 25, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/2316>.
- Kepley, Kristyl Williams, The modeling of an Ecology Language: Haitian Creole among First and Second-Generation Haitian College Students in South Florida. (Florida Atlantic University, FL, 2011), 8, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.
- Lawrence, William D, Distinctive of Christian Leadership, BSAC 144:575 (July 1987): 317-329. (Accessed November 17, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/666>.
- Lee, John, The State of the Immigrant Church, IX 9Marks, February 24, 2020, <https://www.9marks.org/article/the-state-of-the-immigrant-church>.
- Lewis, A. W, The Power of Pentecost, BSAC 087:347 (Jul 1930): 352-56. (Accessed November 11, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/438>.
- Lewis, William, God's Love Is Saving the World, BSAC 086:343 (Jul 1929), 278, (278-284), (accessed November 25, 2019).
- Lorits, Crawford, Leadership as an Identity (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2001), 22
- MacDonald, Charles R, Pastoral Leadership in the Church, CENQ 13:1 (Spring 1970): 33-34. (Accessed November 17, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1013>.
- Malphurs, Aubrey and Gordon E. Penfold, Revision, the Key to Transforming Your Church (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2014), 26.
- McGee, John McGee, Theology of the Tabernacle Part 1, BSAC 094:374 (April 1937): 153-75. (Accessed November 15, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/465>.
- McGoldrick, James W, The Christlikeness of God, RAR 07:2 (Spring 1998): 65-78. (Accessed November 25, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/2055>.
- Mohler, Albert, The conviction to Lead, Principles for Leadership That Matters, (Bloomington: Bethany House, 2012), 21.
- Munroe, Myles, The Power of Character in Leadership (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2014), 11-12.

- Murray, David, An Introduction to Christian Leadership, PRJ 03:2 (July 2011), 318, (318-29), (accessed November 17, 2019).
- Parrott, Richard, Leadership Character: A Matter of Trust, ATJ 33:0 (NA 2001): 23-31. (Accessed November 17, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/33>.
- Parrott, Richard, Transformational Leadership: Theory and Reflections, ATJ 32:0 (NA 2000), 65 (63-76) (accessed November 19, 2019).
- Mercidieu, Leaderflip, Leading in Changing Times with Unchanging Principles (Pittstown: NJ Writes, 2017), 15.
- Pickering, Ernest, The Nature of Covenant Theology, CENQ 03:4 (Winter 1960): 1-8. (Accessed November 17, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/976>.
- Portes, Alejandro and Rubén G. Rumbaut, and Ruben G Rumbaut, Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation (London: University of California Press, 2001), 113, ProQuest Ebrary.
- Robinson, Darrell W, Total Life Church, How to Be a First Century Church (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1997), 57.
- Selman, Martin J, The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament, TYNBUL 40:2 (NA 1989): 161-183. (Accessed November 23, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/2302>.
- Scarborough, Thomas O, Deconstructing ‘Transformational’ in Christian Transformational Leadership, CONSPECTUS 11:1 (March 2011): 167-186. (Accessed November 19, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1063>.
- Scarborough, Thomas O, Defining Christian Transformational Leadership, CONSPECTUS 10:1 (Sep 2010): 58-87. (Accessed November 19, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1062>.
- Stanley, Andy, The Grace of God (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010) Chap. 1, Kindle.
- Unger, Merrill F, The Significance of Pentecost, BSAC 122:486 (April 1965), 169 (169-77), (accessed November 12, 2019).
- Brian Tracy, Leadership (Brodway: Amaca, 2014), 7, ProQuest Ebrary.
- Vickers, Brian, J, The Kingdom of Heaven in Paul’s Gospel, SBJT 12:1 (Spring 2008): 53.65. (Accessed November 24, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/2149>.

- Walvoord, John F, A Review of “Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God” BSAC 110:437 (Jan 1953): 1-10. (Accessed November 23, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/528>.
- Walvoord, John, The Future Works of Christ Part II: The Church in Heaven, BSAC 123:490 (April 1966): 99-103. (Accessed November 15, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/581>.
- Ron Webb, Leadership Behind the Scenes, (Acclaim Press: Morley, OH, 2015) 53.
- Seabrook, William, The magic Island, (New York: Brace and Company, 2016), 285.
- Scazzero, Peter, Emotionally Healthy Leader (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015),
- Stephen J Wellum, Reflecting on the Kingdom of God, SBJT 12:1 (Spring 2008): 2-3. (Accessed November 23, 2019.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/2149>.
- Elmer Towns, The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology, JETS 29:1 (March 1986): 63-70. (Accessed March 6, 2020.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/1575>.
- Trites, Allison A, Church Growth in the Book of Acts, BSAC 145:578 (April 1988): 162-73. (Accessed March 4, 2020.) <https://www-galaxie-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/volume/669>.
- Elmer Towns, The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology, JETS 29:1 (March 1986), 67-38 (63-70), (accessed March 6, 2020).
- Vanderkooy, Patricia, Life Pathways of Haitian American Young Adults in South Florida (Ph.D., Dissertation, Florida International University, Florida, 2011), 12, (accessed February 23, 2020). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Yu, Xing, Language and State: An Inquiry into the Progress of Civilization (Lanham: University Press America, 2013), 14, ProQuest Ebrary.

October 18, 2019

Frantz E. Machoule IRB Exemption 3934.101819: Resolving the Issue of the Exodus of the Second Generation of Haitian Americans in Naples Haitian Church of God

Dear Frantz E. Machoule,

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

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

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if . . . the following criteria are met:

(ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

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

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP Administrative Chair of Institutional Research Ethics Office

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971