

RACE, GENDER, AND 2 CHRISTIAN DIASPORA

New Pentecostal

Intersectionalities and Haiti

ELIZABETH MCALISTER

Along with the other authors in this volume, I aim to better understand the intersection of diaspora, race, and gender as defining forces in the lives of Black Pentecostal women. My focus is on how Haiti fares conceptually in one rather extreme yet influential strand of Pentecostal thought: Third Wave evangelicalism. Also known as the Spiritual Warfare movement, Third Wave evangelicalism is a loose network of born-again believers who share in the dramatic revelation that they are “prayer warriors” specially chosen to fight as intercessors in the cosmic battle that Satan wages against Jesus.¹ These born-again evangelicals and Pentecostals share the sense that they are called by God to engage in spiritual mapping and spiritual warfare—practices that involve discerning the demonic activity of Satan and his legion of demons and doing battle with the demonic realm through fasting, prayer, and other rituals.

The movement is made up of a vocal minority; nevertheless, it wields a great deal of influence across the charismatic world, especially among large swathes of Pentecostals in the Caribbean and Africa. Third Wave theology is crafted by both (White) American and (Black) Haitian Pentecostals (and others), who reconfigure racial narratives, gendered images, and notions of citizenship in new ways. The role Haiti plays in this network is, dramatically enough, “the only nation dedicated to Satan,” and this, therefore, bears unpacking and deconstructing by scholars.

Just after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the right-wing media mogul Pat Robertson said on his television show that the quake was a result of a “pact with Satan,” a notion commonly held by evangelicals oriented toward spiritual warfare. I have researched religion in Haiti for years, and I wanted to better understand this extreme view. I made the acquaintance of Pastor John Flynn, a longtime missionary from the American Midwest.² He had traveled to Port-au-Prince in the days following the earthquake with Robertson’s Christian Broadcast Network (CBN) film crew. Flynn led the crew to film various churches so that the CBN viewers would have an evangelical Christian perspective on the earthquake. He graciously allowed me to join his mission team in Haiti in July 2010, six months after the quake. Traveling with Flynn was surprisingly easy, considering that he is a missionary dedicated to ridding Haiti of its demons and I am a blue-state feminist with a spotty attendance record at a main-line Protestant church in New England. It turned out that we both held in high regard a female pastor, Pastor Yvette, who headed an independent Pentecostal church that ran a school, clinic, and mission team that traveled across Haiti to evangelize and heal. The church formed groups for youth, several choirs, intercessory prayer cells, and a circle of twelve prophets. Our mutual respect and admiration for Pastor Yvette became a strong bond.

TENT CAMP WEDDING

Pastor John took me to visit Pastor Yvette’s Pentecostal congregation, whose many members’ houses had collapsed in the earthquake. They were camped out on a soccer field in tents and under tarps or simple sheets, together about five hundred strong. They had sanctified a large space for worship services, and had set up what pews they could salvage from their own collapsed church. I had expected the hot Caribbean sun beating down on tents and the stench from the latrines and cooking fires, the flies, and the dust. But what surprised me was that enduring these conditions were not abject refugee quake victims, but rather an energetic community preparing a wedding. Several days later they celebrated the largest and most elaborate wedding I have ever attended, right there in the refugee camp. Undeterred by the catastrophe or their resulting displacement, they were following God’s revelation that the wedding must come to pass.

Hundreds of people in their Sunday best dress sat in rows in the festive church tent, where standing plants formed a center aisle and crepe paper streamed

from posts overhead. A hymn in French played over speakers, and as people craned their necks to look behind them, a set of twenty teenaged dancers, boys in one line and girls in another, danced a slow minuet down the aisle. They wore matching hand-made outfits of gold and white, the girls in long white gloves and the boys in gold ties. After them two more sets of youth danced forward together, this time in different but also matching outfits. Children ring-bearers and several bridesmaids followed. After almost an hour of procession the groom stepped out, all in white from head to toe including his tie. At long last the bride paraded down the aisle, resplendent in a full-length white wedding gown, long veil, white gloves, and rhinestone tiara. They sat in two enormous chairs at the front and were treated to performances by three different choirs, each in matching robes, a band with accordion and guitar, and several vocal soloists.

At some point someone whispered to me, "It was God who chose the bride and groom and put them together. He revealed the match to one of our prophets and gave them time to decide whether to accept. This way they can be strong and build the Kingdom of God." Pastor Yvette's church shares the general Haitian Pentecostal belief that marriage sanctifies and strengthens. The church had celebrated twenty-one weddings at the church the previous December, so new couples could begin the year together.

Apparently, the bride was living in the tent camp, but the groom was from Miami. He was "from the diaspora."

AFRICAN DIASPORA, CHRISTIAN DIASPORA

In fieldwork with Pentecostals in Haiti and the Haitian diaspora, I bumped up against a curiosity (McAlister 2011). Even though evangelical Protestantism is not a diaspora in the established sociological sense, many Caribbean Christians conceive of their "spiritual lineage," their past and their future, in ways that mirror a classic ethnic diasporic consciousness. Christians are not a diaspora by social science's definition, since they do not share an ethnic identity or a common homeland. But at certain moments, many fashion themselves as one people through the transcending of ethnicity in the universal possibility of Christian salvation. And do they not have a homeland for which they are nostalgic? The Christians' true homeland is not Jamaica, Trinidad, or another birthplace; it is the Jerusalem of the ancient Israelites, whose identities they have appropriated as God's new chosen people. And do they not actively long for an immanent "return," in the future ingathering in the New Jerusalem of the

Heavenly Kingdom? And will the Holy City not be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband?

Among evangelicals in the Caribbean, a common rhetorical stance is to proclaim that citizenship in God's kingdom trumps one's national identity. In Brooklyn I heard one pastor preach, "I don't need to go back to Haiti because I have Jesus." A young woman in the Virgin Islands said, with great rhetorical flair, to another researcher, "I am Christian. I am first and foremost a citizen of God the Father's kingdom, adopted into his family through Jesus Christ, whose ambassador I am to his honor and glory, in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Harkins-Pierre 2005: 33). How much more glorious it is to hold a passport to God's kingdom than a passport from Haiti, now declared a "failed state" and a ruined land.

My first point here is that evangelical Christianity (including Pentecostals) seems to function as a diaspora for many Caribbean peoples. Evangelical and Pentecostal discourse, prayers, images, and hymns produce a temporal and spatial past and future that mirror the kinds of diasporic sensibilities that ethnic groups cultivate. After all, brothers and sisters in the church, "the body of Christ," span the globe in a great, imagined kinship network. In adopting a saved and sanctified identity, born-again Christians also produce a new form of futurity and spatiality that, in turn, inflects national, racial/ethnic, and gendered identities. To be saved is to be oriented toward biblical geographies, past and future. We can see that, on a rhetorical level, some Caribbean evangelicals keep one foot in the African diaspora and another in the Christian diaspora (see Johnson 2007). For Haitians, the "African diaspora" becomes articulated with the second, Haitian diaspora. Haitians are more recently known in the Caribbean literature for being self-consciously diasporic; the term *yon djaspora* (a diaspora) in Haitian Creole designates a person who returns to Haiti from outside. Evangelicals, in turn, fit these various diasporic frames into their understandings of Christians as a diaspora.

My second point is that if we take into account what I term the "evangelical diasporic imaginary" in theorizing these overlapping diasporas, we can learn about the complex and contradictory ways people and groups produce space, experience time, and produce new raced and gendered collective identities. By reminding ourselves of the interplay of the notion of diaspora in social science and in Christian thought, we might better

understand certain post-diasporic, extra-ethnic global identity formations (McAlister 2011). We will also gain insight into transnational flows, as evangelical Christian networks work out affinities and ideologies for Caribbean, African, and African American evangelicals, who may (or may not) have developed an Afro-diasporic consciousness, this extra-ethnic identity still must provide a way to account for race, for Blackness, and for African ancestral religiosity. What is more, we will be able to understand how the intersectionality of raced and gendered identities can be produced through evangelical theology.

**“SONS OF THE SOIL”: RACE AND BLACKNESS IN
SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

If Caribbean Pentecostals' longed-for return to homeland is the eternal Kingdom of God, then how do they understand their earthly national histories and racialized, gendered identities? The racialized aspects of Afro-Atlantic Pentecostal women's experience has been a focus of much fine work on US and Brazilian Pentecostals, and this essay adds the case of Haiti to the literature. Because of the different histories of racialization across the world, the ways that raced and gendered processes shape various African, North American, Brazilian, and Haitian Pentecostal lives reflects their national contexts. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes's scholarship on the US case makes the point that Black churchwomen are leaders in an autonomous sphere that constitutes its own base of power, prestige, and support (Gilkes 1985). John Burdick (1999) examines how Brazilian Pentecostal women are often accused of giving up racial consciousness and the project of Black liberation in favor of a Pentecostal identity. While both arguments can be said to hold true for Haitian women, their case is distinct from both of these cases in the sense that Haiti is a Black-majority country, and, in general terms, Haitian identity is already wrapped up in the idea that all Haitians are Black by definition (ever since the first Haitian constitution declared all citizens legally Black). Yet differently from African Pentecostals, who are also part of a Black majority, Haitian history unfolded in the American hemisphere. Even as these various national cases are distinct, they are also increasingly bound up in transnational flows of movement and in global conversations within evangelicalism, including the sense of being part of a Christian diaspora.

As Haitians participate in global circuits of thought and practice, they revise previous narratives of nationalism, race, and gender, and some co-create an alternative Christian one. This new conception of history, nationalism, race, and gender is part of the popular intellectual work of creating a new social formation with a new understanding of history, an alternative sense of political authority, and new ideas about nationalism and citizenship. There are both continuities and tensions between old, colonialist, Christian forms of racialization and new forms of racialization and racial identity in Haiti that are themselves complicated and contradictory.

The most extreme strand of Pentecostalism in the Haitian sphere overlaps with the Spiritual Warfare movement. That movement's best-known theologian is the American C. Peter Wagner, who taught for decades at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. His thought has been taken up by conservative seminaries and Bible colleges across the Bible Belt. Sometimes embraced but often rejected, the theologies and practices of Spiritual Warfare have nevertheless inflected the vocabulary of global Pentecostalism, and both Haitian and American seminary students have brought his ideas to bear on Haiti. This revival movement stresses that all of human history consists of a cosmic battle between good and evil; between Christians and the demons ruled by Satan. The battle began, of course, in the Garden of Eden when the serpent tempted Eve to disobey God. However, in the contemporary moment, God has inaugurated a special new age in which He is calling prophets and apostles to break through and affect history, just as they did in biblical times. Those who answer God's call become intercessors and usher in the Kingdom of God through "warfare prayer." This group of divinely "anointed prayer warriors" understand that they are doing battle in the "spiritual realm" with Satan's high-ranking demons and take their understanding of this war from Ephesians 6:12: "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Spiritual warriors discern specific spaces to be demonic strongholds and declare certain cities, towns, or areas under attack from "the enemy" (see also chapter 5 in this volume).

This new evangelical thinking about Haiti retraces much of the well-trodden path of racialized thought that the Roman Catholic church laid

out during the colonial era and beyond. Just as it was for the Catholic orthodoxy, for evangelicals the Afro-Haitian creole religion of the Black majority, known as Vodou, with its African sources, is “of the devil.” The religious culture that originated in Africa is classed as paganism, which, in turn, is un-Christian because its engagements with ancestral spirits goes directly against God’s commandment to “Have no other gods before me.” For Third Wave evangelicalism, the spirits central to Afro-Creole religious practice are in reality numerous demons in the army of Satan. Afro-Haitian ancestral practices, Afro-Creole cosmology, and spirit work are equated with evil (McAlister 2012).

Insofar as “Africanness” and “Blackness” are often conflated in popular discourse throughout the hemisphere, it is important to interrogate whether racial Blackness is therefore closely associated with evil for these evangelicals. Third Wave thought teaches emphatically that racism is a sin against God. Yet, as we see later, it also teaches that indigenous spirits, including African deities, are essentially evil, and working with them spiritually is to commit the sin of idolatry (as written in the Ten Commandments). The evangelical movement in Haiti, with much of its funding coming from politically conservative US churches and seminaries and its centers of education in the US Bible Belt, opens itself to critique as a neo-imperial process in which mission groups of the North bring “salvation” and resources to the South and work to orient Haitian churches toward a Protestantism that is more central to US history and culture than the Roman Catholicism that prevails in Latin America. Since the earthquake of 2010, foreign Christians serving in short-term missions and Christian NGOs have become ubiquitous throughout the disaster zones.

The argument that evangelicalism in Haiti is neo-imperialist and racializes evil bears complicating to fully understand it, however. That diagnosis ignores some fascinating progressive countercurrents. I was surprised to discover that contemporary Pentecostal thinkers work to account for the postcolonial critiques of power. White American mission professors read critical theorists such as Michel Foucault and Homi Bhabha and make presentations at conferences about how to avoid reproducing unequal relations of power. The White American groups I interview who undertake missions in Haiti explicitly eschew relocating to the mission field and living in foreign countries. Rather, their slogan is, “Empower Local Pastors.”³ In their literature, they “emphasize the importance of

indigenous leadership in the church around the world” (italics in original). One Haiti missionary writes, “I firmly believe that God’s greatest and most effective leaders in any country are always the local ‘sons of the soil’” (Williams 2008). In a fascinating implicit critique of colonialist missions typical of the past, the groups work explicitly to privilege the local, native missionary and pastor.

In their practicality, as well as in their decolonizing politics, these ideas eliminate the long-term foreign missionary and give agency to the local leader—as long as he is male. They are part of the contemporary current toward “empowering partnerships” written about by a coalition of evangelical and missionary organizations in the document called “Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission” (2003). The Third Wave missionaries assert emphatically that it is part of God’s plan for national missionaries to lead the church and expand the kingdom, many of whom are “the spiritual children and grandchildren” of earlier pioneer missionaries (Williams 2008). This strategy creates the conditions of possibility for local leadership, local theological production, and local decision making, and it often brings investment for entrepreneurship. This trend nuances the neo-imperial, North-South framework.

These contradictory neo-imperial and decolonizing crosscurrents reflect theological dimensions. Local leaders in the evangelical movement in Haiti largely agree with the diagnosis that ancestral, “African” spirituality is demonic. Born-again Haitians themselves work to elaborate this theological point, and they fill in culturally specific details. I have traced the Spiritual Warfare movement in Haiti in detail elsewhere, and revealed the way that (White) American missionaries to Haiti, studying with Peter Wagner and Charles Kraft at Fuller Seminary in the early 1990s, formulated the logic that the entire nation of Haiti was “demonically entrenched” from its very founding (McAlister 2012). These American evangelicals worked out what they term the “spiritual mapping” of Haiti and produced a new *spiritual* interpretation of Haitian national origins. It began with a sin: the French enslavement of Africans in the colony. So, they say, it was natural and right that the African and Creole enslaved population would rise up to fight for their independence, which they did in 1791 in the world’s only successful slave revolution.

Spiritual mappers stress a particular mythic event in Haitian history: standard accounts report that several weeks before the slave uprising in

1791 that led to Haiti's War for Independence, an enslaved leader named Boukman Dutty held a political and religious meeting on the outskirts of the northern capital in a place called Bois Caïman. Boukman and an African priestess named Cecile Fatiman sacrificed a wild boar to propitiate and strengthen their ancestral spirits. In the ritual logic of the Afro-Creole system, the life force contained in the animal's blood was given to spirits as a form of "feeding" in return for strength and protection in battle. In many versions of the account, the revolutionaries also embraced the African gods and rejected the Christian god (Hurbon 1993).

The story of this foundational political and religious gathering has been the subject of numerous tales, speeches, and writings by Haitian and foreign intellectuals. For spiritual warriors, the slaves of Saint-Domingue were the triple victims of sin and iniquity. Not having had the benefit of the Gospel, they were first unsaved sinners by birth; then, second, they fell victim to the French iniquity of racism and enslavement. Slavery was so terrible it created "welcome mats" for more sin and for demonic infestation. So, third, "in their desperation" and without the benefit of Christ's salvation, they had very little choice but to turn to whatever force would aid them: their demonic ancestral spirits. The sacrifice of the boar at Bois Caïman was nothing less than a "blood pact" with demons, legally sealing the fate of the new nation. Haitians freed themselves from French slavery only to sell themselves as slaves to Satan.⁴

When the earthquake hit Haiti in January 2010, evangelicals in churches and newspapers and on television, radio, and the Internet strained to discern what the quake might have to do with God's plan. Two days later, Pat Robertson stated on CBN: "They were under the heel of the French, you know, Napoleon the third and whatever . . . and they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, 'We will serve you if you get us free from the prince.' True story." A media storm surrounded Robertson's remarks, because it seemed so outrageous that he would be blaming a Haitian pact with the devil for the quake. Yet for many evangelical and Pentecostal viewers, the quake's devastation made theological sense. The principalities and powers of darkness that rule Haiti were causing their devilish mischief, and the people were engaged with them to such an extent that even God had lifted his protection.

In this evangelical nationalist narrative, as we can see, African deities are demonized as ontologically real embodiments of evil, and any

distinctions that Christians would want to make between racial Blackness and African culture become elided in common popular thought. However, spiritual mappers *would* be quick to make this distinction; to emphasize that God created all “people groups” in His own image; and to say that no race or ethnicity is superior in His eyes. Further, each ethnic or racial group has a special destiny, and God has a plan for each group: “All members of the current population of Earth have an earthly indigenous identity that connects them through their ancestors to the geographical land of some nation or nations on the Earth. This we call national identity, and it is a key part of God’s plan for man to exercise effective dominion in some spot of land in the Earth” (Chosa and Chosa 2004: 92). According to Jim Chosa, a Native Ojibwe and a spiritual warfare teacher at the Wagner Leadership Institute, the longer a person has had ancestors living in a particular place, the more spiritual authority the person has over that place. The evangelists called to work on missions or revival must “truly be agents of God to bring His deliverance into our assigned territories.” In the United States, this means that Native peoples must be recognized as the original “hosts of the land” and must be invited as active participants in any Christian activities. If this principle is enacted, then racism will be impossible: “If you as a believer in Christ Jesus know who you are with respect to your heavenly and earthly indigenous identity, then honoring all indigenous people and recognizing them as host authorities in their spheres or territories makes racism a non-issue” (Chosa and Chosa 2004: 105).

Christians who are indigenous to a particular land have more spiritual authority over that land, such that entrenched ancestral demons will obey Christian local “sons of the soil” to a greater degree than they will foreigners. With the God-given (they might say “blood-covered”) spiritual authority of a native Christian comes a greater ability to carry out the spiritual mapping and warfare necessary to break the strongholds of the devil, “bind the strongman,” and usher revival into a territory, locality, or nation. This is not a political authority derived from the state system of governmentality but posits a truer, more real political authority that stems from God and is inherited through long-standing ancestral inhabiting of particular territory. If Christian prayer warriors truly understand the political authority vested in them by God, they will be successful intercessors who can hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God.

We can see that according to this theology, national citizenship is important mostly as a platform from which to act as a citizen of the kingdom. Any (diasporic) Christians have primary authority over their own ancestral, ethnic territory; a Jamaican British person has spiritual political authority in Jamaica (and, by extension, West Africa), just as an Anglo-American carries this privilege in the United States and then, further back, in any ancestral seats in the United Kingdom. Such Christians may receive revelations about particular customs, sins, or moments in their own ethnic histories that can be brought to bear on intercession and revival.

Thus, Haitians have been filling in the details of the Neo-Pentecostal interpretation of Afro-Haitian religion begun by White Americans in the 1990s. Pastor Yvette, who presided over the tent camp wedding, belongs to a group of churches under the leadership of Pastor Max. He, in turn, leads a confederation of churches with a branch in each of the *départments* of Haiti and often visits the United States to preach. He has a radio show and two (self-)published books. His knowledge of Haitian culture, together with revelations from God, allows him to analyze the cosmology of Vodou and discern exactly how and on what grounds Vodou is demonic. He asserts that Dambala, an important Afro-Creole spirit who is associated with snakes, waterfalls, and healing, is none other than the serpent who tempted Eve in Genesis 3. Both figures personify deception and ruse; “the serpent seems to manifest love and wealth for his servants. . . . He marries women that he desires, and enters into sexual relations with them while they sleep under the guise of a man. But this is how they will contract cysts, fibroids, and cancer” (Joseph n.d.: 67, author’s translation).

Pastor Max speaks to Haitians in local religious idioms and works to read Vodou symbols through a biblical lens. For him, sin and iniquity are located not in Africa or in racial Blackness but, rather, in the deeds of Haitians (the serving of other gods, corruption, sexual iniquity, and so on) who have been under the influence of Satan since the moment of the “blood pact” of the Bois Caïman slave revolt before the founding of the nation.

For Haitian Pentecostals, the demonized condition of Haiti is not a conceptual product of the White American racism of spiritual mappers, as social scientists might argue. Rather, it is the effect and consequence

of the sin of French colonial racism, which, in turn, led to the sin of slavery that created a “welcome mat” for demons in the form of the idolatry and covenant of the Vodou ceremony at Bois Caïman. The answer, rather than relying on help from American rescue missions, is for Haitians themselves to “break the blood pact” and accept Jesus Christ—and for Haitian Christians to lead the revival with the spiritual political authority they authentically hold as born-again “native sons of the soil.” By looking at the revival movement from a historical perspective, and then from its own, inner logics, then, we can see two very different accounts of the racialization of Haiti and its relationship to Africa, to France, and to the (White-dominant) United States. What for some is a case of southern White American neo-imperialism that retraces and reactivates colonial routes of racialized demonization is, for others, a movement with a political imperative that native Haitian men become leaders both of the Christian revival and of the self-governing of the Haitian nation. In turn, Haiti is important only as a nation whose citizens will one day join the Kingdom of God. Haitian (and all other) Christians are part of the Christian diaspora that one day will gather and return. It is the task of every national citizen, standing in a Christian space of conceptual tension between nation and diaspora, to pray for the nation while ultimately working for the Kingdom of God.

DJAB RASYAL AND THE PROBLEM OF SEXUALITY

As the tent camp wedding demonstrated, one way born-again Haitians work to build the Kingdom of God is by marrying whom God chooses for them and raising a Christian family. But even when converts live a Christian life, marry, and are faithful to their spouses, the Vodou spirits hunger to continue their relationships with their spiritual children, because people inherit ancestral spirits through family lines. Thus, any given person may be reclaimed (*reklame*) by a particular spirit, for whom she or he must periodically provide ritual food and prayer. New converts often are embroiled in personal dramas in which they feel they have been visited by Vodou spirits and called back into old relationships and obligations. Just as worldly marriage is an important step for Pentecostals to take, spiritual divorce from family spirits is often necessary. Christians graced with the

gift of charismatic healing—in conversation with deliverance ministers internationally—are developing ritual methods to break ties with familial spirits who continue to hold people in spiritual relationships:

One evening after church as the sun set and people lit small kerosene lamps or sat in the dark streets together talking, I made my way with a small group of women prophets from church across the muddy street to Pastor Yvette's house. Pastor Yvette changed from her dressy church clothes and hat while the prophets gathered around a married couple whose spiritual problems overwhelmed them. It seems that a sultry light-skinned woman with long flowing hair appeared regularly in the husband's dreams and made love to him, igniting sexual pleasure so intense it would wake him up. He was fighting the constant temptation to masturbate and to seek out prostitutes. In an earlier session of confession and repentance with Brother Miso, a young man with the gift of healing, the husband realized that he had inherited several ancestral spirits called djab rasyal (lit., "spirits of the race," but better translated as "family spirits"). This contested category of spirits is, for Vodouists, a type of family spirit that must be honored with certain foods, according to its requests. But for evangelicals, djab rasyal is often shorthand for the totality of Vodou spirits that Haitians are subject to inheriting. They are demons sowing discord, misery, and sickness in families and individuals.

Brother Miso discerned that the husband had married Ezili Freda, the well-known spirit who flirts, rules the domain of romantic love, and is modeled historically after the colonial-era mixed-race mistresses of planters who were famous objects of sexual desire (and exploitation). It seemed clear to Brother Miso that Ezili was reclaiming her role as spirit wife in a marriage undertaken years ago for both luck and as a solution to some bouts of fever. Perhaps Ezili Freda was jealous now that the husband had both been born again and married an earthly bride, and the spirit wanted attention. This situation amounted to an iniquity whose cause was clear: the man had married the spirit, and she expected his prayers and occasional gifts of food. We were gathering to do a ritual called kraze alyans (lit., "break alliance" or "end relationship"), and the man would in effect divorce his spirit wife in the name of Jesus.

Pastor Yvette's sisterhood of prophets formed a circle around the man and began to sing hymns. Standing in the fading evening light, they each wore simple skirts and blouses and head wraps or small white lace doilies pinned to their heads in symbolic covering, their beautiful brown complexions glistening with the last perspiration of the day. Some held their Bibles; one cradled a small boy in a suit and tie who had fallen asleep. Their hymn seamlessly gave way to prayer, and they became an intimate chorus, sensing one another's mood and the moving

of the Holy Spirit among them. Sister Rose began a slight tremor and began to speak in tongues, her holy syllables punctuating a stream of “Hallelujah!” and “Praise God!” The Lord was calling them together to heal this man of his spiritual persecution, and He demanded obedience; He demanded fidelity; and He was prepared to bless this couple if they would follow him strictly. The chorus of the sisterhood of prophets shouted and sang underneath this divorce ritual in a holy soundscape matching the gravitas of the man’s salvation.

Brother Miso stepped forward as the sisters continued their soft stream of prayers and sighs punctuated by loud “amens.” He asked the man to repeat after him a series of declarations and denunciations: “In the name of Jesus I tear up every covenant I accepted, every engagement I signed with any demon. I have signed a new covenant with Jesus of Nazareth. I break every covenant I made with any demon either in sleep or wide awake and I declare today that I am no longer a slave either in sleep or awake. My spirit is for God and my body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus, I divorce Ezili.”

After a series of closing prayers, we all drank a cup of sweet hot cornmeal akasan and made our way through the muddy streets into the night. The sermon at church the next Sunday would be on the relationship between Haiti’s national history and the Ezili spirit herself.

THE JEZEBEL SPIRIT: AS EVE CORRUPTS THE GARDEN, CECILE RUINS THE NATION OF HAITI

As theories of intersectionality demonstrate, racialization and nationalism are co-constituted through gender. Anne McClintock (1993: 69) has pointed out that all nationalisms are gendered and “the nation emerges as the progeny of male history through the motor of military might.” The male-led slave revolt at Bois Caïman and the Haitian Revolution are a typical beginning in terms of masculine, if not Black, revolutionary success. After winning its independence from France in 1804, the new Haitian nation followed European gender norms, granting citizenship to men but not to women (although importantly, citizenship was extended to all men, including those formerly enslaved). As in France after its revolution, women in Haiti were ultimately incorporated into the nation through male members of the family: “The Code Napoleon was the first modern statute to decree that the wife’s nationality should follow her husband’s. . . . [A] woman’s *political* relation to the nation was thus submerged as a social *relation* to a man through marriage” (McClintock 1993:

91; italics in original). Even today, Haiti's legal codes are largely drawn from their nineteenth-century beginnings. It was not until the 1950s that women gained a limited right to vote (with their husbands' permission), and they won full equal suffrage in 1957. A landmark decree in 1982 made women equal to men, particularly within marriage (Charles 1995: 147).

Haitian masculinity is still very much informed by the legacy of the Haitian Revolution. An iconic nod to the male Unknown Soldier of so many other nations, a statue of the "Unknown Maroon" graces the square outside the National Palace in Port-au-Prince: "As the Unknown Soldier could potentially be any man who has laid down his life for his nation, the nation is embodied within each man and each man comes to embody the nation. . . . Women are scripted into the national imaginary in a different manner. Women are not equal to the nation but symbolic of it. . . . In the national imaginary, women are mothers of the nation or vulnerable citizens to be protected" (Sharp 1996: 99). If Haiti has a mother (aside from the Virgin Mary), it would certainly be the woman who entered history through the story of Bois Caïman: Cecile Fatiman (sometimes narrated as an "African priestess").⁵ While Boukman led the oath to fight for freedom, Fatiman performed the boar sacrifice under the spiritual auspices of African forces—which is to say, as a medium embodied by spirit. The spirit who "danced in her head" that night was an Ezili—but not Ezili Freda, whom we met in the divorce ritual narrated earlier, but Ezili Je Wouj (Ezili Red Eyes). It is said that Ezili Je Wouj's tongue was cut out by rebel slaves during the uprising to prevent her from giving away military secrets if she was captured. The spirit continues to appear after even two hundred years, and when she embodies an adherent, the person speaks in a guttural "ge ge ge" sound as if the front of the tongue is missing. In this story, the war for independence, a male military project, is powered by the supernatural strength of a female spirit possessing a female priest.

Fatiman and the better-known Ezili are icons of strong feminine power for the Haitian Black majority and in Haitian literature. Ezili's ongoing presence maintains the memories and experiences of enslaved Africans and a deep African past (Dayan 1994). There are a multitude of Ezili spirits, along with Ezili Freda and Ezili Je Wouj, such as Ezili Dantò, known as a poor, dark-complexioned lesbian and single mother who "turns" men and women homosexual, and numerous others. Spanning the color and class spectrum, the Ezilis enact a multiplicity of gendered ways of being

and a range of sexualities. And in Haitian Vodou practice—contrary to both Roman Catholic and Protestant gender systems—possession can be multiply gendered, such that a male or androgynous spirit can possess a female, and vice versa. While the jewel-seeking mulatress Ezili Freda recalls the colonial concubines exploited by the French, the darker and poorer Ezili Dantò wears no gold but is pictured with a child on her lap—not the Christ child but a daughter known often as Anais. Dantò's mother is known as Gran Ezili. Together they form a kind of female trinity. Ezili Dantò with her mother and her daughter embody the highest value in Haitian womanhood: that of the mother. Their iconography also reveals a lesson in Vodou that the mother-child bond is stronger and more important than the bond of marriage. As one common prayer song sung for Ezili in Port-au-Prince says, “Ezili, if your mother dies, you will cry. / If your husband dies, you'll find another one.” In a society that is oppressive to women in multiple ways, it is telling that the two worst insults that can be hurled at a woman are whore (*bouzen*) and lesbian (*madivin*). Yet two major spirits are divine embodiments of these stigmatized identities. Ezili Je Wouj, who fought in the Haitian Revolution, is a soldier and a hero, but her story is even less elaborated. I have encountered Ezili Je Wouj numerous times in Port-au-Prince and in New York City, when she blesses or admonishes members of congregations in spirit possession. Yet tellingly, the Ezili most associated with the Haitian nation is forever mutilated and silenced. Strong and central to Haiti's history, yet voiceless, Ezili Je Wouj “dramatizes a specific historiography of women's experience in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean” (Dayan 1994: 6; also cited in McAlister 2000).

The Spiritual Warfare movement tells a very different story here about Ezili, as we might imagine. Spiritual Warfare reveals that the spirit Ezili is an incarnation of “the Jezebel Spirit,” who has become the most powerful feminized force in Spiritual Warfare demonology. The movement's thinkers draw from scriptural passages in Revelation 2:20 in which Jesus says, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee: because thou suffrest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” A high-ranking demon in Satan's kingdom, Jezebel has been associated with the whore of Babylon, with feminism, and with prostitution and all sexual iniquities, as well as with idolatry and “the spirit of disobedience,” especially manifested in women (Pierce 2007: 129–30).

Gregory Toussaint, a Haitian American pastor based in Miami, absorbed the American pastors' interpretation of Jezebel and applied it to the Haitian case. In his book *Jezebel Unveiled* (2009), he traces Jezebel to the slave revolution. Although he misnames the Ezili (replacing Je Wouj with the better-known Dantò), according to him, Cecile Fatiman, the woman who sacrificed the boar at the Bois Caïman slave revolt, "was possessed with Erzulie Dantò (i.e., Jezebel) when she was doing the ceremony. . . . Therefore, at the ceremony of Bois Caïman, it was Erzulie Dantò (i.e., Jezebel) who got the pioneer of the nation to drink the pig's blood. In short, on that night, Haiti made a blood covenant with that spirit" (Toussaint 2009: 83). In a weeklong revival campaign called *Dezabiye Jezabel* (Unveiling Jezebel), Shalom, the largest church in Haiti, focused on the terrible temptress and her wily ways, encouraging its thousands of congregants to search their worldly behaviors and spiritual ties for signs of demonic influence (*pesekusyon*).

For Pastor Yvette's colleague Pastor Max, "the Spirit of Jezebel" and "the Queen of Heaven" (the Virgin Mary) are both identified with Ezili, who often comes to possess her devotees in a sensual, coquettish persona. (Evangelicals point out that various Ezili spirits were creolized with appellations of the Blessed Mother in Roman Catholicism, and this is further argument that Catholicism is also a demonically infused institution.) Pastor Max finds Vodou's emphasis on the mother-child dyad improper and unbiblical and writes that "the Jezebel spirit incarnates the mother-child religion, which gives to women the place of the heavenly Father and the role of creation (and fertility)" (Joseph n.d.: n.p.). Ezili is a direct counter to the male God and his divine son; her spiritual power represents a profound threat to developing forms of evangelical masculinity. For Pastor Max, Toussaint, and others, the rule of the Jezebel spirit is the root cause of Haiti's downward political and economic spiral. Just as Eve succumbed to the wiles of the devil in the garden, it was Cecile Fatiman, more actively than Boukman Dutty himself, who opened the gate to the enduring female demonic at Bois Caïman. Here the divine feminine is literally demonized, and on the female demon is laid the blame for the myriad problems of Haitian national history.

Evangelicals would like to change how Haitians practice marriage, as well as how they create families. In fact, official marriage relationships were fairly rare historically for many reasons, including African social

practices of polygamy and the dearth of Roman Catholic priests in the countryside. It was long common for men to have multiple “wives” and sets of children in systems of *plaçage* (common-law cohabitation). In the cities and among the wealthy, marriage was more common, but men were reported to keep mistresses and support second, “outside families” as a normal practice. Evangelicals (and other Christians) throughout the world understand adultery to be a sin, and for this reason they preach against polygamy, mistresses, and cheating, as well as against extramarital sex and non-heteronormative forms of sexuality. Third Wave evangelicals name “the demon of adultery” as a satanic force that is both inheritable and responsible for extramarital sex. Haitian converts often experience and depict the spirits of Vodou as active forces intent on ruining their marriages, steering them to illicit erotic encounters, rendering them impotent or infertile, or preventing them from having a peaceful family life. Haitian evangelicals preach a life of obedience to a Father God and his divine Son, a heterosexual marriage (without premarital sex), and male household leadership that is vulnerable to constant attack by inherited spirits/demons who must be fought using warfare prayer.

We can now see that evangelicals work to replace the extended family and its ancestral religious practices with a male-headed nuclear family solely worshipping Jesus Christ. In the process, they do away with the female spiritual power of the Ezili spirits (and others) and her multiple representations. The new evangelical nationalist script places blame for Haiti’s problems on a female spirit’s possessing of a female medium who committed an idolatrous sin and connects the fate of the nation to the fate of individual families. In turn, however, women are also potentially powerful agents of redemption for individuals and families—as long as they are working in the power of the Holy Spirit.

SISTER ROSE AND THE SURGICAL NEEDLE OF JESUS’S BLOOD

Women must be submissive to their husbands, as scripture instructs, and it is uncommon for a woman to take the role of pastor like Pastor Yvette. Still, male leadership in Pentecostal churches is often mitigated by the strong respect and authority women command, especially older women. For Pastor Yvette’s church in Port-au-Prince, women are profound agents of holy healing. Sister Rose is a prophet with a powerful gift

of intercessory prayer who considers herself “an employee of God.” In a country where medical care is prohibitively expensive, it is common for Pentecostals to engage Jesus-as-physician and seek faith healing, one of the charismata, or gifts of the spirit. I end this chapter with a glimpse of a powerful woman whose accomplishments rival those of medical doctors in the narratives of her community:

Amalie, a church sister, was married and had been pregnant numerous times but kept miscarrying at six months. As is often the case, the church sister had been to the doctor and received a medical diagnosis but had no means to pay for the recommended procedure—in this case, a cervical cerclage, or stitch to the uterus that would hold the fetus in place. At a deeper level of diagnosis, the family was convinced that a jealous neighbor was attacking Amalie’s pregnancies through sorcery. Amalie was born-again, but her faith was not strong enough to withstand the demonic attacks. Amalie’s mother saw in a dream that Sister Rose would save the baby. Together they shaped an understanding that, because Sister Rose was anointed with the gift of healing, through her the Holy Spirit was able to work to bring the baby to term. Sister Rose and her household (her husband and several cousins) acted radically in taking Amalie into their home for almost a year and acting as her caregivers. Amalie moved in with Sister Rose and they prayed together “morning, noon, and night.”

At the six-month mark Amalie started leaking amniotic fluid and began to cry and fret that she would miscarry once again. According to Sister Rose, “The Holy Spirit filled me and told me to do a cerclage. He said to take the blood of Christ as my needle and the amniotic water as my thread. He told me to sew up the womb. I declared in the name of Jesus that the baby would stay there until the ninth month.” With this stunning ritual performance “in the spirit,” Sister Rose assuaged the anxiety of the expectant mother. And indeed, Amalie carried the baby to term. Said Sister Rose, “On the day the baby was born God told me to prepare to receive a princess named Berakah, which means blessing. Truly they called me from hospital to say the baby was born.” After staying for four more months with Sister Rose, Amalie returned to her own home.

Sister Rose shows us that, much like the “big-man-ism” of charismatic male leaders who develop high status through their own skills networks (McAlister 2002), Pentecostal woman in Haiti can become power brokers, often through manifesting direct relationships with the Holy Spirit through prophecy and other spiritual gifts. The focus, of course, is always

on guiding converts in the principles of born-again life and in battling the demonic world. Women must still be submissive to their husbands, as scripture instructs.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In this portrait, we can see that race, gender, and Third Wave theology intersect to create an imagined diasporic Christianity in which men are heads of nuclear families; sons of the soil have the ultimate dominion and authority over the Christianizing and history-making of their own nations; and older schemes of racialized hierarchy festers in new logics. The essence of African ancestral traditions/spirituality is evil, and the feminine demonic is a particularly strong force of evil and enemy. Yet we can see that women themselves remain strong and empowered.

Pentecostals in Haiti and throughout the world are rewriting national histories that revise gendered nationalist ideals. The Christian male leader is the heroic and redemptive figure for both the nation and the family. And, of course, this has profound effects on the composition of households, the definition of the family, and gendered roles of everyday life for converts. The evangelical movement in Haiti follows global forms in arguing that the nuclear family, with the father at its head, is the most “biblical” form of kinship. In this sense, Haitian evangelicals align with political advocacy groups in the global Christian right that name a father, mother, and their biological children “the natural family,” to distinguish it from family configurations they believe to be ungodly (Buss and Herman 2003: 2). While in the United States the natural family is positioned against the “gay family” and households headed by single mothers, in Haiti the natural family is the preferred replacement for the extended family networks in the rural traditional family compound called the *lakou*. Not only does the *lakou* contain multiple family dwellings, but it also generally features both a family cemetery and a family spirit house. The extended family, the recently dead, and the spirits—including the *djab rasyal*—that live in the land and are inherited through family lines all make up the totality of the family *lakou*. Families are compelled to divorce their ancestral spirits and base their authority on Jesus Christ, as his heirs. We can see intersections of identity constructed in quite different

ways than they were in the past. In Haiti, as in other parts of the Americas, Pentecostals are rewriting the diasporic past and orienting themselves to the terms of a future Christian kingdom.

NOTES

- 1 The Third Wave has many names, including the Revival Movement and the New Apostolic Reformation; each carries nuances, but they overlap substantially. I use them interchangeably here.
- 2 The pastors' names are all pseudonyms.
- 3 The next lines of the slogan are "Encourage Local Women and Support Local Children," which encourages male leadership and female submission, as well as a paternal stance toward children.
- 4 In this narrative, the French, who began the chain of sin with racism and slavery, go unpunished, while the Africans, victims of French racism and slavery, are consigned to centuries of demonized misery (and then eternal damnation). Christians affirm this logic by saying that in biblical law, quite simply, idolatry breaks one of the Ten Commandments and constitutes a great sin, while slavery does not. This puzzle is a mysterious matter of the will of God.
- 5 Fatiman was a high-status mulatto woman married to Louis Pierrot, who served under the command of Jean-Jacques Dessalines and was a leader of the Battle of Vertières. Others say the manbo was not Fatiman but Manbo Marinette, who is now the spirit called Marinette.