Jean L. Noel

Urban theology

Professor **: Montes**

Site Visit & Interview Paper

Church Name, Pastor, and Location

On Sunday, March 19, 2023, my family and I visited our old Church in First Timothy Christian Church, a non-denomination Haitian church in Spring Valley, New York, led by Pastor Nathan Demosthene. The Church was founded by Reverend Anthony Demosthenes, Pastor Nathan's father, and he started the Church in 1974 after seeing the amount of Haitians migrating from Haiti to Rockland County, NY.

Church'S Haitians & Mission for the target urban context

First Timothy Christian Church proclaims Jesus, The Christ, as the Head of the Church and the manifested Word of God. Their goal is to teach the Word of God with boldness and understanding so that it may apply to our everyday lives practically and effectively. First, Timothy Church believes everyone needs a group

of friends and a family, and a local church to call "home." They are that kind of Church where everyone is welcome to come.

Their mission statement is Save, Sanctify, and Serve. As believers, they want to impact the world they are in as they imitate Christ's love, mercy, and compassion for others. The Mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of heaven to all people within their community and the world. Their Mission is to transform one person at a time, imitating the love of Christ.

Church's social analysis of its target urban context AND its connection to the resulting theological reflection and Formation

Their current social issues and challenges are that the community continues to change. They now have more Central Americans in Spring Valley than before. In May 2021, Corvid 30,000 Haitians tried to migrate from Mexico to the U.S.. Still, only a few were allowed to stay, and more than 10,000 were sent back to Haiti, even though Haiti had a lot of political issues. Some Haitians end up in Rockland County in Spring Valley and other towns.

FTCC Social reality children and adults lack healthcare, affordable housing, Night Schools for adults who need to learn to Speak English, failing public

schools, gun violence, and lack of jobs.

Church's theological reflection and Formation FTCC

In his book Liberty to the Captives, Rivera stated, "In the process of practicing holistic ministry, you must become an instrument that releases God's power of liberty and life." You cannot release God's power without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's Power and the Anointing, and he is only available to those who become born again. "Jesus replied, Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Being born is the key to working for God and having the ability to change things for the advancement of His Kingdom. The scripture tells us the Holy Spirit is the spirit of liberty (Romans 8:15-16). You cannot give the Gospel and imitate Jesus Christ if you do not have him. First Timothy Christian Church is a Holistic local ministry using the Gospel through preaching and teaching to change its community. Their objection is to Save, Sanctify, and Serve others.

Save: John 3:3 (The local Church's most important job is to preach the Gospel and lead people to get saved).

- The Gospel the Power of God- Romans 1:16-17 (Ftcc, believe when we

preach the Gospel correctly, people's life, community, and social issues will change. change).

- The Great commission-Mark 15:15-16 - The focus is on the great commission to Keep the great commission in the center of a local church as their minister to their community.
- Keeping Jesus in the Center- Hebrews 12:1-2- (Know Him and fellowship in His suffering).
- Putting the Kingdom first- Matthew 6:33 (Jesus told His disciple to seek the Kingdom first and everything else will fall into its place).

Sanctify: 2 Timothy 2:20-21(The second objection is to teach its members the importance of a consecrated life. Sanctification is vital for every believer, especially if they want to be used for the Kingdom of God's work.)

-
- The Church is an Agent of Change- (Romans 12:1-2- Where we bring transformation throughout our community by living a life of worship).
- Spiritual and Social Renewal- Matthew 3:1-12 & Matt.11:28-30 -Our focus is bringing people to Jesus while using our life as an example.

Serve: Mark 10:34 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to

serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- Holistic ministry- Isaiah 61:1-2 and John 10:10 -Where we minister to the whole man, not just the spiritual part only.
- Advance kingdom values and leadershipPsalm 103:19 (Praying for the peace of their community while engaging it).
- Be light and Salt when Engaging in Social Issues- (Matt. 5:13-17). The best example is the life of Joseph Genesis 41-42 and Daniel 1:15-16 where God uses both of their gifts to save a nation.

FTCC Church's theological implementation approach and practice

Save

- By creating youth conferences for the locals within and outside the Church for the advancement of the Gospel
- Church conference focusing on ministering to the locals once a year.

Sanctify

- Challenge the members to live a life of consecration and obedience to Christ.

Serve

- Once a week food pantry.
- VBS (Vacation Bible Study) is a Free Summer Camp Program for the local community and members of the Church, children aged 4-12.
- Once a year, health awareness conference and education.
- Partnering with local organizations to educate the community on immigration laws and status.

My reflections of the Church's urban theology

First Timothy Christian Church, located in Rockland, NY, has offered a haven for Haitian immigrants and Central Americans in Rockland County since 1974. It's now one of the leading churches in Rockland County, NY. I believe it's due to Pastor Nathan's background as a teacher in the area and education. Their strength is knowing their community and understanding the issues.

But their weakness is they do not have enough money and resources to transform their Rockland County community effectively. Second, they are lacking in young leaders in the Church. Paul told Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct,

in love, in faith and purity (I Timothy 4:12. "A church without young leaders will not go far in my opinion.