

Introduction

Brother Magloire of Victory Chapel Church of the Nazarene was explaining to me the difference between Protestants and Christians among Haitian migrants in the Bahamas.¹ He noted that you had to observe how someone functioned in society: Does the person serve God and manifest a devout *karaktè* (character), or does he or she engage in acts considered to be sinful, such as attending dance parties, smoking, or wearing make-up? His observations highlight a curious finding I stumbled upon while conducting fieldwork about Haitian Protestant religious practice among migrants in the Bahamas. Some migrants regard Protestant and Christian as two very different identities, though anthropologists and religious studies scholars consider both terms as similar. In Haitian religious life, *Protestant* describes a religious movement that began in Haiti in the nineteenth century. The term is generally used in Haiti and the Haitian diaspora to refer to a person who practices some form of Protestant Christianity, such as the Adventist, Baptist, and Methodist faiths and Pentecostalism.² *Protestant* is also a pejorative term that is used privately among devout Haitian Protestants to describe other migrants in their diasporic religious community who engage in sinful behavior. Devout Haitian Protestant migrants in the Bahamas consider themselves as *Kretyen* (Christian) rather than *Pwotestan* (Protestant). They build their identities as *Kretyen* around (1) their adherence to shared, cultural norms of Protestant Christianity from their native Haiti regarding their appearance and comportment, and (2) their *krent pou Bondyè* (fear of God) which is reflected in proper appearance and comportment.

What is significant about this conceptualization of *Kretyen* versus *Pwotestan* is that it reveals a deeper dynamic in the lives of Protestant migrants from Haiti to the Bahamas—a receiving country in which approximately one in five people are now Haitian born or Haitian descended. Their ideas about religion illuminate how they think about their identities in a society that is hostile toward them. Their thinking also reveals how their religious beliefs help these devout human beings deal with exploitation and marginalization in the Bahamas and to advance a political and moral agenda for their Haitian homeland. At the heart of devout Haitian Protestant migrant life is a belief that religious authenticity is the key to both achieving their individual aspirations and transforming Haiti from the poorest country in the Western hemisphere into a viable, modern nation-state. By attending to the distinction between *Kretyen* and *Pwotestan* this book helps to explain why the typical Haitian migrant in the Bahamas now practices Protestant forms of Christianity.

Anthropologist Webb Keane (2007, 48) writes in his ethnography about Dutch Calvinist missionaries and their converts in Indonesia that the idea of modernity includes two distinctive features: rupture from a traditional past and progress into a better future. Modernity in the Caribbean required the twin barbarisms of the near-extirpation of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and the kidnapping and enslavement of millions from sub-Saharan Africa.³ In the case of what later came to be known as Haiti, the traditional past includes the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick between France and Spain, which established the French colony of Saint-Domingue. It used to be known as the “Pearl of the Antilles” because the industrialization of sugar in the region enriched its French absentee owners and transformed Saint-Domingue into one of the richest sugar colonies in history. The arduous labor required for sugar production resulted in the virtual eradication of the indigenous Taíno population and an average life span of only seven years for those Africans who survived the high mortality rates that stemmed from the forced marches from the interiors of Africa, the horrors of the Middle Passage, and the deadly seasoning process.⁴

Haiti's past also witnessed a struggle against chattel slavery. This struggle led to the destruction of plantation capitalism on the island of Hispaniola, which included the territories of present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In what is known as the only successful slave revolt in human history, black people defeated the British and Spanish forces and achieved independence from their French colonial master to form the world's first black republic and extend the rights to liberty, equality, and fraternity to all Haitian citizens. In addition to its colonial roots and emancipatory struggle, Haiti's past also encapsulates a religious component that has contributed to the nation's bifurcated identity as a beacon of hope for some and a troubled nation for most.

Since Haiti's revolutionary beginnings, most Haitians have practiced Catholicism, the majority religion of Haiti, and Vodou. Vodou—a syncretic religion that incorporates Central and West African, European, and Amerindian beliefs—developed in Saint-Domingue and emerged from the context of chattel slavery and plantation culture. The practice of Vodou by enslaved Africans was an important factor that aided in their struggle for self-determination. As anthropologist Leslie Desman-gles (1992, 6) has written, Haiti could not have become an independent nation without Vodou; its rituals provided the spirit of kinship that fueled the slaves' revolts against their colonial masters. Today, however, many Haitians are renouncing this past as a way to progress into a better future for themselves and their Haitian homeland. The embrace of a religious path that promises to lead to a better life in Haiti is part of a growing trend that is transforming the religious landscape of the region from the practice of Catholicism and Vodou (and other African-based religions) to the practice of Protestant forms of Christianity. Scholars have been somewhat slow to attend to this transformation; much of the research on Haiti and the Haitian diaspora still is focused on the two former religious traditions despite the fact that a large percentage of Haitians (and other formerly Catholic populations in Latin America) are now Protestant.

The practice of Protestant forms of Christianity up until recently has represented only a small fraction of Haiti's overall religious population.

However, as other parts of Catholic Latin America have turned Protestant, the growth and success of Protestantism has extended to Haiti. In 1930, for example, only 1.5 percent of the population of Haiti practiced Protestant forms of Christianity. Between 1930 and 1940, the population of Protestants tripled and between 1940 and 1950 it doubled. By 1977, 20 percent of the country had converted to Protestantism (Romain 2004, 429). It is currently estimated that about one third of Haiti is Protestant (Louis 2007, 194).⁵

The practice of Protestant forms of Christianity among Haitians in its diaspora throughout the United States is also rising, and Haitian Protestants have begun to outnumber Haitian Catholics in some US locales (Richman 2005). In New York City, Haitian Protestant churches—which were estimated to number more than one hundred in 2006—outnumber Haitian Catholic churches (see Ng 2006), suggesting that the number of Haitians who attend Protestant churches is rising and that Haitian Protestants may be a new religious majority among Haitians in the New York City area. This trend may be repeating itself in the American locales in which we find significant Haitian populations, such as Boston, Massachusetts, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁶

The Haitian practice of Protestant forms of Christianity among migrants in the Caribbean is also on the rise (Brodwin 2003a; 2003b).⁷ When responding to a 2005 survey concerning the religion they practiced, 27.7 percent of Haitians interviewed in the Bahamas replied Catholic, whereas 29.1 percent claimed Anglican, Baptist, or Pentecostal (College of the Bahamas 2005, 100). These figures suggest that there is a new religious plurality among Haitians in the Bahamas, whereas in 1979, geographer Dawn Marshall (1979, xiii) remarked that the typical Haitian migrant was “almost certainly a Roman Catholic.”

This book argues that Haitian Protestant migrants in the Bahamas reflect the growing trend toward Protestantism. For these migrants, a *Kreyen*, a devout Protestant, serves as a critique of their diasporic compatriots and also showcases their hopes of a future reshaping of Haiti into a Protestant Christian nation. Based on baptism by immersion in

water and a life based on the culture and religious principles of Protestant Christianity in Haiti, most of my *Kreyen* research consultants believed that their personal salvation was guaranteed. The identity of *Kreyen* helped them both to critique what they considered to be wrong in the broader Haitian Protestant community of the Bahamas and to represent the type of citizen they believed Haiti needed in order to rectify its myriad social and economic ills.

The *Kreyen/Pwotestan* distinction is the result of two important and interrelated factors. The first is the growing practice of Protestant culture in Haiti and how Haitian Protestant migrants in the Bahamas use it to make meaning out of their daily experiences. Reverend Pat Robertson's comments after the Haitian earthquake in 2010 resonate with a similar Haitian Protestant worldview expressed to me during fieldwork in 2005. On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 earthquake devastated large parts of Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, and cities and towns along Haiti's Southern Peninsula. The earthquake destroyed much of the fragile urban infrastructure, claimed the lives of over two hundred thousand Haitians, and left over one million homeless. The day after this catastrophe, Robertson remarked on the 700 Club—a syndicated news show for the Christian Broadcasting Network that reaches over one billion households worldwide⁸—that centuries ago enslaved Africans toiling on the plantations of Saint-Domingue swore a “pact to the Devil” in order to gain their freedom from chattel slavery under the French.⁹ The event, which Robertson analyzed through the lens of American Evangelical Christianity, was a Vodou ceremony known in the Haitian national narrative as *Bwa Kayiman* (Bois Caïman) that launched the Haitian Revolution (1791–1803). It was this supposed “pact with the Devil” that, according to Robertson, laid the foundations for the tragedy of the earthquake.

Robertson's remarks in the midst of this unimaginable tragedy sparked outrage and dismay, including condemnations (see Miller 2010) and essays (see Gates 2010) that critiqued his theological interpretation of Haitian history. Reverend Robertson's comments did not surprise me, however; my Haitian Protestant research consultants in New Providence,

Bahamas, had made similar comments five years earlier about the troubles of Haiti stemming from this pivotal Vodou ceremony, and some offered similar sentiments in the wake of the earthquake. At first glance, people familiar with Haitian history could view these comments by Haitian Protestant migrants as a form of self-hate. But this oppositional worldview stems, partly, from a Haitian Protestant rejection of the secular world. By viewing *Bwa Kayiman* as a moment when Haiti was “consecrated to the Devil,” these devout migrants share a similar worldview to that of Reverend Robertson. They embrace a key component of a larger Haitian Protestant culture that rejects its Africanized roots in order to refashion Haitians into evangelical Christians and reintegrate Haiti as a respected nation into a larger global system that currently ruthlessly exploits them.

Although a number of Haitian Protestant denominations—including Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, Nazarenes, and Pentecostals—experience interdenominational tensions due to theological differences, they all share commonalities that make their practice of Protestantism distinct from the practice of Catholicism, the traditional majority religion of Haiti. One of these characteristics is a complete rejection of Vodou. Haitian Protestants, regardless of denominational affiliation, see Vodou as a backward way of life that keeps Haiti mired in endemic poverty and governmental corruption, and, in some cases, “curses” Haiti with ecological disasters like the 2010 earthquake.

The second factor that influences the use of the *Kretyen/Pwotestan* distinction is the normative exploitation of Haitians in the Bahamas. Their oppression is facilitated by the Bahamian state, codified in Bahamian law, and reflected in the organization of Bahamian society. As a result, Haitian migrants and Bahamians of Haitian descent, who are referred to as Haitian and Haitian-Bahamian, have become part of an underclass that continues to grow due to Haitian immigration and Bahamian laws that restrict social and economic opportunities to only those who can be defined as “Bahamian”—primarily black people with certain surnames, such as Bodie, Knowles, Moxey, Roker, Rolle, and Strachan. Thus,

operating within the Bahamas limits the potential for Haitian social advancement.¹⁰ Bahamians fear that Haitians threaten Bahamian sovereignty and prosperity though, in fact, Haitians partly facilitate Bahamian prosperity due to the way in which their labor is exploited in the Bahamian economy. Haitian Protestant migrants and their progeny turn to their religious practices to provide a *bourad* (boost) in a country that rejects and scapegoats them (see Rey and Stepick 2010). Their religious culture and practices also offer them a model for how to conduct themselves in this foreign country.

Theory

At the heart of the shift in religious practice toward Protestantism in the Bahamas is a distinction-making process devout migrants use to differentiate themselves from other migrants. The process reflects how they survive in the Bahamas and how they reimagine Haiti as a Protestant Christian nation. The majority of my research consultants used three major categories—*Kretyen*, *Pwotestan*, and *moun ki poko konvèti* (people who have not converted to a Protestant form of Christianity)—to differentiate themselves from one another. By understanding why devout Protestant migrants use these terms and what their ramifications are, we can gain insights into both the shift to Protestantism as the majority religion practiced by Haitians in the Bahamas and the broader success of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America and the Caribbean, areas of the world that used to be Catholic strongholds.

This book argues that some devout Haitian Protestants in the Bahamas use the terms *Pwotestan* and *moun ki poko konvèti* as moral critiques of how Protestant Christianity is practiced by other Haitian migrants. Their use of the term *Kretyen* reflects their beliefs that the “authentic” practice of Haitian Protestantism will improve the lives of Haitians in the Bahamas and in Haiti. When Haitian Protestants in the Bahamas privately refer to other people in their churches and the larger migrant community as *Pwotestan* and *moun ki poko konvèti*, they are judging individuals

whom they consider to be at the root of the problems that affect Haitians in the Bahamas because they are not *Kretyen*, that is, authentic Christians who fear God and behave in a manner that contributes to the betterment of Haiti. In this sense *Kretyen* can be understood as a religious identity and also as a form of nationalist expression that is used to combat marginalization in the Bahamas. In the context of a transnational social field that includes the Bahamas, Haiti, and the United States, those who view themselves as *Kretyen* in the Bahamas believe that Haiti's socioeconomic, ecological, and environmental crises stem from moral and spiritual problems among the Haitian citizenry and state. The use of these differentiating terms thus highlights how diaspora, migration, nationalism, and transnationalism are intertwined as migrants recreate and practice Haitian Protestant Christianity in the Bahamas and conceptualize their religious and political milieu.

To analyze the distinction-making process of devout Haitian Protestant migrants, this book employs the concept of symbolic boundaries, as articulated by sociologist Michele Lamont (1992). Lamont and sociologist Virag Molnar (2002, 187) write that “the notion of boundaries is crucial for analyzing how social actors construct groups as similar and different and how it shapes their understanding of their responsibilities toward such groups.” This book analyzes how different social groups in New Providence, Bahamas—Bahamians, Haitian Protestants, and Bahamians of Haitian descent—define themselves through their use of symbolic boundaries. It also illustrates how symbolic boundaries are formed, how they are used on an everyday basis, and how they provide a foundation for the reimagination of Haiti as a Protestant Christian nation.

When Bahamians deem that Haitians are a “burden” to the Bahamas and perceive Haitians as taxing Bahamian social services and hospitals, and “fixing” Bahamians (casting spells to harm Bahamians and, by extension, the Bahamas), they draw polarizing ethnic boundaries that marginalize people of Haitian descent, legitimate anti-Haitian discrimination in Bahamian society, and foster a social order that is structured to maintain a permanent Haitian underclass. When devout Haitian Protestant

migrants believe that their religious community is dysfunctional and in “complete chaos,” they draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and other Haitian migrants that criticize community behavior and the practice of Protestant forms of Christianity in the Bahamas. By understanding why these different social groups use symbolic boundaries, we can learn more about how Bahamian society is structured, how devout Haitian Protestants try to recreate Protestant forms of Christianity as they were practiced in Haiti, and why deep inequalities persist in the Caribbean. Moreover, by focusing on the religious activities and observations of Haitian Protestants in New Providence, this book demonstrates why some Haitian Protestants employ a conceptual continuum of moral purity—consisting of *Kreyen*, *Pwotestan*, and *moun ki poko konvèti*—and why these identities have risen to prominence among devout migrants. The use of this conceptual continuum is important because it demonstrates how migrants create meaning out of their religious experience rather than copying Christian practices in their host country for utilitarian reasons, such as procuring employment and advancing in Bahamian society.

In this ethnography I draw on the work of anthropologists who counter, as anthropologist Fenella Cannell (2006) writes, a widespread, although not total, disciplinary bias in the study of Christianity within anthropology. Cannell (2006, 3) observes that some scholars take a “secular analytical approach” to the study of Christianity while others sometimes seem “exaggeratedly resistant to the possibility of taking seriously the religious experiences of others.” When analyzing conversion to Christianity in the lives of people living in the underdeveloped world, previous anthropological studies that used the “secular analytical approach” have attributed Christianity to factors other than the people’s attempts to understand the world around them and their existence through a religious framework that is usually foreign to them. For example, religious conversion to Christianity by the Tswana of South Africa was not viewed as an attempt to restructure their world but as the result of intense missionary efforts, backed by colonial and Western powers (Comaroff and

Comaroff 1991). In reaction to views that evangelical growth in Latin America is solely the result of forces from the United States, anthropologist David Stoll (1990, xvi) opines that to see the conversion to Christianity as less than cultural “suggests a deep distrust of the poor, an unwillingness to accept the possibility that they could turn an imported religion to their own purposes.”

In response to this hegemonic view of Christianity within anthropology, anthropologists such as Webb Keane (2007), Fenella Cannell (2006), Susan Harding (1991; 1987; 2000), Brian Howell (2007), and Joel Robbins (2004a; 2004b) have contributed greatly to the advancement of the study of the practice of Christianity by viewing the practice of Christianity as cultural. I draw on their work in my own analysis of devout Haitian Protestant migrants. Specifically, I employ an intellectualist approach to analyze the discourse of Haitian Protestant migrants who construct themselves as *Kretyen*. This approach emphasizes why people convert and how they make meaning out of religion (Robbins 2004a).

Using an intellectualist approach is necessary in conducting an ethnography about Haitian Protestant Christianity due to the huge imbalance in the scholarly literature about the religions Haitians practice. Anthropologists and religious studies experts traditionally have paid more attention to the study of Vodou and Catholicism among Haitians and less attention to the Haitian practice of Protestant Christianity. While influential texts, such as *Mama Lola* by anthropologist Karen McCarthy Brown and *The Faces of the Gods* by anthropologist Leslie Desmangles, were written to challenge Western stereotypes about the practice of New World African religions like Vodou, a traditional research focus on Catholicism and Vodou has ignored contemporary Haitian religious practices and the growing number of Protestant Christians in Haiti and in diasporic contexts such as Canada, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, and the United States. When some scholarly attention is devoted to the study of Haitian Protestantism, it tends to emphasize utilitarian explanations for its existence and spread among Haitians (Métraux 1958; Richman 2005a). Although utilitarian motives

may motivate some Haitians to convert to Protestant forms of Christianity, many Haitian Protestants develop a worldview that is intellectualist in its foundation.

The intellectualist approach also helps to illuminate my research consultants' responses: how they described themselves, their faith, and their opinions of other Haitian Protestants within their religious community. It helps to articulate why Haitians remain Protestant—rather than switching between Protestantism, Catholicism, and Vodou—and why they draw the symbolic boundaries of *Kretyen*, *Pwotestan*, and *moun ki poko konvèti*. And it enables us to understand the interviewees' comments as a critique of their churches and religious community.

This book also applies the theoretical lens of transnationalism—as informed by transnational migration literature (see Basch et al. 1994; Tsuda 2003; Rouse 1991) and transnational religious migration literature (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Mooney 2009; Richman 2005a)—to interpret the religious lives of Haitian Protestants in the Bahamas. Transnationalism helps to explain processes that immigrants use to forge and sustain multistranded social relations that connect societies of origin and settlement (Basch et al. 1994). It is linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism and must be analyzed in terms of global relations between capital and labor. Transnational relationships create social fields that go beyond national boundaries. Bounded social scientific concepts that conflate physical location, culture, and identity limit the ability of researchers to perceive and analyze transnational phenomena. Transmigrants—people whose identities are split between two or more nations, such as the devout Haitian Protestant migrants discussed in this book—find themselves confronted with and engaged in the nation-building processes of two or more nation-states. Their identities and practices are configured and constructed according to hegemonic categories, such as race and ethnicity, which are deeply embedded in the nation-building processes of multiple nation-states (Basch et al. 1994). My research consultants' experiences are situated within the Bahamas and a larger, transnational social field that includes Haiti and the United States. It is insufficient to

study the comments, opinions, rituals, and religious beliefs of Haitian Protestants in the Bahamas solely by attending to the physical boundaries of the Bahamian nation-state because their identities exceed such boundaries. A transnational social field is also the larger context where my research about Haitian Protestantism took place.

Methods

Before studying the migrant practice of Protestant Christianity in the Bahamas, I participated in familial religious activities in the United States and Haiti, observed and interviewed research participants at Haitian Protestant churches in the greater Saint Louis, Missouri area, and conducted fieldwork in Haiti in Protestant milieus. The majority of my mother's nuclear and extended family was raised in Haiti's Protestant Christian movement. Her mother, Alice Fougy (née Alice Jean Louis), was an evangelist who would preach the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Haiti and in Haitian diasporic communities in Massachusetts (Boston), New York (New York City, Spring Valley), and the Washington, DC area. In my youth, my mother would bring me to services at one of the first Haitian Baptist churches in New York City, L'Église Baptiste d'Expression Française (French Speaking Baptist Church), located in Brooklyn. We would participate in Actions de Graces à L'Éternel (Thanksgiving)—which included worship and praise of the Lord, testimonials, impromptu sermons, and a call for nonbelievers to accept Jesus Christ as their savior—with maternal relatives in Boston, the Washington, DC area, and Spring Valley, New York.¹¹

After participating and observing festivities and services at Haitian Protestant churches (two Baptist, one nondenominational) in Saint Peters, Saint Louis, and Kansas City, Missouri, I wanted to learn more about the socio-religious context that produced Haitian Protestant immigrants in the United States. In summer 2002 I traveled to Haiti for six weeks to research various aspects of Haitian Protestant church life and culture. I employed semistructured and structured interviews and

participant observation of various Haitian Protestant events and rituals. One of the main events on my research trip to Haiti was an Actions de Grâce, which was performed on July 25, 2002, in Ti Rivye (or Little River, “Petite Rivière” in French), an agrarian village located outside of Jacmel in the Southwestern department of Haiti. Ti Rivye was the birthplace of my grandmother and the Actions de Grâce was held in honor of the exemplary Christian life she had led. When she died in October 2001, one of her last wishes was that her family would not forget their relatives in Ti Rivye. Members of my immediate and extended families as well as members of the Boston Missionary Baptist Church, including my uncle, the Reverend Dr. Soliny Védrine, who would be instrumental in connecting me with pastors in the Bahamas, attended the event.¹²

I arrived in New Providence, Bahamas, in February 2005, and divided my research among three Haitian Protestant churches: New Haitian Mission Baptist Church (New Mission), Victory Chapel Church of the Nazarene, and International Tabernacle of Praise Ministries, Incorporated (an interdenominational church). Upon my arrival, I spent my time at New Mission participating in Sunday services and *lajènes* (church youth group) meetings. In July 2005 I began interviewing people at New Mission and the other two churches. Based on research questions and assumptions about what I would find when I started my field interviews, I used what is known as a purposive or judgment sample. When using this type of sampling technique, one defines the purpose one wants one’s research consultants to serve and then looks for consultants who meet those characteristics (Bernard 2002, 182).¹³ I used this technique because in the early stages of interviewing I wanted to study people who had switched denominations. Having identified the first group of people—Haitians who had left Catholicism and converted to Protestantism—through activities at New Haitian Mission Baptist Church, I used an interview protocol that elicited detailed responses about educational background, family dynamics, family traditions, religious development, church affiliations, work histories, life in the Bahamas, and views of Haiti, Haitian society, my informants’ future, and the future of Haiti. Although

my sample was not representative, the comments from the participants revealed a lot about Haitian Protestant churches in the Bahamas, Bahamian church culture, and the tensions between Haitians and children of Haitian descent living in the Bahamas. Their comments also uncovered the meaning of the terms *Kretyen*, *Pwotestan*, and *moun ki poko konvèti*, and what anthropologist Takeyuki Tsuda (2003, 27) refers to as the “honno” in Japan: private information that includes personal opinions, private attitudes, and inner feelings hidden from public view.

I primarily used open-ended questions that allowed respondents to interpret the questions and elaborate on their answers; for example, “What is your opinion of the Haitian Protestant community in New Providence? What do you like about it and what do you not like about it?” The first interviews were tested with Bahamian and immigrant research consultants. After those interviews, I interviewed seven Haitians from International Tabernacle of Praise Ministries and New Haitian Mission Baptist Church. I began interviewing in July 2005 and finished in December 2005. Yet, it was not until Dieunous Senatus, assistant pastor of Victory Chapel, described the difference between migrants who practiced Protestant Christianity in a devout manner and other Protestant migrants who still committed egregious sins, that I decided to alter my interview protocol.¹⁴ Specifically, I determined that asking about the general differences between a *Pwotestan* and a *Kretyen* would be another interesting question to pose to informants while I gathered data about religious choice and denominational change. As it happened, the distinction that devout migrants made between *Kretyen* and *Pwotestan* caused me to disregard my original research agenda and became the focus of this book.

From that point forward I modified the interview protocol to include questions that teased out distinctions concerning religious and ethnic identities among Haitians and Bahamians of Haitian descent.¹⁵ For instance, in the section of the interview schedule about religious development and affiliation I asked research consultants to describe the difference between a Haitian Protestant and a Haitian Catholic, explain the difference between a Protestant in Haiti and a Haitian Protestant in

New Providence, and describe the difference between a Haitian Protestant and a Haitian Christian.¹⁶ I interviewed members of each church, including two migrant men who attended two additional Haitian Protestant churches not featured in the ethnography, one migrant woman who worked at the place where I stayed, and a Bahamian man of Haitian descent who practices Catholicism. I collected five preliminary interviews from four Haitians and one Trinidadian who helped me to develop questions for a protocol for in-depth interviews. In total, I collected fifty-three in-depth interviews from Bahamians (five), Haitians (thirty-six), and Bahamians of Haitian descent (ten), as well as from two non-Haitian immigrants—one Trinidadian and the other Canadian. Out of the thirty-six Haitian Protestants I interviewed, seventeen were not asked about the *Pwotestan/Kretyen* distinction because I had not yet interviewed Pastor Senatus; thus, the new focus on this distinction was to be developed. Eighteen of the research consultants noted a difference between a *Pwotestan* and a *Kretyen*, attributing negative qualities to *Pwotestans* and positive ones to *Kretyens*. One person I interviewed declined to answer those questions when they were posed to her.

In addition to formal interviewing, I was a participant observer in the religious lives of my research consultants. Participant observers can be insiders who observe some aspects of life around them, or they can be outsiders who participate in some aspects of life around them and take notes or record what they see and hear (Bernard 2002, 327). While in New Providence, I attended a variety of services at the three dominant churches featured in this book as well as other Bahamian and Haitian churches. Since each church held morning and evening services on Sundays, I could visit more than one church on a given day. At the services I would sing hymns (in Haitian Creole, French, and English), pray, take pictures of church activities, and film portions of the services. I spent the first five months in New Providence at New Mission, splitting my remaining time in the Bahamas between International Tabernacle of Praise and Victory Chapel Church of the Nazarene. I also attended Bible study and *lajènes* meetings at the churches.

Participating in church activities throughout the week enhanced my Haitian Protestant habitus (behaving, speaking, worshipping, praying, and carrying myself as an adherent of Protestant Christianity would), which I had developed during fieldwork among Haitian Protestants in Saint Louis, Missouri, and Haiti. My time spent at *lajènes* meetings at New Mission and Victory Chapel helped the members become more comfortable around me. It also gave me access to a large pool of interview participants, even though they were initially aloof and treated me like an outsider. At Victory Chapel Church of the Nazarene, it was only after I shared my experiences of racism and alienation in the public school system in New York City that Bahamians of Haitian descent, who felt discriminated against by Bahamians in their school system, opened up to me in interviews. Teaching an English class to adherents at International Tabernacle of Praise broke the ice and allowed me to interview people I could not have had access to otherwise because of their suspicions about my religious identity and their doubts about whether I was a person whom they could trust with their private information.

My observations contributed to this study in different ways. By participating in and observing Haitian Protestant rituals and practices in Sunday school, *jènn* (prayer services), Sunday morning and evening services, Bible study, choir rehearsals, and interdenominational meetings, I could discern how someone could easily learn the rules of proper appearance and comportment within the church. Furthermore, based on the way men and women carried themselves within the walls and outside the walls of their churches, as well as the rigid categories that participants constructed in their interviews, I also was able to discern how Haitian Protestants could be categorized as either *Pwotestan* or *Kretyen*. In other words, there were moments in the field when, through my observations of and discussions with my research consultants, I could determine whether they had reoriented their worldview according to devout Haitian Protestant beliefs and traditions or viewed the world in a manner that was antithetical to that religious culture.

After attending services at all three churches numerous times—playing the role of cultural outsider that anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) describes in his classic essay “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” and improving my linguistic competency in Haitian Creole—adherents at all churches began to speak more freely to me. When I finally interviewed people, they helped me see beyond the surface of rituals that lead casual observers of Haitian Protestantism to homogenize this transnational religious movement into a religion that is practiced the same way by Haitians virtually everywhere. When I started recording my first interview I began a journey that took me into a vast and complex world where migration, ethnicity, religious practice, ideology, nationalism, asceticism, candid comments, and hope and despair were all intertwined to illuminate a world few people outside of Haiti and Haitian communities knew existed. This book describes that world and how the use of symbolic boundaries by devout Haitian Protestant migrants expresses a critique of the Haitian practice of Protestantism in the Bahamas as well as a critique of citizenship in Haiti that is intended to solve Haiti’s crisis and realize a Protestant Christian Haiti that is respected among other nations.

The Organization of the Book

To understand the religious practice of Haitian migrants, it is necessary to learn more about the type of Protestantism they used to practice in Haiti. Chapter 1 covers the culture of Haitian Protestantism with a focus on its shared aspects emphasized by migrants. Chapter 2 introduces the island of New Providence and explains how Haitian migration to the Bahamas and Bahamian laws combine to exploit and marginalize Haitian life there. Chapter 3 discusses the Haitian Protestant community of New Providence as seen by the pastors at the respective churches featured in this book and the transnational Haitian Protestant elements at play within the community. Chapter 4 examines Haitian Protestant liturgy and focuses on how worship and praise combine with Haitian Protestant

hymnody and sermons to encourage migrants to lead Christian lives. Chapter 5 analyzes the categories of *Kretyen*, *Pwotestan*, and *moun ki poko konvèti* to reveal their meanings within the boundaries of the Bahamian nation-state and a larger transnational context that includes Haiti. The conclusion revisits the idea of modernity as it is expressed among Haitian Protestant migrants in relation to Haitians in the Bahamas and the future of Haiti. It also highlights this book's theoretical contributions to the scholarship of the anthropology of Christianity, Haitian studies, religious studies and the understanding of the success of evangelical forms of Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean. But this ethnography begins with an embarrassing experience I had during fieldwork in Haiti that helped me to understand the importance of appearance and comportment as it relates to Haitian Protestant culture and identity in the Bahamas.