

## “NOU KWE NAN SENTESPRI” (WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT): MUSIC, ECSTASY, AND IDENTITY IN HAITIAN PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

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Since the 1920s, Haiti has witnessed an evangelical movement characterized by the rapid growth of Protestant and Pentecostal churches (Jeanty 1989, 56). Despite persecution by the Catholic Church and a brief closure (1941–43) under President Elie Lescot, Pentecostal churches in Haiti continued to flourish in the 1940s and 1950s (Louis 1998, 197–198). When François “Papa Doc” Duvalier came to power in 1957, he began encouraging a greater influx of evangelical missions in an attempt to undermine the power of the Catholic Church (McAlister 2000, 3; Louis 1998, 156). By 1960, Protestants and Pentecostals comprised about twenty percent of the Haitian population, compared with only three percent in 1940.<sup>1</sup> Despite the persistence of the misleading adage “Haiti is 90 percent Catholic and 100 percent vaudou” (Dash 2001, 51), recent figures indicate that at the turn of the twenty-first century as much as one-third of the country self-identifies as Protestant or Pentecostal (Lain 1998, 72; Louis 1998, 197). Catholic churches have found perhaps the stiffest competition among Pentecostal organizations, such as the various Churches of God (e.g., Church of God in Christ, Church of God of Prophecy), and independent Pentecostal churches scattered throughout Haiti. Nevertheless, the rise of Pentecostalism and its profound impact on Haitian expressive

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1. Determining the percentage of Pentecostal churches in Haiti is notoriously difficult because so many are independent and undocumented. These statistics are taken from Lain (1998), who cites Mumper (1987).

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culture have yet to be adequately researched. Most ethnomusicological literature on Haiti examines the music of Vodou (Fleurant 1987; Wilcken 1992; Yih 1995; McAlister 2002) and, to a lesser degree, Haitian classical and popular music (Largey 1991; Averill 1993, 1997); but Haitian gospel music (*mizik evanjelik*) constitutes a realm of expressive culture that remains largely untapped by ethnomusicologists.<sup>2</sup> It seems that music made in Christian churches is assumed to lack the richness of the supposedly more “Haitian” genres. I hope to call this notion into question by examining the dynamic links among music, ecstasy,<sup>3</sup> and identity in Haitian Pentecostal worship.

Much of the existing ethnomusicological research on Haiti discusses *mizik Vodou* (Vodou music) as a means of serving the spirits (*lwas*). Fleurant (1987), Wilcken (1992), and Yih (1995) look at ways in which specific musical devices, such as distinct rhythms, dances, and lyrics, serve to induce spirit possession. A few Haitian writers, such as Belany (1998) and Romain (1986), offer historical and sociological treatments of Haitian Protestantism, but most scholars downplay the role of music in sustaining the evangelical revival throughout the Caribbean region. Conway’s dissertation (1978) contains very little discussion of music, yet it remains

2. Although there have been several general studies of the black church in the United States (e.g., Frazier 1964; Williams 1974; and Sanders 1996), and some ethnomusicological research on African-American gospel music (e.g., Boyer 1973, 1979; Williams-Jones 1975; Marks 1982; Burnim 1980a, 1980b, 1985; Stone 1986; Harris 1992; Boyer and Yearwood 1995; Ward 1997; and Hinson 2000), a comprehensive, booklength study of Pentecostal church music in a Caribbean context has yet to be conducted. Over the past decade, however, scholars have begun to devote greater attention to the global rise of Pentecostalism. Hollenweger (1997) provides a thorough synopsis of the Pentecostal movement as it has spread, during the twentieth century, from very few to approximately 500 million adherents. Poewe (1994) provides a global perspective in her comprehensive overview of Pentecostal charismatic churches. Other scholars have focused primarily on Latin American and Caribbean Pentecostal praxis. Studies that first began to appear in the 1960s, such as Damboriena (1963) and Lalive d’Epinay (1969), saw modernization and urbanization as contributing strongly to the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Chile and Argentina. The 1990s brought renewed scholarly interest, beginning with works by Martin (1990) and Stoll (1990), who critique the assumption that Pentecostal adherents are apolitical and point to sociopolitical factors related to the Pentecostal movement in Latin America. More recently, studies by Boudewijnse, Droogers, and Kamsteeg (1998), Gill (1999), and Smilde (1999) assess Pentecostalism within specific countries, finding social, political, and religious motives for conversion.

3. In this article, I use the term *ecstasy* to mean a temporary feeling of intense happiness and excitement that derives from Pentecostal musical worship. The process of achieving what I call an “ecstatic state” entails a sincere yearning to commune with God by using music as a means of “standing outside of oneself.” Thus, I draw on the Greek meaning of the term—*ex* (out) and *histanai* (to stand) (Reese 1980, 140)—in order to discuss how Pentecostal worshippers, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, sing and dance to offer musical praise to God. God responds by “blessing” worshippers to transcend corporeal bodies and experience the divine power and joy of the Holy Spirit during a church service.

the primary anthropological resource for research on Haitian Pentecostalism. Brodwin (1996, 2003) and McAlister (1995, 2000) are among the few scholars who have contributed insightful research on the topic. Brodwin (1996) deals with competition among the ethical systems of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Vodou as they relate to the practice of healing in rural Haiti. In a more recent essay, Brodwin (2003) explores Pentecostalism among Haitian migrants in Guadeloupe. Calley (1965), Toulis (1997), and Brodwin (2003) identify transnational issues surrounding Pentecostal practice, showing how marginalized Afro-Caribbean communities assert national, ethnic, and gender identities among dominant majority populations perceived as hostile. McAlister (2000) examines the influence of U.S. missions on both the historical development of Pentecostalism in Haiti and on contemporary debates concerning Haitian national identity.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues (also known as glossolalia or xenoglossy) lies at the heart of Pentecostalism and distinguishes Pentecostal churches from mainline Protestant denominations. Although Pentecostal congregations generally share this belief, the character of musical worship in Haitian Pentecostal churches varies significantly according to the type of service and church in which musical worship takes place. In this article, I will highlight the musical differences between independent “heavenly army” churches and organizational churches affiliated with a U.S.-based Pentecostal mission, both of which I attended in the town of Jacmel, located in Haiti’s southeastern department. I hope to bring these musical differences into sharp relief by describing two types of Pentecostal services: prayer and fasting services (*jenn* or *veydenwit*) in independent heavenly army churches and Sunday-morning worship services (*gran kilt*) in organizational churches. After focusing on these two types of worship services, I will broaden the scope of analysis to encompass Haitian Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn, New York, exploring how musical worship relates to its transnational context. I contend that in facilitating an ecstatic state of Christian worship, Haitian Pentecostal music serves a threefold task: it allows Pentecostals to assert distinct religious identities in relation to denominational Protestants, Catholics, and those who practice Afro-Haitian folk religion; it distinguishes independent and organizational Pentecostal churches; and it expresses a Haitian cultural identity<sup>4</sup> through the use of musical style, instrumentation, and language (French and Haitian

4. I concur with Averill (1994b, 157), who states, “When Haitians discuss Haitian identity, they generally are concerned with something that might best be termed national identity. . . . Because Haitian identity can be regarded as either national or ethnic depending upon the context, I prefer to employ the more general concept of cultural identity.”

Creole). In exploring the relationship between identity and ecstatic experience, I also stress the musical, social, and ideological criteria by which Haitians distinguish *mizik evanjelik* (gospel music), *mizik popilè* (popular music, containing Afro-Haitian folk rhythms), and *mizik mondenn* (worldly or secular music). Although at times I refer to African-American Pentecostal practice, this is not so much for the sake of direct comparison but to call attention to this project's dialogic and multi-sited<sup>5</sup> character and to reveal how my personal background—as an African American, a Pentecostal, and a scholar—informs my ethnographic representation of Haitian Pentecostal musical worship.<sup>6</sup>

### *Musical Worship as Weaponry in "Heavenly Army" Churches*

Since its successful war against France (1791–1804) to become the first independent black republic, Haiti has witnessed a tremendous amount of political instability, characterized by a series of coups d'état, presidential assassinations, and U.S. military interventions. Gage Averill and David Yih (2000) argue that this historical legacy contributes to an ethos of militarism in Haitian culture. Elizabeth McAlister (2000) extends this argument by showing how this ethos resonates with biblical themes of "spiritual warfare"—the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho and accounts of the children of Israel fighting to possess the Promised Land. The rise of Pentecostalism in Haiti and its overseas diaspora may indeed be related to the fact that "evangelical language centering on the advancing of Christ's army and Christ's eventual victory could be understood in the military terms already at work in the culture" (12). Military imagery surfaces frequently in African-American Pentecostal churches through songs such as "I'm on the Battlefield" and "I'm a Soldier in the Army of the Lord."

The success of Haiti's heavenly army churches in particular may stem

5. George Marcus (1998, 15) argues that when "existing affinities between the ethnographer and the subject of study" are projected "from the realm of the more personal to the delineation of more generic social-cultural problems, . . . a multi-sited canvas . . . emerges almost naturally." He continues: "Conventional controlled comparison in anthropology is indeed multi-sited, but it operates on a linear spatial plane. . . . In projects of multi-sited ethnographic research, de facto comparative dimensions develop instead as a function of the fractured, discontinuous plane of movement and discovery among sites as one maps an object of study and needs to posit logics of relationships, translation, and association among these sites" (86).

6. Although my first exposure to Pentecostalism came as a child in the late 1970s, I spent most of my youth as a member of a non-Pentecostal Nazarene church. I began seriously studying Pentecostalism in 1991 and have been heavily involved since 1992. My ongoing activities as organist and minister of music at Emmanuel Temple have provided me with a privileged vantage point from which to observe Pentecostal musical worship in an African-American congregation.

from the fact that Pentecostalism has been planted on cultural ground fertilized by the country's tumultuous military history. The term "heavenly army" (*lame selès*) usually refers to a battalion of spiritual entities empowered by God to wage war against Satanic forces. Although this battle is fought primarily in the spiritual realm, congregants who have been "filled" (*ranpli*) with the Holy Spirit or "have gifts of the Spirit" (*gen don Sentespri*) are the human vehicles through whom the power of God is manifested. These Spirit-filled individuals, known collectively as *manm solda* (soldiers), *pwofèt* (prophets), or simply *lame* (the army),<sup>7</sup> have been chosen by God to perform a variety of spiritual tasks. When "the army is working" (*lame ap travay*), it is understood to be engaged in intense song and dance intended to facilitate an ecstatic state of worship and to evoke powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The army's "work" also includes prophesying and healing during and after musical worship. Army members often serve as God's mouthpiece, prophesying in tongues to deliver messages to congregants or interpreting words spoken by God through the pastor. The heavenly army may also pray for those seeking deliverance from physical or spiritual afflictions, which can include extreme financial hardship (see Chestnut 1997).

In heavenly army churches, musical worship is a form of spiritual weaponry. Through divinely inspired singing, playing, and dancing, congregants praise God and implore him to intervene on their behalf. They may even call upon God to "attack" (*atake*) evil spirits and individuals who are the cause of misfortune, as in the song "Papa, Papa, Papa" (see Ex. 1). This chorus is usually repeated several times as a way of building musical intensity and emphasizing the meaning of the text. I heard it sung most often during the loudest and most intense moments of worship services, when singing and bodily movements were highly energetic and emotional. Some Pentecostals view this chorus, along with others like it, as a kind of "point song" (*chan pwen*) whose lyrics are inappropriate for Christian worship. Gage Averill's (1997, 15–16) definition of *chan pwen* is worth citing:

Songs that censure, recriminate, criticize, and cast aspersions (usually indirectly) are called *chan pwen*, which literally means "point song," and singers are said to *voye pwen* (send a point) in song or simply *chante pwen* (sing a point). . . . One meaning of *pwen* is a class of "magical" spells whose power works over distances. The art of *chan pwen*—which can imply sending an

7. Although some Haitians use the term *lame selès* or *lame* to refer to human beings, Pastor Yves (2001) of Deliverance Temple (a heavenly army church) explained, "When we talk about *lame selès*, we are not talking about people. We are talking about the Spirit of God." He believes that by sending back the Holy Spirit, along with the "gifts of the Spirit," Jesus has allowed the heavenly army to manifest itself through human agents in the church.

## Example 1. "Papa, Papa, Papa"

$\text{♩} \cong 144$

Pa - pa, Pa - pa, Pa - pa, a - ta - ke

moun ki pa vle wè'm yo. Gou-men ak moun kapfè'm la -

gè yo.

Father, Father, Father, attack those who despise me.  
Fight against those who make war with me.

This chorus is based on a Haitian Creole translation of Psalms 35:1. The Creole translation, which uses the verb *atake* (to attack), appears to be less faithful to the meaning of the original Hebrew word, *rîyb*, which is translated in the King James Version as "to plead (one's cause)" and in the New International Version as "to contend."

"opinion" or point of view in the midst of an argument or conflict, as well as sending the power of song against someone else—is part of the traditional musicopolitical arsenal of the musician.

One popular technique used in *chan pwen* is that of targeting an unspecified "they" (*yo*) rather than precisely identifying the intended recipient of the *pwen* (Averill 1997, 181). The Pentecostal *chan pwen*, "Yo vann mwen nan simitye," exemplifies this technique (see Ex. 2). The references in Example 2 to Afro-Haitian folk religion (e.g., *Bizango*, *Bawon*) suggest, without specifying any single individual, that the song is directed against those who attempt to attack the "army" of God through spiritual warfare. After each line sung by the soloist, the congregation responds with the phrase "Ame a pa bay mwen" ("The army doesn't give me [to them]"), celebrating the protective power of the army over those who try to "sell" the souls of army members to practitioners of witchcraft.

Heavenly army churches frequently use spontaneously improvised songs, most of which, as in "Yo vann mwen nan simitye," are led by the pastor (or designated songleader) in call-and-response fashion. Some slow songs express a particularly somber or plaintive mood and provide congregants a means of communicating to God feelings of despair and dependency. This type of song is sometimes called a *plent* (lament or "complaint" song). "Jezu Nazaret se ou menm map rele" is frequently

Example 2. “Yo vann mwèn nan simitye” (They Sell Me in the Cemetery), chanpwèn

$\text{♩} \approx 144$



1. Yo	vann mwèn — nan	si - mi - tyè.	A - me a pa	bay mwèn.	2. Yo
	vann mwèn — nan	Bi - zan - go.	A - me a pa	bay mwèn.	3. Yo
	vann mwèn — de - van	Ba - won.	A - me a pa	bay mwèn.	4. Yo
	vann mwèn — nan	gwo ka - fou.	A - me a pa	bay mwèn.	5. Yo
	vann mwèn — ko - te	yo vle.	A - me a pa	bay mwèn.	

### Call

They sell me in the cemetery.  
 They sell me to Bizango.  
 They sell me to Baron [Samdi]  
 They sell me in the big crossroads.  
 They sell me wherever they want.

### Response

The army doesn't give me [to them].

sung in a heavenly army church that I attended in Port-au-Prince (see Ex. 3). The leader improvises a line that is repeated twice by the congregation and followed by the recurring line “Ou pa wè m santi m angaje?” (“Don’t you see I feel distressed?”).

While many song types are employed in heavenly army churches, they all tend to revolve around the themes of prayer, praise, and worship as a means of drawing on the power of God to combat evil spiritual forces. Moreover, heavenly army congregants use music to distinguish themselves from other religious groups and to express a Haitian cultural identity. In the following section, I discuss one of the worship services that I attended in Jacmel as a way to shed more light on how music functions in heavenly army churches.

### *A Jenn at Deliverance Temple*

“Don’t call out to Patricia.<sup>8</sup> She won’t recognize you,” cautioned Junior as we made our way toward Deliverance Temple. Junior, age eleven, is Patricia’s younger brother, and on this day she had instructed him to accompany me to their church, located about a twenty-minute walk from the center of town. Just two weeks prior, I had engaged in the first of many conversations with Patricia about Pentecostalism. She spoke at

8. I have used pseudonyms for all Haitian churches and individuals, except where indicated.

Example 3. "Jezu Nazaret se ou menm map rele" (Jesus of Nazareth, It's You Who I'm Calling), plent

Call	Response
<p>1. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se ou menm map re - le. Je -                  2. Je - zu Na - za - ret, yo di'm pap janm an - yen. Je -                  3. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se pa - don map man - de. Je -                  4. Je - zu Na - za - ret, mwen le - ve men an - lè. Je -                  5. Se'w menm map re - le son pwo - blem mwen gen - yen. Se'w                  6. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se an - mwe map re - le. Je -                  7. Je - zu, Na - za - ret, se ko - te'w mwen vi - ni. Je -                  8. Lè mwen gen pwo - blem se ou menm mwen re - le. Lè</p>	
<p>zu Na - za - ret, se ou menm map re - le. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se ou                  zu Na - za - ret, yo di'm pap janm an - yen. Je - zu Na - za - ret, yo di'm                  zu Na - za - ret, se pa - don map man - de. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se pa -                  zu Na - za - ret, mwen le - ve men an - lè. Je - zu Na - za - ret, mwen le -                  menm map re - le son pwo - blem mwen gen - yen. Se'w menm map re - le son pwo -                  zu Na - za - ret, se an - mwe map re - le. Je - zu Na - za - ret, se an -                  zu, Na - za - ret, se ko - te'w mwen vi - ni. Je - zu, Na - za - ret, se ko -                  mwen gen pwo - blem se ou menm mwen re - le. Lè mwen gen pwo - blem se ou</p>	
<p>menm map re - le. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  pap janm an - yen. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  don map man - de. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  ve men an - lè. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  blem mwen gen - yen. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  mwe map re - le. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  te'w mwen vi - ni. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?                  menm mwen re - le. Ou pa wè'm san - ti'm an - ga - je?</p>	

- Call
1. Jesus of Nazareth, you're the one I'm calling.
  2. Jesus of Nazareth, they say I'll never be anything.
  3. Jesus of Nazareth, I'm asking for forgiveness.
  4. Jesus of Nazareth, I lift up my hands.
  5. It's you I'll call if I have a problem.
  6. Jesus of Nazareth, I'm calling "help!"
  7. Jesus of Nazareth, I'm coming next to you.
  8. When I have problems you're the one I call.

Response  
 Don't you see I feel distressed?

length about her experiences at Deliverance: how her mother had first taken her there as a young child, how she had decided at one point to leave Deliverance and “become Catholic,” and how she had only recently rejoined Deliverance and become “filled” (*ranpli*) with the Holy Spirit. Patricia also told me that she was one of seven “army members” (*manm lame*) in her church, each of whom had received spiritual “gifts” from God and was regularly expected to “work” (*travay*) during *jenn*. Scholars have explored the cultural concept of “work” as it applies to Afro-Haitian religious practice in particular (McAlister 2002, 85–111) and African diasporic spirituality in general (Murphy 1994). Most *jenn* at Deliverance take place during the day from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.; however, a *jenn* may also begin around 8 or 9 P.M., lasting until the early morning hours, in which case it is usually referred to as a “watch-night service” (*veydenwit*).

Patricia’s work during these services consists of spiritual warfare carried out through Holy Spirit-inspired song and dance; it was this work that Junior was now taking me to witness. As we trudged our way through sugarcane fields, sidestepped chickens and goats, and climbed up and down the rough dirt trails leading to the church, Junior’s gentle but surprising warning echoed in my mind: “Don’t call out to Patricia. She won’t recognize you.” Although Patricia and I had established a rapport based on the common ground of Pentecostal experience—and we shared a belief that God uses music to drive away evil spirits (see 1 Sam. 16:23), bring about divine healing, and spur an individual toward salvation—Junior’s words and the musical worship that I saw once we arrived attested to something with which I was considerably less familiar. At Deliverance Temple, musical worship helps army members achieve a level of spiritual transcendence<sup>9</sup> in which they are “outside of themselves,” completely undistracted by their physical environment, and temporarily free from normal bodily limitations.<sup>10</sup> Once this transcendent level is reached, army members are able to work effectively in the supernatural realm and may dance continuously for extended periods of time without showing signs of fatigue.

Neatly written in white chalk just above the wooden doorway to the

9. In describing various kinds of Pentecostal experiences, I find terms like “trance” and “possession” problematic because they attempt to universalize supernatural phenomena that are enormously diverse, at the expense of illuminating that which is specific to a given religious experience (see Rouget 1985). Moreover, I speak of “levels of spiritual transcendence” rather than “altered states of consciousness” to avoid implicitly locating the source of Holy Spirit infilling in human psychology and to foreground my belief in the validity of Pentecostal experiences in general.

10. During one of our conversations, Patricia mentioned to me that while “working,” young girls can perform feats requiring great strength, such as lifting individuals who weigh more than they ordinarily would be capable of carrying. She once remarked, “They can easily lift three people!”

church were the words “Nou kwe nan Sentespri. Tanpri mare tèt ou anvan ou antre” (“We believe in the Holy Spirit. Please tie your head before entering”).<sup>11</sup> As my eyes adjusted to the relative darkness of the church’s interior, I noticed that of the seventy-nine congregants that I counted, over eighty percent were women. The chairs and benches had been removed, and the congregants were seated on the floor with their backs against the walls. Since the service had only just begun, they were still singing slow hymns in a musical style that Haitian Pentecostals often refer to as *adorasyon* (worship). Pastor Yves was leading some songs in call-and-response fashion, singing a line of text that was repeated by the congregation. Unlike the previous lament song (“Jezu Nazaret”), the lyrics of which express utter dependency on God, asking him for desperately needed help, the song “Mwen beni non ou” (“I Bless Your Name”) praises God for deliverance from life’s difficulties:

Verse

Ala bon sa bon lè map sèvi Bondye.  
 Traka te chaje, se pou yon ti moman.  
 Pa genyen barye Letènèl pap kraze.  
 Se pou m beni non ou pou sa ou fè pou mwen.

Chorus

Mwen beni non ou. Mwen beni non ou.  
 Mwen beni non ou pou sa ou fè pou mwen.

Verse

How good is it when I am serving God.  
 There was a load of trouble, but only for a moment.  
 There is no barrier that God won’t destroy.  
 I must bless your name for what you’ve done for me.

Chorus

I bless your name. I bless your name.  
 I bless your name for what you’ve done for me.

After nearly an hour of *adorasyon*, consisting of unaccompanied slow- and medium-tempo singing, Pastor Yves announced, “We’re going to heat up a little.” By using the phrase “to heat up” (*chofe*), Pastor Yves signaled the instrumentalists to take their places up front while the rest of us<sup>12</sup> in the congregation prepared for the more energetic singing and

11. In most of the Pentecostal churches that I have attended in Haiti, as well as some in the United States, female church members are required to cover their heads during prayer and worship. In my own church in Brooklyn, as well as in most African-American churches with which I am familiar, this is not the case, as it is understood that a woman’s “hair is given [to] her for a covering” (1 Cor. 11:15).

12. I use first-person pronouns (“we” and “us”) when I recall experiencing myself as part

dancing that are part and parcel of a livelier, more up-tempo period of musical worship. At this point, the congregants still seated or lying half-asleep on the blankets were urged by the missionary ladies (*danm misyonè*)<sup>13</sup> to stand up and participate in the heated musical worship about to take place.

In studies of Haitian music, the concept of “heating up” is usually applied to events such as Vodou ceremonies, *rara* processions, Carnival, or popular music concerts (see Averill 1994a, 1997; Wilcken 1992), whose practices conflict with the beliefs of evangelical Christians. The goals of these events center on “heating up,” and the degree to which this occurs is often the criterion by which success is judged (Averill 1997, 22). In my interviews with Haitian Pentecostals, most expressed a preference for music that is *cho*, or “hot,” as opposed to the “cold” styles traditionally favored by Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian churchgoers. In both independent and organizational churches, “hot” styles of Pentecostal musical worship feature lively tempos, energetic use of the body, highly emotional singing, and constant, driving rhythmic accompaniment, all of which are geared toward evoking the felt presence of the Holy Spirit.

It is intriguing to note that both Pentecostal and Vodou practitioners speak of musical intensity in terms of *cho* (hot) and *fret* (cold), while also holding in common the belief that “hot” musical participation is a highly effective means of accessing supernatural power.<sup>14</sup> Despite this shared

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of those taking part in musical worship. I write in the third person (e.g., “the congregation”) when I remember feeling more like an observer than a participant. It should be noted that Haitian and African-American Pentecostals often practice varying degrees of participation during services, sometimes fully engaged in the proceedings and other times more emotionally removed, perhaps in order to perform ushering duties or play a musical instrument. If the ways in which I position myself seem inconsistent, this is emblematic of the ambiguity that I sometimes felt because of the cultural and doctrinal differences between this brand of Haitian Pentecostalism and African-American Pentecostalism as I have experienced it.

13. As their title suggests, “missionary ladies” take charge of outreach excursions to “spread the gospel.” They exert considerable power in most of the Pentecostal churches that I attended. Whereas all of the pastors that I met in Haiti are men, the overwhelming majority of congregants were women and girls. Beyond exercising musical influence through their singing and dancing, women often hold visible positions of leadership (e.g., missionary ladies, interpreter of tongues, and disciplinarians) and may even rival male pastors in their impact on how worship services progress. The role of women in Haitian Pentecostalism (and in Pentecostalism in general) is a topic worthy of further research.

14. This terminological similarity has unfortunately led some scholars (e.g. Conway 1978) to overestimate the *experiential* similarities between Pentecostalism and vodou. Even from a purely psychological perspective, the term “possession” is problematic. For example, Winkelman (1999, 412) notes that although “strong cross-cultural similarities . . . suggest a common basis, . . . a closer explanation of the phenomena grouped under the guise of possession illustrates variation and ultimately problems in assuming a unitary phenomenon.” In biblical usage, one is “possessed” with a demon but “filled” with the Holy Spirit.

emphasis on heated musical activity, however, Pastor Yves and other Pentecostal pastors frequently preach against involvement in Carnival, *rara* processions, and Vodou. Thus, even if Pentecostalism and Vodou can be said to converge at the level of musical intensity,<sup>15</sup> they diverge at the level of doctrine. Likewise, if Haitian Catholicism and Vodou tend to converge at the level of doctrine (see Greene 1993; Desmangles 1992), they diverge at the level of musical worship intensity. (Despite the indigenization of many Catholic liturgies after the second Vatican council in the 1960s, Haitians to whom I spoke regarded Catholic church music as “cold” compared with Pentecostal musical worship.) The Haitian religious landscape and its “politics of moral orders” (Austin-Broos 1997, 7–12) place Pentecostals in a somewhat peculiar position in the minds of many Episcopalians, Baptists, and other Protestants. These groups share with Pentecostals the belief that Jesus Christ is the resurrected Savior, yet they sometimes view Pentecostals with a certain discomfort and suspicion because of their heated style of worship.

The traditional musical instruments used at Deliverance Temple and in most of Haiti’s heavenly army churches—*graj* (scraper), *senbal*<sup>16</sup> (bass drum), *tambouren* (tambourine), and *batri* (mounted frame drums)—differ from those that I saw in organizational churches, where “modern” drum kits, electric keyboards, and guitars were prominent. Example 4 shows the basic pattern played by the *graj* and *senbal*, which lay the rhythmic foundation for improvisatory parts added by the *tambouren* and *batri*, as well as the singing that these instruments accompany. The use of traditional instrumentation serves both to heat up the worship services and also to signal a critical difference between heavenly army churches such as Deliverance Temple and organizational churches affiliated with U.S.-based missions.

As the congregants at Deliverance Temple stood up, the instrumentalists began to play, and Pastor Yves launched into a medley of songs that would continue for about forty-five minutes. Although versed hymns were sometimes sung during this portion of the service, on this occasion most songs contained only a few short lines that were sung in unison

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Therefore, I avoid the practice of using the term “possession” to denote religious phenomena occurring in both vodou and Pentecostal contexts.

15. By asserting convergence, I do not mean to imply a causal relation between vodou and Pentecostalism in Haiti. “Heating up” seems to be an indelible characteristic of many Haitian musical and expressive forms (McAlister 1995, 338). See Averill (1997, 21), citing Brown (1991), for a fuller discussion on how the notion of “heating up” relates to vodou, Carnival, and dance bands.

16. Although the same Creole word is used to mean “cymbal,” in a Pentecostal church context, *senbal* refers to the skin-covered drum often used during heavenly army church services.



When this period of heated musical worship ended, the testimony portion of the service began. When people “give a testimony” (*bay temwayaj*), it usually means that they recount a difficult situation from which God has delivered them. The purpose of testimonies is to give praise to God while encouraging other congregants to persevere through adversity, continue living for God, and stay strong in the faith. Five women and one man shared experiences with the congregation, after which Pastor Yves delivered another short sermon, followed by more singing.

The musical worship now took on a character similar to the *adorasyon* (i.e., unaccompanied slow-tempo singing) that took place at the beginning of the service. As the congregation sang, Pastor Yves called for the *manm solda* (army members or soldiers), all seven of whom were dressed in white, to come forward. Pastor Yves and the army members (four females and three males) then moved into the center of the space, where they joined hands, formed a circle, and began to rotate slowly in a counterclockwise direction. The service was now approaching its climax, as those of us in the congregation continued to sing songs inviting the Holy Spirit to descend (*desann*). It took only about five minutes of singing the chorus “Abiye mwen” (“Clothe Me”) for the army members to show signs of being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and some seemed already to have reached the level of transcendence at which the army was to do its work (see Ex. 5).

As the music heated up, some of the army members began to make loud, high-pitched noises by rapidly vibrating their lips, while others produced accented cries of “tya, tya, tya!” or “pya, pya!” I later asked Patricia, an army member, “Why do army members make those noises?” She responded by describing them as onomatopoeic devices that resemble the sound of gunfire: “Each person has a sound that they make. When a person shoots—that means when they make noise—that’s the way you know it’s the Holy Spirit and not just music. It’s something they do when a gift descends on a person. . . . When you shoot, it’s like having a weapon in your hand.”<sup>17</sup>

Patricia often used the verb “to shoot” (*tire*) when referring to the mak-

17. The notion that vocal sound is indicative of the Holy Spirit’s descent is similar, but not identical, to the doctrine stating that speaking in tongues represents the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism. Just as babies cry when born into the world, an individual speaks in another language when he or she experiences the “new birth” (i.e., is “born again”). Thus, in Apostolic Pentecostal churches like my own, the new birth is understood to entail Holy Spirit baptism. Patricia and I disagree, however, over the precise meaning of being “filled” (*ranpli*) with the Holy Spirit. She describes herself as having been filled but also says she has not yet spoken in tongues. Likewise, according to Patricia, once army members begin to shoot or display signs of transcendence, Pastor Yves understands them to be filled and ready to work.

## Example 5. "Abiye mwen" (Clothe Me)

1. A - bi - ye mwen, a - bi - ye mwen. A - bi - ye mwen, Le-tè-  
 2. Konso - le mwen, kon-so - le mwen. Kon-so - le mwen, Le-tè-

1. nèl, a - bi - ye mwen. A - bi nèl, a - bi - ye mwen.  
 2. nèl, kon-so - le mwen. Kon-so nèl, kon-so - le mwen.

1. Clothe me, clothe me. Clothe me, Lord, clothe me.
2. Console me, console me. Console me, Lord, console me.

ing of these vocal sounds, suggesting both a striking relationship between musical worship and spiritual warfare and also a sonic manifestation of Haitian militarism in a Pentecostal milieu. We sang "Abiye mwen" for about fifteen minutes, during which the army members released hands, stopped rotating in their circle formation, and began to imitate Pastor Yves as he led them in a simple, but more stylized, dance pattern. Leaning back slightly, the army members would simply kick outward with each leg as they hopped from one foot to the other in rhythm with the *senbal's* driving quarter-note beat. The rest of the congregation now assumed most of the singing duties, and the army members seemed focused entirely on following Pastor Yves' direction as he led them in Spirit-inspired dancing. As their dancing continued with increasing intensity, we began another medley of short choruses, beginning with "Papa Emmanuel" (see Ex. 6).

The singing and playing continued for about ninety minutes, sometimes ceasing temporarily as the army members danced, keeping a steady, audible rhythm with their feet. Very gradually, the dance steps slowed and Pastor Yves began to speak in tongues and pray aloud for various members of the congregation. As the dancing came to a halt, the atmosphere remained spiritually charged and two of the female army members began to *tire* loudly once again. (During other services at Deliverance, I often saw these vocalizations accompanied by a series of impressively quick pirouette-like moves done by Pastor Yves and the army members when the Spirit fell [*tonbe*] on them.)

Once the musical phase of the service came to a close, the rest of the afternoon was devoted to prophesying and healing. The heavenly army had successfully used musical worship to create an atmosphere in which God's delivering power could be manifested. The high volume of the

Example 6. "Papa Emanyel" (Father Emmanuel)

Pa - pa E - man - yel. Vo - ye Sen - te - spri.

Vin — pa - le a - ve'm. Lè a — ri - ve. ve.

(Vin — pa - le a - ve'm.) Lè a — ri - ve.

Father Emmanuel  
 Send the Holy Spirit.  
 Come talk with me.  
 The time has come.

music was now replaced by an expectant silence that was quickly broken when Pastor Yves announced "There's a person here for the first time who has a stomach sickness—an intense [hot] sickness. Come forward." When a woman came forward, Pastor Yves asked her a series of questions, after which he instructed her to return next week to receive an herbal remedy that he would prepare specifically for her. Later, Pastor Yves called on army members to pray with him for a woman tormented by an evil spirit. By effectively ministering to congregants' spiritual and natural needs, Pastor Yves demonstrated the multifaceted character of his pastoral role. For the saints at Deliverance Temple, musical worship had once again served as one of the invaluable weapons against the spiritual and natural enemies causing social misery.

*"Heating Up" through Songs of Hope in the Church of God*

Despite the popularity of heavenly army churches, most of the Haitian Pentecostals that I interviewed claim membership in the Church of God (*Legliz de Dye*).<sup>18</sup> Members of organizational Pentecostal churches proud-

18. The names of organizational Churches of God usually include the zone in which the church is located (e.g., Christ-Roi, Lasaline, Delmas, and so forth). During my fieldwork, it became evident that "Church of God" is used by many Haitians as a catch-all phrase to denote Pentecostal churches in general. In summer 2000, I spoke with a woman who said that she had grown up in a Church of God. Not until the following year did I learn that her church was an independent heavenly army church that only used the organizational title.

ly describe their music as *cho* (hot). Like their heavenly army counterparts, they experience music as an effective means of “heating up” the atmosphere with praise so that the Holy Spirit will descend. Music in the Church of God also facilitates an ecstatic state of worship that encourages congregants to trust in God despite the daily hardships of poverty and sickness, which pose a constant threat for many Haitians.

Notwithstanding the similarities between heavenly army and organizational churches, they have significant doctrinal and musical differences.<sup>19</sup> For example, organizational churches tend to frown upon Pentecostal “point songs” exemplified by “Papa, Papa, Papa.” During one service that I attended, Pastor Jean, who heads a Church of God in Port-au-Prince, urged his congregation, “Don’t sing as though you are sending a point against somebody!” Michel, a current Church of God member and former preacher, accompanied me to the service. He interpreted Pastor Jean’s remark to mean that songs should focus on praise and worship rather than on imploring God to “attack” (*atake*) individuals.

Another musical difference concerns instrumentation. Unlike the heavenly army churches that I visited in Jacmel and Port-au-Prince, organizational churches use musical instruments familiar to most American Pentecostals—drum set, electric keyboard, and guitars—or simply use hand clapping for accompaniment. Michel attributed this difference to the organization’s desire to distance itself ideologically and musically from heavenly army churches and their style of musical worship. I let Michel hear some of my recordings of heavenly army services, including *jenn* at Deliverance Temple. As a musician (he sings and plays flute), he appreciated the artistry involved but found the style of music problematic because “It’s like they’re singing *rara* music.” Michel (2001) elaborated:

*Michel:* They don’t believe the same way as us. It’s the way they operate, with manifestations of the Holy Spirit. There are a lot of things that they put in services that Pentecostals don’t believe in. For example, heavenly armies use instruments that the Church of God has a little problem with—for example, the *graj* [scraper]. We don’t use the *graj* in the Church of God.

*Melvin:* Why is that?

*Michel:* Because they say it’s an instrument—they see that *rara* bands usually use it.

Although there is some overlap in the song repertoires of both church

19. Many organizational church members to whom I spoke strongly disapprove of the use of heavenly armies and feel that the types of traditional healing practices they employ lack a sound biblical basis. Some Church of God members echoed the views of church leaders who feel that heavenly army churches worship “another spirit” (*yon lòt esprit*).

types that I attended, the organizational churches relied more heavily on *Chan desperans* (1995), a popular songbook used by many Haitian Protestants and Pentecostals. In it, songs are numbered and divided into sections according to language: 335 French-language hymns and 51 *choeurs français* (French choruses), followed by 145 Creole-language hymns and 80 *kè kreyòl* (Creole choruses). Over the years, *Chan desperans* has expanded to include five supplementary booklets, each of which also contains both French and Haitian Creole sections. Color-coded for convenience, these supplements are titled “Mélodies joyeuses” (“Joyful Melodies”), “Reveillons-nous” (“Let Us Awake”), “Haïti chante avec Radio Lumière” (“Haïti Sings with Radio Lumière”), “La voix du réveil” (“The Voice of Awakening”), and “Echo des élus” (“Echo of the Chosen People”).

In many ways, *gran kilt* in Haitian Churches of God resemble Sunday-morning services in African-American Pentecostal churches, in which congregational singing is a vital element. Unlike African-American Pentecostal churches, however, Haitian Churches of God do not generally provide hymnbooks. Each person must bring a *Chan desperans*, sing from memory, or share a hymnal with another congregant. During most *gran kilt*, the *dirijan* (director), who leads the congregational singing and acts as an emcee, announces the number and language (along with the supplement if one is used) of each selection before it is sung. For example, a *dirijan* might call out “number three, French” or “one hundred twenty-three, Creole.” In smaller churches where few congregants own a hymnal, selections from *Chan desperans* are sung from memory, and the *dirijan* is more likely to line out the verses.

Although most of the songs in *Chan desperans* are translations of European-American hymns, most Haitian Pentecostal congregations infuse them with a distinctly Haitian rhythmic feel. Containing lyrics but no musical notation, *Chan desperans* lends itself particularly well to multiple musical interpretations and facilitates the “Haitianization” of imported church songs. Some Haitian Pentecostals with whom I spoke assumed that popular hymns such as “Ala Bon Zanmi Se Jezu” (“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”) were Haitian compositions and were surprised to learn that such songs are also sung in the United States. I asked many Pentecostals who knew about the non-Haitian origin of most *Chan desperans* songs how they felt about so much of their church music being imported. Most felt that their use of Haitian languages (Creole and French) and *konpa* (Haïti’s popular dance rhythm) allows them to express a distinctly Haitian experience, even if their church music originates elsewhere. Many scholars observe that imported hymnody may even provide a means of resisting hegemonic powers. Philip Bohlman (1997,

72) calls into question the “usual historiography of missionary hymnody,” in which “both religion and music assume the forms of systems, which compete for adherents and must supplant other religions and music or be totally supplanted in any given society.” Hymnody, he adds,

is not just an object or bounded repertory. Quite the contrary, it serves as the basis for musical practices that express individual and community differences. In the moment of performance, hymns pass from the ownership of a colonial religious institution into the local religious practices (Draper 1982). Ownership has passed from the colonizer to the colonized, who transform music into a means of responding to domination. It is precisely for these reasons that missionary hymnody becomes one of the most important sites for resistance in the contested domains of colonialism.

Pastor Jean, who heads a Church of God in Port-au-Prince, often encouraged my study of Haitian Pentecostal music by affirming that “it deserves much research because when you hear it, . . . you can discern that there is a local color within it” (Pastor Jean 2001). Pastor Jean specifically mentioned vocal style and the use of Haitian rhythmic accompaniment as evidence that Haitian Pentecostals are doing much more than simply imitating foreign musical worship styles. Although Pastor Jean did not elaborate on the characteristics of a Haitian vocal style, I noticed two tendencies on the part of many Haitian Pentecostals and Protestants. First, singers often maintain a full-throated chest voice in the extreme upper register rather than switch to a falsetto head voice (as is more frequently done in African-American congregational singing I have heard). Second, an audible nasalization is often employed, much like that found in Haitian Creole words such as *mwen*, *genyen*, *anyen*, and *lontan*, in which the vowel preceding the letter n is nasalized. Several Haitian Pentecostals in Port-au-Prince to whom I spoke feel that the nasal style of singing is exaggerated in the countryside. Both the nasal and full-throated styles seem most commonly used by female congregants, who almost always outnumbered males in the churches that I attended. These styles are disparaged as unrefined by some members of the more elite classes, who gravitate toward the more “respectable” Catholic and Episcopalian cathedrals and mainline Protestant churches. See Austin (1983, 232) and Gmelch and Gmelch (1997) for discussions of the relationship of Pentecostalism and “respectability” in Jamaica and Barbados, respectively.

In terms of instrumental rhythmic accompaniment, the organizational churches that I attended often used the drum-set rhythm notated in Example 7, which two Haitian Pentecostal friends labeled a “march.” (Upon listening to one of my recordings of this drum-set rhythm used in a Pentecostal church, another friend said that he did not know precisely

Example 7. "March" rhythm

Hi-hat  
Cymbal

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

⊗ = Half-open

what to call it; he insisted, however, that he would recognize it as *mizik evanjelik* [gospel music], even without the lyrics.) Often, songs are sung in medley fashion, initially in French but quickly moving to Creole. As the level of musical intensity increases (i.e., singing and playing becomes louder, and bodily movements become more energetic and emotional), the rhythmic accompaniment shown in Example 7 gradually moves toward the *konpa* pattern, characterized by the *kata* rhythm played on the cymbal, shown in Example 8. This *konpa* pattern differs, however, from the standard *konpa-dirèk*—performed by popular dance bands such as Tabou Combo, Skah-Shah, Tropicana, T-Vice, and Sweet Mickey—in that the *tanbou* (skin-covered drum) and *graj* are usually absent from the former. The absence of these instruments, along with the presence of gospel lyrics, has led some Haitians to use the term *konpa-Jezu* when referring to the use of *konpa* in a Christian church.

Instrumental rhythmic accompaniment in organizational Pentecostal churches is almost always supported by hand clapping.<sup>20</sup> During fast-tempo songs (about eighty half-notes per minute), congregants often clap on beats one and three, especially if the "march" rhythm is being played by the drummer. As the music heats up, and people begin to feel the presence of the Spirit, hand claps emulate the *kata* cymbal pattern (see Ex. 8) that a drummer may or may not be playing. The song "Pa bay Satan glwa" ("Don't Give Satan Glory"), which I recorded at Good Shepherd Assembly, an organizational church in Jacmel, is an example of one such song (see Ex. 9).

"Pa bay Satan glwa" is one of many Haitian-composed church songs that are not found in *Chan desperans*. Nevertheless, in terms of repertory and instrumentation, the organizational churches that I attended lean more heavily on "imported" styles of music than do independent heavenly army churches. Imported styles include American popular musics

20. To my surprise, there was less hand clapping in the heavenly army churches that I attended. Because of the more stylized dancing, however, the feet may actually play a relatively larger role in these churches.

Example 8. Konpa-Jezu pattern

o = Half-open

Example 9. "Pa bay Satan glwa" (Don't Give Satan Glory)

Pa bay Sa - tan glwa. Se Le - tè -  
 nèl pou'm bay glwa. — Pa Map chan -  
 te, map chan - te, map chan - te Map chan - te an-mou Pa -  
 (swa, be - ni swa Le - tè - nèl.)  
 pa'm gen - yen pou mwen. — Be - ni mwen.

Don't give Satan glory. I must give the Lord glory. (sung twice)  
 I will sing, I will sing, I will sing  
 I will sing of the love my Father has for me.  
 Blessed, blessed by the Lord.  
 I will sing of the love my Father has for me.

that some Haitians refer to as *wòkenwòl* (rock and roll) and *slo* (slow), as well as *mizik afrikenn* (African music), *mizik laten* (Latin music), and *rege* (reggae). However, the apparent hegemony of foreign missions provides a powerful means for many Haitian Pentecostals to appropriate imported songs and instruments for the purpose of heating up, achieving an ecstatic state, and experiencing a distinctly Haitian brand of musical worship.

### *The Gran Kilt at Good Shepherd Assembly*

In summer 2000, when I first started worshiping with the saints<sup>21</sup> of Good Shepherd Assembly in Jacmel, the church was in a period of transition. Still awaiting the completion of a new building, Pastor Rene and his congregation were temporarily holding services in an elementary school classroom with a seating capacity of about sixty. On Sunday mornings, this classroom—equipped with wooden benches, desks, a long chalkboard, and a few educational posters—was transformed into a Pentecostal sanctuary. This particular Sunday was no exception. When I arrived around 9:50 A.M. some of the missionary ladies were sitting prayerfully, waiting for the service to begin. As usual, they greeted me with a salutatory nod. After taking my seat on a bench-turned-pew in the back row, I got out the necessary “equipment”: first my Bible and *Chan desperans* and then, as discreetly as possible, my minidisk recorder and microphone. Although Pastor Rene had given me permission to record the church services, I sometimes felt awkward recording services while participating in them.<sup>22</sup>

The service began with a slow hymn found in *Chan desperans*: “Paske L vivan,” a Creole translation of “Because He Lives,” with which I was familiar. (The words to this hymn are found in the “Reveillons-nous” section of the hymnal, number sixty-nine, Creole.) After eight minutes, the song ended, and a Scripture passage (John 14:1–14) was read. Another slow hymn followed, after which the *dirijan* recited a few verses from the book of Proverbs. We then knelt in collective prayer for about two minutes, during which each saint spoke aloud, making his or her requests known to God. This was followed by a simple chorus, “Alelouya, alelouya, alelouya, amen,” which was repeated several times as congregants were told to “wave [your] hands to worship God.” Next came a Creole translation of the hymn “The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power.” When this hymn concluded, the *dirijan* read another Bible passage before

21. The term *saints* denotes the body of baptized believers who have been “set apart” or “sanctified” for God’s purpose.

22. My conception of fieldwork is partly informed by Barbara Tedlock’s (1991) discussion of “observant participation.”

introducing Pastor Rene, who gave a general welcome, made announcements concerning upcoming services, and reported on the status of the ongoing building project. Pastor Rene then prayed and turned the service back over to the *dirijan*, who cried out, “Ede m di ‘Beni swa Letènèl!” (“Help me say ‘Blessed be the Lord!’”). The additional praise phrases gradually increased in volume as each was spoken first by the *dirijan* and then by the entire congregation: “Alelouya!” (“Hallelujah!”), “Mèsi, Senyè!” (“Thank you, Lord”), “Glwa a Jezu!” (“Glory to Jesus!”), “Glwa a Sentespri de Dye!” (“Glory to the Holy Spirit of God!”).

The time had now come to begin heating up the atmosphere with livelier music. With renewed vigor, the *dirijan* launched into a few Creole-language hymns that most congregants knew by heart. As singing grew more enthusiastic and rhythmicized, bodily movements became more demonstrative as some congregants jumped in place and waved arms back and forth while singing. Although at the time, Good Shepherd Assembly had no drummers, the congregants’ hand clapping intensified to provide a driving rhythmic foundation for the musical worship. The *dirijan* now moved into a medley of repeated choruses, beginning with “Pa bay Satan glwa,” followed by “Se Letènèl ki Towo” (“It’s the Lord who is the bull,” the bull being symbolic of great power), “Lè map pale ak Papa m” (“When I talk to my Father”), and “Amen, alelouya” (“Amen, hallelujah”). The lyrics of the latter three choruses are shown in Example 10.

After about twenty minutes, this final phase of musical worship came to an end as the *dirijan* once again cried “Beni swa Letènèl!” followed by a series of other praise phrases. After we took our seats, an offering was collected, and Pastor Rene began his sermon. With the felt presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, we were now prepared to receive the Word of God.

### *Cultural and Religious Identities: Negotiating Haitian Pride and Christian Faith*

Just before starting my fieldwork in the summer of 2000, I told Elder Armstrong, a young visiting preacher at my church in Brooklyn, New York, about my plans to do research in Haiti. As if to warn me, he immediately replied, “Oh, that’s *voodoo* country.” I suppose his response was not really unusual; for most people living in the United States, the mere mention of Haiti brings to mind Afro-Haitian folk religion, generally labeled “voodoo,” if not one of Hollywood’s sensationalist caricatures of it. But I continue to be disheartened that so many people are taken aback by the idea of going to Haiti to study something other than a Vodou- or

Example 10. "Ki es ki Towo a?" (Who Is the Bull?), "Lè map pale ak Papa m" (When I Talk to My Father), and "Amen, aloulouya" (Amen, hallelujah)

Ki es ki to - wo - a Se Le - tè - nèl Ki to - wo  
 ki ef ki to - wo - a Se Le - tè - nèl ki to - wo (lè)  
 map pa-le ak Pa - pa'm Pa - pa'm re-le m pam lè map pa-le ak Pa -  
 pa'm ken - be'm pou'm pa ton - be. (Lè) A - - -  
 men (a - le - lou - ya) A - - - men (a - le - lou - ya)  
 A - - - men A - - - men A - - - men

Who is the bull? The Lord God is the bull

When I talk to my Father, my Father calls me "mine."  
 When I talk to my Father, He keeps me from falling.

Amen, hallelujah. Amen, hallelujah. Amen, amen, amen.

Carnival-related topic. While formulating my research plan, and even during fieldwork, I met several people who openly questioned whether Haitian church music could possibly be "rich enough" to warrant serious study. Even some Haitians scoffed at the idea, doubting whether anything "truly Haitian" could be found in a Protestant or Pentecostal church. These discourses on the relationship of Haitian identity to religious practice set the stage for my initial forays into Haitian Pentecostalism and continued to shape many of my interactions in Haiti.

The unfortunate downside of the celebration of Afro-Haitian "folk" culture—which seems a necessary response to negative stereotypes perpetuated by television and film—is that it has allowed one-sided por-

trayals of Haitians to go uncontested. Little has been done to problematize the kinds of remarks made by Elder Armstrong, which remain typical in the United States and underscore a prevailing ignorance of the religious diversity of Haiti's seven million people. However, many Haitian evangelicals are countering the pigeonholing of Haitians as *voudouwizan* (Vodou worshipers) by defining, in their own ways, what it means to be Haitian. During a debate that I once sparked concerning the defining characteristics of Haitian culture, a defiant young Pentecostal man interjected, "Vodou is only *part* of Haitian culture!" His assertion came in response to the notion that Vodou is emblematic of the Haitian people. I asked Haitian composer Emile Desamours (his real name),<sup>23</sup> a Baptist, whether he saw any contradiction between self-identifying both as Haitian and Christian. In his response, Desamours (2000) echoed the sentiments of numerous Haitian Christians to whom I had posed the question:

Some say that there is only one kind of Haitian. Cultural authorities would tend to have people believe that Haitians must be involved with *lwa*, vodou—things like that. No, it is not true, because a culture is something that starts in one place, in one point, but it develops; it becomes broader. Everywhere, each year, it gets wider. . . . Music also broadens . . . because man doesn't live alone. People are citizens of the *world*, not isolated. It's not 1492 anymore. Europeans didn't know America existed, understand? . . . In Haiti, . . . we can say we have all kinds of things, all kinds of music. Religious music has American influence, English influences. . . . This makes for enriching. . . . Also, the gospel has been preached [in Haiti] for almost two hundred years! So, it's normal that Christianity has now entered in Haitian culture. In Haitian culture, you find vodou, [but] you also find Christianity. So there's not a single tendency that we have—not only vodou.

During the course of my fieldwork, I quickly learned that an easy way to start conversations is to ask about the kinds of music suitable for Christian worship. My inquiries about Pentecostals' perceptions of "worldly music" and about the appropriateness of a given genre in the worship service rarely failed to yield a funny story, a spirited discussion, or a heated debate. Philippe, a Haitian Pentecostal, recounted an incident that he claims took place in his organizational church in Port-au-Prince.

23. Emile Desamours has earned an international reputation as a versatile composer and arranger. He composes, among other things, gospel music (*mizik evanjelik*) using traditional Haitian peasant rhythms. At least two of his pieces are commercially available in the United States through Mark Foster Publishing: "Papa Nou" ("Our Father") and "Nowèl Ayisyen" ("Haitian Christmas"). His music has been performed in concerts in Haitian churches and by a number of university choirs in the United States, including Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Bradley University in Illinois. I thank Dr. John Jost for initially bringing Desamours' work to my attention.

The story was about a former *voudouwizan*, who, upon converting and joining the church, was invited to sing a solo during a Sunday-morning service. Having no prior experience in church, the man began to sing the only thing that he could recall, which was a song used to evoke one of the *lwa* during a Vodou ceremony. The pastor, evidently caught off guard, had forgotten about the man's past involvement with Vodou and stood up in alarm after hearing the first few words of the song. He quickly motioned for the man to stop singing, after which the bewildered new convert was hurriedly escorted back to his seat. The popularity of these types of stories illustrates a Haitian tendency to toy with notions of appropriateness and to take pleasure in participating, even vicariously, in actions that disrupt or subvert societal norms. Whether Philippe's humorous account is fact or fiction is less important than what it reveals about Haitians' keen awareness of how music relates to the social and religious contexts in which it is performed and experienced. Although this story was a source of laughter, Haitian Pentecostals also expressed very serious attitudes about the styles of music that they feel are appropriate for worship services. This seriousness stems largely from the fact that Pentecostal music styles reflect more than the aesthetic preferences of worshipers. Their ability to achieve ecstasy through musical participation and to find the inspiration needed to persevere through life's hardships is at stake.

Congregations self-identifying as "Pentecostal" usually share a belief that music may be used to heat the atmosphere so that the Holy Spirit will "descend." Music also helps congregants to become emotionally involved in the service and more receptive to preaching. There are, however, strong differences of opinion regarding musical appropriateness, which account for stylistic diversity among various types of Pentecostal churches. For many Pentecostals, the use of *konpa* (or *konpa-Jezu*) and lively music is precisely what distinguishes their musical worship and lends it an undeniably Haitian character. When church music is *cho*, explained Stephanie (2000), a Pentecostal, age fifteen, "it goes into my blood." Nichole (2000), a choir member from a Church of God of Prophecy in Port-au-Prince, viewed the use of *konpa* as deeply related to her identity as a Haitian: "*Konpa* is the Haitian soul. . . . Even if [the musicians in my church] don't rehearse it, or say that the rhythm is *konpa*, as soon as you hear them play you sense that it is a rhythm that is more or less elevated, and it goes with the *konpa* rhythm. . . . Even if the message is not gospel, as soon as *konpa* is played, you feel as though you are in your skin."

Others, however, feel that *konpa* is too "hot" to handle, deeming it inappropriate because of its "worldly" associations with nightclubs and popular dance bands. During one spirited debate on the topic in June 2001,

Jean-Claude, a man who claimed no religious affiliation, exclaimed, "As soon as I heard *konpa* in a church, I'll do a nice little *gouyad*!" The term *gouyad* denotes a popular dance involving a rolling of the pelvis or a grinding of the hips, and the idea of performing a *gouyad* in church suggests an egregious transgression of sacred space. By deliberately making such an irreverent remark, Jean-Claude succeeded in evoking laughter while underscoring a fundamental difference between Christian and non-Christian contexts. Events related to Carnival and *rara* are immensely popular, but Haitian Pentecostal pastors preach vehemently against involvement in them, in part because of the obscenity (*betiz*) with which they are associated. Objections to *konpa* often stem from an unwillingness to risk sexually suggestive use of the body in worship. Joseph, who grew up attending a Church of God, confirmed that, for some, *konpa* lends itself too easily to inappropriate types of bodily movement:

Because *konpa* tends to cause people to move their bodies in a "vulgar" fashion, *mizik rasin* [roots music] is more appropriate [for church], perhaps, because it spurs people to jump up. It's not vulgar. [But] when you play *konpa* people have another tendency. . . . People prefer another kind of body movement. *Konpa* isn't fast enough to really jump up. But with *rasin* or rock, you can jump up. Rap, too, [and] perhaps African music. We have a greater tendency in these musics to jump for God. It's "hot" [*chofe*] so it makes you want to jump [*sote*]. (Joseph 2000)

It is interesting to note that the terms that Averill (1994a, 223) uses in his description of "carnival exuberance" suggest both similarities (*chofe*, *balanse*, *mete men nan lè*, *sote*) and differences (*anraje*, *gwiye*, *souke*) between the *koudyay* (celebratory) enthusiasm of Carnival and the ecstasy of Pentecostal musical worship:

The peak of carnival exuberance—the ambiance of carnival in its final days on the road—is known as *koudyay* (French, *coup de jaille*, a spontaneous bursting forth). . . . Carnival and *koudyay* enthusiasm, an intersubjective peak experience, is described in terms such [as] *debòde* (overflowing, exuberant, furious), *anraje* (worked-up, turned-on, crazy, enraged), or the colorful *anty-outyout* (exuberant, excited). Carnival participants achieve these states in a progression of escalations involving music and movement. Musicians try to *chofe* (heat) the crowd with exhortations to physically respond. Revelers are encouraged to *lage ko-w!* (let go of yourself!), *mete men nan lè* (put hands in the air), *balanse* (sway), *bobinen* (spin), *souke* (shake), *vole* (fly), *gwiye* (grind the hips), and *sote* (jump).

Pentecostal churches affiliated with the Body of Christ (*Corps de Christ*), a U.S.-based mission, avoid *konpa* altogether in favor of styles that Haitians describe as "gospel," "slow," and "rock and roll." David, a musi-

cian in a Body of Christ church called Solid Rock, lamented the absence of *konpa* from his church's worship services. He saw the use of "American" music as indicative of the "adaptations" that Haiti has had to make in exchange for U.S. financial support:

There is a problem with American influences. . . . It is the United States who is our aid. . . . We have made a series of adaptations to other nations. Some, like the United States, are closer to us than others. This leads to a transmission from the United States to Haiti. It's hard for our church music to evolve. We adapt ourselves more so to American music. For example, we especially sing gospel music; we sing rock and roll, slow. . . . We do not sing *konpa*. *Konpa* is a problem. . . . It is another rhythm. . . . We are more adapted to American styles. . . . Everything we sing is in the American style. We sing the same songs you sing in the United States. (David 2000)

According to David, most congregants at Solid Rock actually *prefer* to sing American music and are uncomfortable with *konpa*, which they believe is "for the world." The fact that Body of Christ churches eschew *konpa* and espouse "American" styles of music does not necessarily mean that they equate the terms "American" and "Haitian" with opposite ends of a moral continuum. Nevertheless, I did notice a tendency on the part of some Haitian evangelicals to see the economic prosperity of the United States as proof of God's favor. These same evangelicals tend to attribute Haiti's economic and political woes to the prevalence of Vodou. Such explanations (which are incomplete at best) continue to be perpetuated, although they not only underestimate the historical and present-day impact of global power and racism but also promote the false view that the relative lack of Vodou in the United States makes Americans morally superior to Haitians. The exclusive use of American musical styles by Pentecostal churches in Haiti may exemplify hegemony (in a Gramscian sense of the term), defined as "winning the consent" of a subordinated group (Gramsci 1971). Many Haitian Pentecostals with whom I spoke expressed a preference for "American" styles of music in church and have developed a deep emotional attachment to some English-language hymns; they saw no contradiction in stating also that they are proud to be Haitian. Rather than dismiss such sentiments as a by-product of U.S. cultural or ideological domination (see Hall 1986), I feel it important to consider the voices of Haitians who reject the notion that their use of "American" music comes at the expense of "Haitianness." David is one of a few church members who is dissatisfied with the musical worship at Solid Rock and wants to explore different styles of music. To gain musical fulfillment and professional exposure, he has recently formed his own

gospel band, comprised of members from Solid Rock and another *konpa*-using organizational Pentecostal church.

Although Body of Christ churches do not use *konpa*, they can still be differentiated from denominational Protestant churches. For example, Haitian Baptist churches tend to favor slow-tempo singing with absolutely no rhythmic accompaniment in the way of drums or hand clapping. One young Baptist woman in Port-au-Prince spoke to me about the frustrations of her church's teenagers, many of whom have recently left to find a church where the music is "hotter."

Henri, musical director at True Vine Assembly (another Body of Christ church), cited musical style and Pentecostal experience as the key distinguishing elements of his church:

Our church does not sing the way other churches do. We are always happier in the way we praise because people in the Body of Christ usually have the Holy Spirit. We usually speak in other tongues. We don't function the same way as other churches. [For example,] we don't use *Chan desperans*. All of the songs are biblically based. We can take a biblical passage and do several things with it. . . . We don't use *konpa*, but we often have music that's hot and gay [or lively]. (Henri 2000)

I am intrigued that, for Henri and the saints at True Vine, the absence of *konpa* and the prevalence of "American" music do not prevent "heating up" from occurring. On the contrary, the introduction of *konpa* into the worship service would likely have a "cooling down" effect, caused by the congregants' discomfort and perceptions of inappropriateness. Although Henri stated that he is proud to be Haitian, has a deep respect for Haitian culture (*kilti ayisyen*), and appreciates many styles of music, he recognizes, "I cannot arrange music that I know will give the people problems and give the pastor problems." For Henri, the goal of "heating up" is too important to be compromised for the sake of more "Haitian-sounding" musical worship. Given his sense of Haitian pride, I asked him if he felt any personal dilemma in having to curb his musical creativity in order to stay within his church's musical comfort zone. His response indicated some of the fascinating complexities involved as Haitian Christians negotiate religious and cultural identities:

*Henri:* Even if I like some things, I can't do them. My compartment cannot lead me any place. Also, I am a musician; I cannot play anywhere, like taking my instrument into a *perestil* [Vodou temple] to play. I don't know what is to gain from that. God takes no pleasure in that if I do it. I know that is true.

*Melvin:* Is it difficult sometimes?

*Henri*: No. I have no problem. The Bible is greater than anything else that exists. Even if I make music professionally, . . . the Bible tells me that I have a limit. Even if I *know* that vodou is a cultural thing—part of my culture—I know I cannot go in a *perestil* and play because God would not be pleased. (Henri 2000)

Henri feels his identity as a converted Christian has the most influence on his values, actions, and musical choices. Although he rejects the notion that being Pentecostal somehow makes him “less Haitian,” he does feel strongly that certain aspects of Haitian culture are necessarily off-limits to him. Henri also expresses a sense of Haitian pride, but his statements imply a privileging of his religious identity as a Pentecostal over his cultural identity as a Haitian. His use of American-style music serves to foreground a Haitian Christian identity that enables him to distinguish himself from unconverted Haitians who play “worldly” dance band music.

Emile Desamours (2000) expressed similar ideas using somewhat different terms. For him, the important point is that Haitian culture has absorbed a multiplicity of elements over time, including Christianity, and is continually becoming “broader” as it develops. Desamours stressed the idea of an inclusive Haitian culture and uses church music as a means of expressing Haitian identity.

Neither individual views his Christian and Haitian identities as mutually exclusive; however, Desamours’ Haitian identity subsumes his Christian faith, whereas Henri’s Christian faith subsumes his Haitian identity. In a study of cultural change among Native American converts to Christianity, Luke Lassiter (2001, 348) laments, “Our scholarly descriptions and understandings of these changes . . . have been largely (but certainly not entirely) dictated by academically-positioned models, models like ‘assimilation’ that emphasize broad sweeping changes and ignore the deeper experiential complexities that have emerged from this multi-dimensional encounter.” Likewise, Amy Stillman (1993, 97) looks at the ways that “Polynesians have accepted and molded Christian belief and worship within uniquely Polynesian frames of experience.” I consider the espousal of Pentecostalism and the use of “imported” music by Haitians like David and Henri to be more than simply unfortunate by-products of U.S. cultural hegemony. Although I regret the absence of *konpa* in Body of Christ churches and strongly disagree with the ethnocentric beliefs and practices of some missions, I also strive toward an understanding of the “deeper experiential complexities” of a Haitian Pentecostal practice. For me, this involves coming to grips with the Haitian capacity to appropriate<sup>24</sup> imported styles of church music. For the saints at True Vine

24. I draw on Paul Ricoeur’s notion of appropriation as “understanding at and through distance,” to “make one’s own” that which was initially “alien” (Ricoeur 1981, 143, 185).

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Assembly, appropriating “American” music is an effective means of experiencing the ecstasy of the Holy Spirit and asserting identities as Haitians who are most fundamentally Pentecostal believers.

*Haitian Nationalism and Pentecostal Musical Worship in Brooklyn*

It is difficult to discuss Pentecostalism in Haiti without also examining the transnational social field in which it is embedded. The Haitian diaspora constitutes a major social, political, and cultural force, and the expressive culture of Haitians living in the United States participates—as do the people themselves—in transnational flows to and from Haiti. These transnational flows have resulted in the “Caribbeanization” of New York City (Sutton 1987, 16), while spawning no fewer than 116 Haitian Pentecostal Churches of God in the United States and Canada since the 1960s (Michel 2000, 105).

Although some scholars argue that contemporary flows of people, goods, expressive cultures, and media signal the declining significance of the nation-state, Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron (2001, 270) offer a refreshing account of “subaltern long-distance nationalism” showing that nation-states, as well as nationalist discourses, continue to merit serious attention. According to Glick Schiller and Fouron, a Haitian long-distance nationalist is one who “identif[ies] with and become[s] committed to building a nation-state which extends beyond the borders of Haiti” (176). The authors also state that “wherever Haitian long-distance nationalists think they belong, and however they identify, as transborder citizens they actually participate in both the Haitian and U.S. political systems” (20–24). The authors focus on the experiences of Haitians living both in Haiti and the United States, presenting a view of transnationalism “from below” (Guarnizo and Smith 1998, 3) and drawing on James Scott’s (1990, 4) notion of “hidden transcripts” to posit that nationalist viewpoints are expressed in multiple forms as a way of seeking social justice.

Speaking of music in this context, Bohlman (1997, 72) comments, citing Scott (1990), that “hymns afford what James Scott has called ‘hidden transcripts,’ an ‘art of’ and an ‘art for’ resistance. These hidden transcripts . . . function because the dominant and the dominated perceive their meanings in radically different ways. Music has a particularly powerful capacity to embody radically different meanings because of its complex forms of signification.” Nationalism acts as a “floating signifier” (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, 28), meaning different things to Haitians living in the United States and in Haiti, who share a heartfelt commitment to the Haitian transnational nation-state but employ and express nationalism in distinct ways to meet the needs of generation, class, and

gender. As Martin Stokes (1994, 13) argues, "Musical styles can be made emblematic of national identities in complex and often contradictory ways. Thus, to grasp the relationship between Pentecostal musical practice and national identity, we must understand Haitian nationalism as polysemous (i.e., having multiple meanings). This term

highlights the flexibility of nationalism that can readily encompass religious messages about personal or collective salvation within discussions about the future of the nation. . . . Approaching nationalism in this way allows us to move beyond the opposition between nationalist ideologies and religious beliefs that has been made by Western social science. Many theories of nationalism factor out any exploration of religion. When nationalist struggles are waged in the name of religious beliefs, analysts call such struggles "fundamentalist." This labeling does not explain how *religious beliefs and nationalism can reinforce and define each other*. (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, 28–29; my italics)

To understand fully how Haitian Pentecostals self-identify by appropriating "American" styles of music, we must see their musical worship as part of a much larger set of actions expressing love for God and church and, by extension, for nation. Many Pentecostals view salvation as a maturation process that begins with an initial conversion experience and continues as the individual strives to live victoriously on earth. From a Pentecostal standpoint, living victoriously entails being empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist sin and worldly temptations, derive joy from a personal relationship with God, and grow stronger through enduring life's adversities. Because *konpa* is linked to popular dance bands, nightclubs, and a "worldly" lifestyle, it represents a potential spiritual hindrance to Body of Christ Pentecostals. Thus, by opting to use musical styles other than *konpa*, they take a significant step toward personal salvation for themselves and national salvation for Haiti.

As Glick Schiller and Fouron point out, this linking of religion and Haitian nationalism is not a particularly new phenomenon in Haiti. For example, "in order to legitimate his regime, [François] Duvalier made numerous and seemingly contradictory connections between the sacred, the religious beliefs and practices of people in Haiti, and an identification with the nation" (107). Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide (1990, 90) has also tied religious faith to national pride, stating, "If you are a Haitian and you have Haitian blood that runs in your veins, if you are a real Haitian, stand beneath the flag of conviction and sing the national anthem. Link your faith with your commitment . . . like the proud Christians that you are."

Some Haitian Pentecostals have even "attempted to superimpose a

new, evangelical story on the Haitian national narrative," as McAlister (2000, 17, 19) explains:

Mirroring the outdoor maneuvers of the Rara bands, the Pentecostals marched through public space performing exorcisms at spots considered sacred in Vodou and recast as satanic for Pentecostals. In one charged "crusade" ceremony, a group of Haitian Pentecostal pastors launched a serious critique of the Haitian government and indeed of national history. The group marched on August 14th of 1997 to the north of Haiti to Bwa Kayiman, the site of the original religious ritual in 1791 when the slaves of Saint Domingue vowed to fight for freedom. The pastors intended to exorcise the Vodou spirits who still governed the site, and "win" the space "for Jesus." . . . This particular crusade was aimed at the genesis and essence of the Haitian nation: the foundational ceremony at Bwa Kayiman. The occasion that Haitian history books regarded as a sacralized moment of inspiration for the historic slave uprising was re-interpreted in Pentecostal terms.

In New York City, Haitian Pentecostals in the Church of God often conflate love of God with love of Haiti, expressing long-distance nationalism. In March 2001, during a weeklong revival at Bethel Church of God in Brooklyn, Pastor Gerard, age sixty-three, repeatedly proclaimed "Haiti for Christ, and Christ for Haiti," a slogan promoting the 2001 National Convention of Haitian Churches of God to be held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. On one Friday evening, he elaborated on this theme, announcing, "Any place Haitians are, the eyes of God are on them. If you are a Haitian, you belong to Christ!" Pastor Gerard's remarks assert a complementary relationship between Haitian identity and Christian faith. A few days later, however, a visiting minister, Pastor Donald, preached against *mizik mondenn* (worldly, or secular, music) and *mizik vodou*, while expressing a seemingly contradictory concept of Haitian identity: "There are some people who say they can use *rara* music to praise God, but we must pay attention! . . . You cannot say you are a Christian, and then you serve Ezili Freda and Ezili Red Eye. I am not Haitian; I am not Jamaican. I am Christian!"

In this Pentecostal church context, Pastor Donald discursively distances himself from an exclusive Haitian identity as a means of embracing an inclusive Christian one. Like Henri at True Vine Assembly, he chooses to subsume his Haitianness under his Christianity. During interviews with Haitian transmigrants in the 1980s, Glick Schiller and Fournon (2001, 112) encountered "people who, although identified as Haitians in our research, had many other identities as well. For these leaders, Christian, Haitian nationalist, Haitian American, American, Masonic, French, black, African, African American, and hometown identities could all be *overlapping, noncontradictory public identities*" (my italics).

The notion that Haitians in the United States may assert multiple identities helps explain how the seemingly contradictory remarks by Pastors Gerard and Donald are, in fact, complementary. By abstaining from worldly music and seeking personal salvation, Haitian Pentecostals at Bethel work to “save” Haiti and ensure that their homeland obtains “respect, dignity, and justice in the world of nation-states” (262).

Compared with my own church and those I attended in Haiti, the services at Bethel Church of God are usually rather low key. Although congregants do strive to achieve ecstasy through heated musical participation, Bethel lacks the kinds of intense singing and emotional bodily movements that one might expect to find more consistently in a Pentecostal church. Most of the congregational songs are found in *Chan desperans*, and although *konpa* is used, it is played less frequently than the “march” rhythm (see Ex. 7). Pastor Gerard, who founded Bethel after migrating from Haiti in the 1960s, still takes an active interest in the music, often enthusiastically leading the congregation in song. During one Friday evening service, he even came down from the podium to teach a melody to those of us who admitted, by a show of hands, to being unfamiliar with the Creole-language song that he had been trying to lead. Pastor Gerard enjoys singing mostly in French and Creole, although he will sometimes mix in an English-language song for variety. The congregation is sometimes split linguistically along generational lines. The youth, most of whom are second-generation Haitians (or Haitian Americans), have tended to favor Creole over French, even gravitating toward English when the opportunity arises. During a February youth revival, I heard Haitian youth choirs impressively perform songs by African-American gospel artists Hezekiah Walker, Richard Smallwood, and Kirk Franklin. I often heard young Haitian musicians making direct musical reference to African-American church styles of piano and bass accompaniment. In particular, I noted the use of an African-American style of rubato piano accompaniment and a “shout” bass line (C, D, E $\flat$ , E, F, A, B $\flat$ , B, C) that repeatedly moves from the I chord to the IV chord. The church as a whole, however, embraces Creole more than any other language, and even for the youth, the use of Haitian Creole sets them apart from Brooklyn’s other black ethnic groups (see Stafford 1987).

It may be fruitful to compare the musical worship of Bethel Church of God, along with Pastor Gerard’s expressions of Haitian nationalism, with what occurs at Refuge Temple, a heavenly army church also located in Brooklyn. During Friday night *veydenwit* (all-night services) lasting from 8 P.M. until 6 A.M., musical worship stylistically resembles that found in heavenly churches in Haiti. Although the *graj* and *senbal* are replaced by a drum kit and electronic keyboard, these more modern instruments imi-

tate the sounds of their traditional counterparts, which are more common in Haiti. (I suspect that the traditional instruments are also used in the diaspora, although I have only seen them in Haiti.) During the services that I attended at Refuge Temple, Pastor Lionel (who is in his mid-forties) and his congregants engaged in a more charismatic style of worship, characterized by intense singing and holy dancing, usually with *konpa* accompaniment. Women and girls were particularly expressive, often dancing in skip-like fashion with their arms upraised. As is the case in all of the Haitian churches that I attended, men were generally more physically reserved, standing in one place but emotionally involved, nonetheless, in the singing.

Compared with Bethel, both the songs and sermons at Refuge made more explicit reference to evil spirits. For example, during one Sunday-evening service in February 2001, Pastor Lionel urged the congregation, "Leave Papa Legba at rest! Leave Ezili at rest! Leave Vodou at rest!" In his sermons at Bethel, Pastor Gerard most often focused on maintaining a holy lifestyle, making only oblique reference to those who "serve the spirits" (*sèvi lwa*). Occasionally, he preached against "false doctrines" of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and other religious groups, but very rarely did he specifically mention any of the *lwa*. The most intense moments of musical worship at Refuge featured celebratory, improvised choruses sung at a quick tempo in medley fashion, one of which simply repeated the line, "The devil sees us dance and he runs." Although these types of repeated choruses were sung at Bethel, their lyrics usually incorporated direct words of praise (e.g., "Praise, praise the Lord") rather than referring explicitly to the realm of evil spirits (cf. the earlier discussion of Pentecostal point songs in heavenly army churches).

This comparison of Bethel and Refuge makes clear that a variety of Pentecostal music styles are used to achieve ecstasy and express Haitian Christian identities. In both churches, heated musical worship also serves to evoke powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit. However, I view the lyrical and stylistic differences in musical worship as indicative of the distinct response of each church to its transnational context. At Bethel, sermons and individual spoken testimonies make frequent reference to relatives and loved ones in Haiti. Pastor Gerard and his congregants use the language of Haitian nationalism to express both love for God (e.g., "Haiti for Jesus") and distinctiveness vis-à-vis the United States. While giving a testimony at Bethel, a woman once made a curiously enlightening remark: "The Americans say 'Time is money' but we say 'Time is Jesus!'" (Even without fully understanding the meaning of this statement, I find it fascinating given U.S.-bred stereotypes of Haitians as non-Christian "heathen.") The use of Creole- and French-language songs found in *Chan*

*desperans* distinguishes Bethel from the non-Haitian “black” churches in Brooklyn and provides an opportunity to experience a sense of community based on religious, cultural, and musical common ground.

During all-night services at Refuge Temple, musical worship takes on a more typically Haitian flavor, favoring the use of *kompa* and sharing many stylistic characteristics with the more indigenous heavenly army churches in Haiti. While Bethel’s congregants enjoy singing in Creole, French, and English, at Refuge, Creole is by far the language of choice. Pastor Lionel and his congregants also speak regularly of family members back home, often asking God to protect and sustain them in Haiti. At Refuge Temple, I did not hear explicitly nationalistic statements such as “Haiti for Jesus.” Rather, the Haitian nation-state was evoked more indirectly through prayers for loved ones still living in Haiti. Refuge Temple, like the heavenly army churches that I attended in Haiti, placed a strong emphasis on spiritual warfare against evil spirits. This comparatively high concern for the spiritual realm and direct references to various *lwa* not only distinguishes Refuge Temple from Bethel but also expresses another way of self-identification in relation to the Haitian transnational context. The members of Bethel Church of God experience themselves (and I experience them) as part of a transnational network consisting of churches in the United States and Haiti. By both musically and discursively contrasting Haiti with “America,” Pastor Gerard and his congregants reveal a sense of being complexly intertwined with the United States, appropriating English-language hymns and songs by African-American gospel artists. At Refuge Temple, English is seldom used, and I did not detect musical references to African-American gospel music, as I did at Bethel. The more Haitian musical style of Refuge Temple, along with that of the heavenly army churches that I attended in Haiti, resonates more fully with a Pentecostal outlook in which worshipers’ identity as children of God is ultimately seen as most significant.

### Conclusion

Pentecostalism has been remarkably successful in Haiti and the diaspora in part because it provides worshipers a means of asserting specific religious and cultural identities through musical worship. In Haitian Pentecostal churches, music helps congregants to achieve an ecstatic state of worship while expressing opposition to the world of nonbelievers. From a Pentecostal perspective, “the world” connotes a sinful realm of existence that is antithetical to “the Church,” which represents the sanctified<sup>25</sup> body of believers in Jesus Christ. By extension, the world may also

25. A biblical basis for being “set apart” or “sanctified” is found in 2 Cor. 6:17. Other distinguishing elements include adherence to specified dress codes and abstention from “world-

consist of any oppressive economic and political forces that contribute to social misery. Meaningful ways of resisting the world and asserting Haitian Pentecostal identities are often embedded within “language about music”<sup>26</sup> and choices regarding appropriate musical style.

I contend that through spiritual transcendence, Haitian Pentecostals find not simply a temporary “escape” but rather a means of accessing the power of God to combat life’s adversities and survive in their midst. In independent heavenly army churches, worshipers draw from a powerful arsenal of musical weaponry, using Pentecostal point songs (*chan pwen*), lament songs (*plent*), and traditional instruments (including *graj*, *senbal*, *tambouren* and *batri*) to gain personal inspiration and wage spiritual warfare against evil spirits (*djab*) ultimately responsible for poverty and sickness. The notion of spiritual warfare resonates with an ethos of militarism in Haitian culture and is also expressed in organizational churches, albeit to a lesser degree. Musical worship in the Church of God is ostensibly more geared toward counteridentification with worldly influences of Haitian Carnival and Vodou-related activity. Instruments such as the *graj* and, especially, the *tanbou*, which are often seen as iconic representations of *rara* and Vodou, are considered highly inappropriate, and songs are more regularly chosen from *Chan desperans*. Thus, one of the pieces of knowledge to emerge from this study is that while Haitian Pentecostals tend to agree on these fundamental tenets of the faith, the characteristics of Pentecostal musical worship vary according to specific type of church and service.

Both the adjectival and verbal forms of “appropriate” apply to my research on Haitian Pentecostal music. Pentecostals engage in musical worship with an acute awareness of what Timothy Rommen (2001) calls “the ethics of style.” Notions of musical appropriateness greatly impact the stylistic choices made by musicians, accepted by worshipers, and proven effective during worship services. Haitian Pentecostals also appropriate imported hymns for use in the Haitian social context. I, too, have engaged in appropriation on at least two levels. First, I appropriated Haitian Pentecostal church songs as a way to grasp their rhythmic feel and to gain a thorough understanding of how they are sung and experienced musically. Second, I appropriated them for the purpose of gaining spiritual encouragement and sustenance while away from my church in Brooklyn. In other words, I experience musical worship not only as one appreciating and studying musical sound but also as a Pentecostal adher-

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ly” activities such as social dancing, extramarital sex, alcoholic beverages, and cigarettes.

26. The “language about music” approach posits that informants’ technical, evaluative, and aesthetic discourses about music can (and should) provide insight for ethnomusicologists (see Feld and Fox 1994, 29).

ent believing in the Holy Spirit and seeing in each musical encounter an opportunity to feel the power of God. One could say that my appropriation of Haitian musical worship mirrors the appropriation of American styles of music by Haitian Pentecostals. In both cases, the style of music is ultimately a function of its ability to evoke the felt presence of the Holy Spirit and to facilitate an ecstatic state of worship.

This article is based on five months of fieldwork conducted in Port-au-Prince, Leogane, and Jacmel, Haiti, during the summers of 2000 and 2001. I also draw on the numerous worship services that I have attended both in Haitian Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn and in my own African-American Pentecostal church. I wish to thank the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at New York University for funding my initial research in Haiti.

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