The Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

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

by

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Lynchburg, Virginia
November 2020
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2020
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This DMin thesis project sought to address the decline of male participation in ministry leadership at the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church (WMBC) in Houston, Texas. Not only are males absent from many church congregations, but those that do attend church services tend to be seemingly content with the female populace leading an abundance of church ministries. This research study accessed rationales prompting male withdrawal and then ascertained how to restore balance to the initial design of God at WMBC. Assessment tools of questionnaires, surveys, and one-on-one interviews were utilized to gain insights from 10 WMBC males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty-five. Participant responses and feedback were used to develop a contextual training paradigm aimed at the education of these males on the roles and responsibilities of the man as orchestrated by God. A weekend workshop/seminar served as a baseline for comparative analysis. The mindset and actions of men at WMBC (concerning leadership roles and responsibilities) before the workshop were compared to the mindset and activities after the workshop to determine the efficacy of the training program.
Acknowledgments

First, I want to give glory to God Almighty. Thank you for being my constant source of peace. For your glory, and honor, and praise, I desire to be your instrument and voice.

Trisha E. Davis, my loving wife, your tender love, and concern for me have sparked a journey of becoming the man of God desperately needed me to be. I sincerely want to thank you for believing in me and seeing potential in me that I could not see within myself. My love for you is endless. You are my beautiful and virtuous woman of God.

Jordon and Sara, Jeremiah, Trinity, Zion, and baby (Rosalyn)—just having you in my life brings a ray of sunshine to each day. Never forget—always dare to dream and aspire to reach higher in all that you do. God has his hands over your lives and desires to bring about great things through you. Remain in position and faithful to the Word of God.

To Mama, Daddy, JT, and Tina, thanks for all your encouragement and support. It is immensely appreciated. I could not have made it thus far without the “Faith Circle” round about me. That is what you represent to me. You kept me alive when I wanted to lay down and die. To the rest of my family, friends, and anyone who played a vital role in developing who I am today, I love you all, and thank you.

I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Kenneth Warren and Dr. John S. Knox for the countless hours of invaluable mentorship. Lastly, to the men of Worthington MBC and pastors of the Trinity Gardens Community, this project would not have been possible without you.
## Contents

Acknowledgments .................................................................................................................. v

List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... viii

List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... ix

Chapter 1 ................................................................................................................................. 1
  Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
  Ministry Context .................................................................................................................. 4
  Problem Presented .............................................................................................................. 7
  Purpose Statement ............................................................................................................. 9
  Basic Assumptions ............................................................................................................ 11
  Definitions .......................................................................................................................... 13
  Limitations .......................................................................................................................... 14
  Delimitations ...................................................................................................................... 15
  Thesis Statement ............................................................................................................... 16

Chapter 2 ................................................................................................................................. 17
  Conceptual Framework ...................................................................................................... 17
  Literature Review .............................................................................................................. 17
    Godly Leadership .......................................................................................................... 18
      The Impact of Godly Leadership ................................................................................. 19
      The Gender Discussion ............................................................................................... 20
      Lack of Godly Leadership ......................................................................................... 25
    Discipleship and Evangelism ......................................................................................... 30
  Theological Foundations ................................................................................................. 31
    In Defense of Male Leadership ...................................................................................... 34
  Theoretical Foundations ................................................................................................. 36
    Prior Research Efforts ................................................................................................. 37
      Men’s Revival .............................................................................................................. 38
      Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study ............................................................................. 38
      Responding to the Incarceration Statistic ................................................................. 39
      Men’s Discipleship and Evangelism Ministry ............................................................ 40
    Theoretical Models and Ministry Practices .................................................................. 40
      Commission on United Methodist Men – Ministry Model ...................................... 40
      Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Ministry Practices ......................................................... 41
      Redesign: 121 Community Church ............................................................................ 42

Chapter 3 .................................................................................................................................. 43
  Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 43
  Intervention Design ............................................................................................................ 43
  Participant Composition ................................................................................................. 44
  Retrospective Review ........................................................................................................ 45
    Protocol for Pastoral Eligibility .................................................................................... 45
List of Tables

Table 1. Current ministry trends ................................................................. 64
List of Figures

Figure 1. Pastoral tenure ...................................................................................................................... 60
Figure 2. Prior church climate .............................................................................................................. 62
Figure 3. Most effective program initiatives ......................................................................................... 65
Figure 4. WMBC member tenure .......................................................................................................... 70
Figure 5. Decline in ministry participation .......................................................................................... 71
Figure 6. Mentoring perception since uniting with WMBC ................................................................. 72
Figure 7. Reason for lack of male involvement ..................................................................................... 75
Figure 8. Leadership model comparison .............................................................................................. 78
Figure 9. Leadership and mentoring received comparison ................................................................. 79
Figure 10. Desire to participate in church ministry ............................................................................... 80
Figure 11. Ministry participation trajectory ......................................................................................... 81
Figure 12. Boosting male ministry participation .................................................................................. 83
Figure 13. Tenure vs. trend correlation ................................................................................................. 84
Figure 14. Pre vs. Post Desire to Participate in Ministry ..................................................................... 88
Chapter 1

Introduction

The high preponderance of women dominating ministry leadership is a looming issue in many Black churches across the nation. Within the African American (AA) church context, “Women have held a strong numerical majority of Black church membership.”¹ Even in churches where there is a near-even divide between the number of women and the men, women still represent a disproportionately high number of governance roles.² In today’s Black churches, nearly 67% of the congregants are women.³ Many things have transpired that continue to drive these percentages higher and higher each year.

Despite the educational opportunities afforded to men in religious organizations, there are glaring differences between men’s and women’s participation in them. Women tend to be more active in church than men. The current perception is that women are the backbone of the Black church.⁴ “Women are the ones who volunteer, tithe steadily, chair committees, take care of the day to day functions of the church, and make up between 70 and 90 percent of the congregations.”⁵ Women score higher on dimensions of nonorganizational religious movement, such as reading the Bible, and higher on religious organizational and leadership involvement (e.g., attending worship service or leading small group ministry).⁶ This prompts the question:

⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Hodges, Rowland, and Isaac-Savage, “Black Males in Black Churches,” 47.
How does the church find itself in this current trend of diminished male ministry involvement? Many curious minds have sought to discern the root cause of this perplexing phenomenon.

Mark Croston, a former pastor who is affiliated with the publishing division of the Southern Baptist Convention, shared, “Very often in African-American culture, we’re really, really tied to what we would call our home church, the church you grew up in.” He asserted that AA men are introduced to church attendance and the church experience at a very young age. In Adelle Banks’ survey of Black millennial church attendance, it is conveyed that 75% of AA young adults stop attending church for at least one year between the ages of 18 and 22. Of this total percentage, roughly 58% are AA males (compared to 39% of their White male counterparts).

Adelle Banks pointed out that many AA males leave the church at this time of young adulthood, never to return. They often cite that the move away to college, new freedoms, disagreement with the church’s stance on political/social issues, and feeling unplugged from people in their church were key promotors of the separation. Once this gulf or void is formed, if there is no sound foundation established for AA men to fall back on, they rarely have a desire to come back to the church or participate in its ministries. If the church does not possess active and thriving ministries for Black men to plug into, then the church runs the risk of losing them indefinitely.

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Over the past two decades, a gaping disconnect has emerged that is driving men away from the church and thwarting any possibility of leadership participation. Dameion Royal suggested that an attributing factor in the development of this wedge has to do with a failure to provide for the needs of men in the church effectively. Somewhere along the line, church leaders have failed to connect with the current culture of men in the church. There must be an understanding of the context, culture, and language to impact a target group. The African American male is plagued with high dropout rates from school, increasingly large numbers of incarceration, and high rates of single-parent homes. These plagues have fueled the seeming disconnect observed in the home and in the church.

The continuance of males in the current pattern of diminished leadership and falling away from roles and responsibilities in active church ministry represents a move further and further away from the balanced spiritual design of the church of God depicted in Scripture. Genesis 2:15 says, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” From the very beginning, the initial mandate of dominion and leadership, in the theology of headship, has rested with men. Just as Adam was created before Eve to be responsible for ruling and leading, men today have the same role and responsibility. When men become aware of their significance, function, and purpose as the male component of the body of

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10 Hodges, Rowland, and Isaac-Savage “Black Males in Black Churches,” 47.
13 Ibid.
14 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in King James Version Bible.
15 Tony Evans, Kingdom Man: Every Man’s Destiny, Every Woman’s Dream (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2012), 87.
Christ, they can thrive and take pride in knowing that male roles please God. In numerous ways, male ministry participation and leadership lead to a stronger and more stable family connection.16

**Ministry Context**

In August of 2014, this investigator commenced training and seminary education with the intent of becoming a better ambassador for the kingdom of Christ and to better instruct the people of God. A deep passion of mine has always been to establish a stronger brotherhood in the body of Christ. Over the past few years, this student researcher has personally witnessed a sharp drop-off in the ministry leadership, roles, and responsibilities of males within the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church (WMBC). This series of events serves as a significant motivating factor for reversing this adverse spiritual trend.

The Holy Spirit formed WMBC in 1968 under the pastoral leadership of Lawrence Deason. One evening, Pastor Deason was sitting at the home of the late James Deason and the Holy Spirit moved him to look for a church site. The Holy Spirit led Pastor Deason to Worthington Street in Houston, Texas, to a vacant house. He inquired with a neighbor across the street as to who owned the house. The owner of the house was the person he was speaking with, and he was willing to sell the house to have it become a church.

Pastor Deason went up and down the streets of the Trinity Gardens community and collected over 30 names of people who stated they would attend the new church. The organization meeting was held on October 7, 1968, at Dr. Cleophus Montgomery’s church, presently named Northside Missionary Baptist Church. There were thirty-two persons at the

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conference, including the late W. Leo Daniels, Nathan Perry, and Cleophus Montgomery. During this meeting, a collection was taken up by the organizers to paint the church. Pastor Daniels donated a piano and pews. On the first Sunday of worship, there were thirty-five congregants in attendance. Yolanda Moore was the first convert.

Worthington Missionary Baptist Church has had six ordained ministers, which includes the late W.C. Moore, Minister Clarence Deason Sr., Pastor Henry Clay, Pastor Anthony Ester, Minister Emanuel Deason, Jr., and Minister Charles Brown. Upon the passing of Pastor Lawrence Deason on October 29, 2010, Minister Clarence Deason, Sr. began serving as interim pastor as the search for a new pastor went forth. On January 29, 2012, this student researcher was called by God to be the new pastor and the successor of a wonderful mentor and beloved uncle. The installation service for this shepherd took place on April 15, 2012. Further pastoral leaders added to the WMBC ministry since that date include minister Rodney Rodgers, Minister Jimmy Durio, and Minister Randall Hicks.

A body of believers in Christ nestled within the Trinity Gardens subdivision of northeastern Houston, Texas, comprises WMBC. What was once a region consisting of an overwhelming populace of AAs has now become a community of nearly equal numbers of Hispanic and AA individuals. WMBC is a predominantly Black church that sits on the community border between the AA and the Hispanic groups and is characterized by a 99% to 1% split of AA and all other ethnicities combined. Likewise, there arises a growing need for multicultural evangelism. As the kingdom of God is to reflect a diverse compilation of cultures, races, and ethnicities, the movement of compelling lost souls to Christ cannot stop at the border of the AA community.
The church grew from an initial following of thirty-five members to over 400 within five years. Today, WMBC is composed of 70% female members. Of the 150 members who currently attend the Sunday and Wednesday worship services, 105–110 of the total number are women. The church is known for promoting sound biblical doctrine through insightful Christian education and for its evangelism and discipleship campaigns. It holds to a rigid interpretation of Scripture with limited flexibility rarely exhibited. Despite the seeming harshness, the church portrays principles of hospitality, service, and love. The church motto says it all: “The Church where friendliness is a habit.”

At WMBC, guests are genuinely made to feel welcome upon entry, but many members in the church expect all members to (almost immediately from conversion) uphold a near-perfect Christian walk with God. If a member does not portray a spotless life, that individual incurs extreme criticism and judgment.

This student researcher assumed the shepherd’s mantle over the WMBC flock in 2012 upon the death of Pastor Deason. Over the past two decades, it has been common to see many dilapidated homes amid a poverty-stricken neighborhood. What was once a thriving and affluent community has become a collection of low-income residences, with physical deterioration as far as the eye can see. High numbers of AA males enslaved and institutionalized to the gambling and drug trades can be found on nearby street corners. Perhaps many of them have been burned by the church to some degree and can sense the mounting disconnect between church leadership and AA males they should be mentoring.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{17}\) Price, *The Black Church and Hip Hop Culture*, 140.
Problem Presented

A critical issue in the AA church is the rate at which church attendance is declining. Across the male and female populace within the Black church, parishioners appear to be missing from church services. Studies indicate roughly 78% of the AA population claim church affiliation but admit to attending a church service only once in a six-month period. Further research has revealed that nearly 32% of the national AA community is “unchurched.” For a Black community with such a deep historical religious foundation, these statistics are remarkable. This issue is even more apparent when specific and refined attention is directed toward the AA male crises.

The problem this project addressed is the observed decline of ministry participation and leadership amid Black males at WMBC in Houston, Texas. From 2012 to 2019, interval disparities in male ministry leadership at WMBC began to emerge. Frequently, this researcher noticed young men who were once active in church ministry become consumed with the appeal of street life and become disenchanted with church bureaucracy. Another observation the researcher made was the growing number of older males within the church who were becoming bogged down with the increasing demands of work-life.

In the onslaught of these life challenges, many men conceal their frustration, throw up their hands, and drift away in the aftermath. With each passing year, WBMC has observed a rising number of AA women unite with the church and move from initial conversion to active commitment and then to ministry leadership. AA male ministry leadership representation needs

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to be better and more in line with the biblical mandate. At WMBC, men have become content
with conceding ministry leadership to the women that are available, capable, and willing.

In support of this growing trend, research suggests that “ethnic and overseas churches
report gender gaps as high as 10 to 1.”21 The high percentage of female congregants is evident in
a myriad of Sunday worship services amongst AA churches. Usually, women account for 66% to
80% of Black church memberships.22 There is not much variation between the current populace
at WMBC and the data extracted from the contemporary literature. The ratio of men to women is
1:3.

Male leadership within the confines of WMBC must meet the challenge of developing
males to live their lives in a manner that is in alignment with the Word of God. Role modeling,
effective discipleship of men, and godly leadership has dissipated tremendously. Deuteronomy
6:6–7 attests to the responsibility of the man of God to teach biblical statutes to his children:
“And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach
them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house,
and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

The male is the first role model, leader, and teacher of the family. Judges 2:10 alludes to
the resulting circumstance in the absence of male leadership: “And also all the generation were
gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the
Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” This excerpt from the book of Judges is a
testament to the plight of AA males today. Where strong leadership is deficient from elders, the
next generation sustains a considerable drop-off in its ministry participation and leadership.

22 Lincoln and Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, 382.
Weak spiritual leadership in the church is one of the most noted causes of the AA male decline. With weak spiritual leadership defined as “proclaiming a concept while missing in practice,” many AA males are repulsed by the hypocritical model of leadership described in Matthew 23.

At the onset of the twenty-first century, Jeffrey Tribble, Sr., made readers privy to a new vision of pastoral leadership. Transformative leadership is designed to transform individuals, churches, and society. It is this paradigm shift in leadership models that ushers in an age of AA male resurgence in church ministry and leadership.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project was to address the decline of AA male participation in local church ministry leadership. This student researcher sought to discover why there is an observed departure of men from these roles of responsibility and how to restore balance to the initial design of God at WMBC. This research thesis examined the AA church in the Trinity Gardens neighborhood of Houston, Texas, to determine if the same accelerated decline of male ministry participation was prevalent in neighboring congregations. Furthermore, this study sought to utilize data gathered to devise training paradigms on how to increase the ministry involvement of AA males at WMBC.

The researcher’s passion for this project arises from the experiences, ministry opportunity, and tutelage received from the late Dr. Lawrence Deason. This mighty man of God laid a solid foundational church plant in his home in 1968. The church grew by leaps and bounds from an initial four members to over 400 within ten years. The church enjoyed a fruitful season

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of exponential growth. In the waning years of his life, the church endured a mass exodus of many of the young men who once thrived in the church. As mentioned earlier in this project, the researcher became a successor in accepting the call to continue to lead the flock of WMBC. One of the researcher’s primary objectives was to ascertain why the Black males were disassociating from their God-mandated responsibilities of ministry participation and leadership.

Many dominant themes have emerged in the literature concerning the decline in the church attendance of Black males, but a gap exists as to why men shy away from leadership roles or participation in ministry. The research indicates that historically Black Protestant churches in Texas are made up of 41% men and 59% women.25 This student researcher set out to investigate the observed ministry regression to determine root causation. The overarching goal was to reverse the trend through educational paradigms that build men AA men at WMBC.

This research can benefit pastors and churches of a predominantly AA demographic because the subject matter is a critical element and foundation to all churches that are wondering: Where the men have gone? Why the departure? This research project revolved around key contributions of nine pastors in the Trinity Gardens local of Houston, Texas, coupled with solicited questionnaire responses of seven members of WMBC. Listening, observing, and compiling sagacious advice from these participants uncovered a reservoir of knowledge pertinent to the goals of this research project. The cooperative junction of these two groups supported the purpose of the dissertation: to uncover critical content related to the mental disposition of AA males that produces a decline in ministry participation and leadership at WMBC. With these

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thematic rationales unveiled, new models and paradigms were explored to incite the resurgence and proliferation of God-mandated male leadership.

**Basic Assumptions**

There are foundational predispositions that undergirded the thought process of the student researcher. They affected the writings encapsulated in his framework, assumptions, and worldview. The researcher’s underlying assumptions guided the context and shape of the thesis project; however, an objective research process was used to address the problem of decline in ministry participation and leadership amongst males at WMBC.

To achieve this level of objectivity, the researcher needed to be cognizant and abreast of current issues related to the subject matter. This researcher needed to pinpoint a specific root cause of the problem and then offer solutions to reverse the trend. The compilation of basic assumptions that ensued required no justification and assumed a baseline adherence to theological principles.

This student author assumed a devotion of long hours of planning, development, and tenuous fieldwork. The researcher knew that countless hours would be spent collecting data, conducting interviews, cultivating workshops, and preparing and executing training programs. Numerous hours were allocated to establish rapport and trust with men in hopes of attaining honest and insightful feedback. The project researcher understood the labor-intensive process of data analysis, coupled with the daunting chore of deciphering common themes, and expected the underlying trend to emerge. This researcher assumed a season of compounded stress via contemplative data study and analysis. He planned to be confounded, at times, from the feedback received from the male participants. With so many factors affecting AA males, the researcher assumed that at some point in the research process, he would have to consider the views of social
and human service research for complete objectivity. The researcher assumed that he might incur a level of judgment and criticism from other Christians (especially from those with a feminist viewpoint).

Another underlying assumption of the researcher was that most readers are unaware of the slow and subtle trend away from the Scriptural mandate for kingdom men. Since the spiritual shift in churches has been slow and gradual, many Christians are still oblivious to the decline of AA male ministry participation and leadership. This researcher assumes that the reader possesses a contemporary mindset of the nature and purposes of ministry to the point that they may refuse stagnancy as a position in executing the preaching of God.

It is important to possess a foundational belief that man, whether he likes it or not, has been called to execute a mandate of leadership and headship in the home and the church. However, the researcher assumes that because of potential readers’ progressive mindset, they may see no danger or dysfunction with men functioning in diminished leadership capacities. The author hopes the reader will approve of a doctoral-level thesis project that investigates the current trend at WMBC and rationales of men that lead to the decline. The researcher assumes that the reader is confident that the project is strengthened by sound theological foundations and will find the research useful for a potential application.

A key consideration to bear in mind is that the author’s research foundation is within the scope of his ministry at his own church, which was the inspiration for the project. The assumption is that the reader is comfortable with and understands stepping into the role of a pastoral peer who connects to the plight of AA men shying away from spiritual responsibility as mandated by God. The researcher has tried not to overestimate his contribution in this project;

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26 Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 18.
rather, he identified with the problem at WMBC and set out to investigate and address the problem by executing sound action plans applicable to the context.

Definitions

**AA** – African American and used interchangeably with Black

**Action Research** – A collaborative approach to research that empowers individuals or groups with the means to take systematic action to resolve problems. In this project, action research involves developing a paradigm in response to decline of male ministry participation and leadership in church.\(^{27}\)

**Brotherhood** – The fellowship of men expressing true Christian fraternity at WMBC

**Declining men’s ministry** – A church with diminished male ministry participation and leadership during a pastor’s tenure

**Design** – The Scriptural mandate of God for the male gender, encompassing his role and responsibilities

**Discipleship** – The commitment to training, teaching, and maturing believers in Jesus Christ. It is encapsulated by the obedient deed of following the One who has presented the initial call.\(^{28}\)

**Evangelism** – Church outreach specifically designed to foster opportunities for the promulgation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to recruit others into the local church. It encompasses and all out obedience to the Great Commission as depicted in Matthew 28:18–20.\(^{29}\)

**Growth** – A church marked by a semiannual increase of 5 percent or more of the number of males in ministry leadership.


\(^{28}\) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 57.

**Intervention** – Steps taken by the researcher and pastor to reverse the indicated decline of male ministry leadership and participation

**Ministry participation and leadership** – Male involvement in fulfilling the Scriptural mandate in the home and the church

**MOP** – Men of Power brotherhood established at Worthington Missionary Baptist Church

**Student researcher/Investigator/Student author** – Terms used interchangeably to denote the author of the thesis project

**Unchurched** – A term used to describe the lack of religious involvement and participation in any local spiritual body

**WMBC** – Worthington Missionary Baptist Church

**Limitations**

This research project sought to use the data gathered to make recommendations about how to increase male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC in Houston, Texas. The student researcher is aware that this study is about a predominantly AA church. Therefore, his goal was to appeal to a primary audience of AA men in a rural area of northeastern Harris County. A known limitation rests on the fact that this research may not be beneficial to churches that are not of the same worldview or religious philosophy.

Additionally, the AA men who participated in this study are members of WMBC. The men of this group are not necessarily a representation of all men across other churches and denominations. The thoughts, actions, and mindsets of these men may not be comparable to or reflective of men in other congregations with different racial and cultural make-ups, so the data obtained from these participants may not be applicable to those churches.
In this research project, AA males of WMBC completed surveys and questionnaires. Therefore, the views of this isolated group of study participants may not encompass those of all AA men within the entirety of the Trinity Gardens church community. The composition and design of this research project may not be of relevance to other local churches outside of WMBC. However, some aspects of the research could prove beneficial for local churches of a similar demographic that face related issues. This research can present pertinent data that local Christian churches could use to gain a better perspective of the broader problem of male ministry participation and leadership within Christian churches across the United States.

**Delimitations**

This student researcher elected to set boundaries to the research to narrow the research focus. Limits were set to minimize deviations from the topic and overreach that could derail a proper investigation of the chief aim of the thesis project. These delimitations create a move away from a general study of diminished ministry participation and leadership amongst males in American churches. Thus, this research focuses on investigating the decline at WMBC in Houston, Texas. Without the delimitations, the topic would be too broad and unmanageable.

Another boundary was set for this research in that this trend was examined within a specific gender, race, and denomination. The student author elected to focus attention on AA males at WMBC, a church within the Baptist denomination. The researcher most closely identified with this populace and shared an undying passion for brotherhood and the restoration of males within this cultural demographic.

One other area of delimitation has to do with the age of the Black males utilized in the study, who were twenty-one and older. Capable men eighteen to twenty years of age were not part of the core control group for this study, as data gathered in these groups could potentially
skew the overall results. The quantitative research was limited to research gathered from retrospective literature reviews: books, journals, and the Internet; these sources offer strong correlation but do not account for the root cause.

**Thesis Statement**

If new and innovative mentoring paradigms for Black male participation in ministry leadership are constructed, then the adult male populace of WMBC will be positively impacted to incite thriving involvement in Christian ministry. Kunjufu’s work provides further insights into this thesis statement. He suggested that for Black men to thrive in ministry, the church must empower them\(^\text{30}\) and cause them to realize the greatness within.\(^\text{31}\) The empowerment process lends itself to the development of useful training paradigms coupled with impact evangelism and discipleship ministries.

When men know their worth and can see themselves in the progressive vision and purpose of the church, they will be more involved in ministry and leadership. Murrow suggested that men are desperate for a clear and sharp vision for their involvement. When vision is present, menial tasks carry great significance, promoting men to invest themselves with vigor.\(^\text{32}\)

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\(^\text{31}\) Ibid., 67.

\(^\text{32}\) Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 159.
Chapter 2
Conceptual Framework

This researcher sought to uncover why there was an observed decline in the number of Black males participating in ministry and leadership at WMBC. A literature review ensued that examined research conducted prior to this thesis project. A meta-analysis of the literary foundation for this topic was enlightening as it affirmed, “Your work is not being done in a vacuum. When you take the keyboard into hand and begin writing, you enter into a dialogue with other scholars.” Sound biblical principles formed this project’s theological foundation. Ideas and prior concepts of precepting scholars helped shape the theoretical construct.

Literature Review

The review of literature undergirds research presented regarding a decline of ministry participation and leadership amongst Black males in many church congregations across America. Eric Q. Truss alluded to a study of the book of Judges as an indicator of what has gone wrong with today’s society. Today, women display a position of leadership in the family, a place initially designed for male influence, which is too often disrupting the family. These actions have initiated a chain of events that have inundated the church, where “Black males are extinct or at least are at a minimum.” Robert Allen O’Neal presented research that highlights the modern-day makeup of the Black church Sunday worship service as consisting predominantly of female members and leaders. On average, women comprise between 59% and 67% of African

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American church membership in Harris County, Texas.\textsuperscript{36} Burning questions arise from a review of these statistics: Where are the men in the church? Why have they not taken their place as leaders in the home and church?

Dominant themes emerge concerning the decline in church attendance of Black males, accounting for why men shy away from leadership roles or participate in ministry. The literature’s presentation and explanation of why Black males are seemingly absent from many church congregations offers sound foundations to this research. However, the purpose of this research study is to delve deeper into the rationale of Black males who shrug off leadership responsibility and ministry participation. Dominant themes of authentic godly leadership, discipleship and evangelism programs designed specifically for men, and educational voids on the male role as instituted by God represent a high correlation with and parallel to the decline of Black male ministry participation.

Godly Leadership

Godly leadership has been defined as men of God serving in the capacity of spiritual leaders and leading the people of God into more complete fellowship with Him.\textsuperscript{37} Two areas of specific interest emerge within the confines of godly leadership—the positive influence that godly leadership has on Black males and the resultant void observed when there is no competent and godly leadership. The positive model of one male leader has a direct impact on hundreds under his mentorship, and conversely, the absence of a strong male leadership model breeds divergence from the biblical mandate for the AA male.

\textsuperscript{36} Pew Research Center, “Religious Landscape Study.”

\textsuperscript{37} Tribble, \textit{Transformative Pastoral Leadership}, 30.
The Impact of Godly Leadership

Before delving into the effects of godly leadership, it behooves the reader to develop a base understanding of what it means to be “a leader.” Littleton Maxwell provided astute observations on the subject matter, stating that “leadership is an art, an inner journal, a network of relationships, a mastery of methods, and much, much more.”

In its simplest sense, a good leader or leadership as a whole encompasses standard descriptors across various definitions. Researchers tend to see the repetitive use of words like direction, influence, and change in definitions of a leader. Thus, a godly leader seeks to transform the moral and spiritual values of an individual by inspiring them to move in a particular direction to incite change—i.e., conversion and life transformation.

The impact of authentic godly leadership serves as a spiritual barometer of male leadership and ministry participation in George Barna’s work. He alludes to the importance of religious leaders exhibiting the character and anointing of God in their lives. Spiritual leaders who forsake the governance and guidance of the Holy Spirit are merely leaders who hold high-ranking executive positions, with no real influence in the lives of God’s people. Barna highlights the lack of strong leadership as one of the most significant reasons for the decline of the American church. The church is losing influence, and this type of unspiritual leadership drives men to begin seeking a more spiritually responsive church.

Alison Cook reports, “When church leadership turns toxic, it can be incredibly damaging. The results can include added injury to hearts, souls, and minds. I understand why people step away from church all together for a

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season." The most devastating link to decreased ministry participation and leadership has proven to be ineffective leadership.\(^{42}\)

As the literature progressed into the twenty-first century, the godly leadership theme was still evident and unscathed. Tony Evans provides support and continuity to the topic of godly leadership. He asserts that life-altering transformations occur in the lives and homes of men who align themselves under a godly and spirit-filled pastor or church leader.\(^{43}\) The attitudes and activity of males in the church reflect the leadership presented. Jeffrey Tribble, Sr., encapsulates the indelible impressions that are etched in the psyche of the spiritual mentee that provide a firm foundation for male leadership and maturity.\(^{44}\) It is transformative pastoral leadership that is needed to affect change in individuals, churches, communities, and societies at large.\(^{45}\) Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby’s research contributes to the impact of strong leadership, as they state that it is observed to occur when followers translocate from where they are to a new level of vision and purpose. The result of godly leadership is that “people are not in the same place they were before they were led.”\(^{46}\)

**The Gender Discussion**

It is of importance to note that there are scholars within academia that have reservations with the view that only males are mandated to take leadership positions within the body of Christ. Some cling to the ideal of godly leadership across the male and female genders, that

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\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 77.

\(^{44}\) Tribble, *Transformative Pastoral Leadership*, 34.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 87.

women are every bit as capable of leading congregations as their male counterparts. However, though many women are capable and often have proved willing to step in when men cower from their leadership responsibilities, they overstep God’s mandate. Genesis 3:16 reveals that from the very beginning, an ordained leadership role was given to the man. Those who hold to this theological view tend to “maintain traditional views of gender roles and to reject the contemporary perspective of gender equality.” Regardless of the observed increase of clergywomen into ministerial leadership, clergymen still cling to the belief that these clergywomen experience overwhelming amounts of role strain due to unresolvable conflicts between pastoral duties and family responsibilities.

James Cone articulates the Black church cannot afford to downplay the observed proliferation of female leaders in its day-to-day practices. Through his research, he concluded that it should be no surprise to find women in the pulpit. However, ever-increasing additions to church bylaws, with seemingly blatant disregard to Scriptural exegesis and hermeneutics, often serve as barriers to granting women the opportunity to fulfill their calling into positions of leadership.

Sarah Sumner and Philip E. Johnson argue that John Piper’s definition of manhood is faulty. Piper holds to the idea of masculinity as representative of man’s benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women. Sumner and Johnson refute Piper’s claim and offer an

48 Ibid, 13.
50 O’Neal, “The Black Church and the Current Generation.”
argument that the Bible does not say that God designed men to be leaders, providers, and protectors of women. “Nor does the Bible say that women are designed by God to affirm, receive, and nurture the strength and leadership of worthy men.”

Perry and Collins support the claim of Sumner and Johnson in alluding to criticism of an overarching promotion of a patriarchal agenda. Black women may be more abundant in church services, but men still hold a disproportionate number of leadership positions within the church. Perry and Collins argue that there is no shortage of male leadership in many churches and that male preference is evident in rigid interpretations of biblical exegesis.

It would prove naïve to pretend that there is complete objectivity in the conceptualization of this thesis project in terms of its relationship to leadership and ministry participation in the Black church setting. In certain respects, ministry leadership is understood in terms of egalitarianism. An egalitarian perspective of church ministry is one that relates to or believes that all facets and responsibilities of ministry are deliberately open to women, who deserve equal rights and privileges and should not be subjected to male subservience purely based on gender.

In J. Aldred’s work, Dixon alludes to this ideal:

It is not an unusual experience for an able, young, Black or White woman to aspire to the highest echelons of management because her abilities are recognized and cherished, while in her church life, she is expected to defer to disabling, domineering male leaders of far less skill and experience just because they are men and she a woman!

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Rosemary Reuther suggests, “The more one becomes a feminist, the more difficult it becomes to go to church.” Aldred and Reuther based their claims on the principle that there are different viewpoints within the church as to what constitutes faithful Christian practice. For some, faithful Christian practice assumes the strict adherence to the Scriptural deferential and subordinate position of women.

The opposing patriarchal view is one of complementarity, which stresses male headship and female submission. Those who adhere to this view insist that it is the true biblical mandate, stating other viewpoints have undermined the Scriptures and lean towards a pagan ethos. Proponents often assert that their intention is not to discourage women, but to illuminate the principle that although God has created both male and female in His image, their responsibilities are not interchangeable. Grudem asserts that a woman’s call to work in ministry cannot include the pastorate, but may apply to women’s ministry, children and youth work, and smaller or more intimate forms of pastoral work.

Arthur Pinn argues that there is an observed and diminished role of women in the Black church. He adds this situation is “fueled by the residue of the cult of domesticity, the need for male-centered leadership as the proper framing for spiritual development in line with the will of

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60 Grudem and Piper, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.


63 Sharon James, *God’s Design for Women* (Darlington, United Kingdom: Evangelical Press, 2002), 137.
God."\(^{64}\) James Cone also emphasizes the importance of female leadership and denounces the Black church for advocating the perceived subservience of women to men. According to him, Black males in leadership position insist that women cater to roles where they can “[sing] in the choir, serve on the usher and stewardess boards, participate in missionary society, [and] cook in the kitchen.”\(^{65}\)

Lastly, Eric Redmond contributes to the gender discussion in noting, “The whole concept of the church—Sunday worship, weekly activities, and membership—seems like one big women’s society, with (in most cases) a man at the helm with a message to get women to follow what he says.”\(^{66}\) A segment of men in today’s society is convinced that the Sunday morning worship service is primarily geared toward women, promoting discomfort for males. Men are left with feelings of exclusivity and un-usefulness.

In 2010, leadership within the AME and CME church congregations observed a decline in attendance in the Black church. Bishop Cecil Bishop of an African Methodist Episcopal church notes, “The church now is during a storm and the storm is worse than we thought it was . . . What you have is a growing number of people for whom the church doesn’t mean very much.”\(^{67}\) Furthermore, he goes on to unveil that younger generations of Black males are diminishing in their numbers within the pews. In March of 2010, leadership from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Christian

\(^{64}\) Anthony B. Pinn, *Understanding and Transforming the Black Church* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 95.

\(^{65}\) Cone, *For My People*, 132.


Methodist Episcopal Church assembled to acknowledge the decline of attendance. Specifically, they discussed the decline of Black males and the social concerns that affect them (e.g., unemployment, incarceration, etc.).

Controversial scholar Jawanza Kunjufu asserts that the decline of AA males in the church can be attributed to the new-age definition of religion, which is viewed by many Black males as too passive and soft and full of too many emotions. Leon Podles theorizes that Christianity in general has “lost this masculine sense of a struggle against the forces within oneself, having been watered down to passionate feelings and emotional ecstasies that men find difficult to identify with.” Even though the clergy in most churches are male, Podles asserts that they have fashioned their messages toward females. Julia DeCelles-Zwerneman asserts that the decline in male attendance and participation in church “creates a vicious cycle, with more men tempted to view church as an all-girls club where they would not be welcome or comfortable.”

Lack of Godly Leadership

The antithesis to godly leadership is the lack of a true godly leadership model. Where there is a noted guidance and influence deficiency, AA males pay a heavy price, which results in a breach of ministry participation and leadership. Christian Gale argues that adult AA male role models can be highly beneficial in breaking the cycle of crime and incarceration among young AA males. Without these true paradigms in place, the research is indicative of a dark and gloomy path ahead.

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68 Fitzgerald, “Decline of Black Males.”

69 Ibid.


The Emotionally Unhealthy Leader

Peter Scazzero makes the reader privy to the dangers associated with direction from an unhealthy leader. He refers to these leaders as destructive and a hindrance to themselves and the people they lead. Scazzero highlights that church leaders who exude emotionally unhealthy characteristics display an unrealized low self-awareness, prioritize ministry over marriage or singleness, take on more activity toward the ministry of God than their relationship with God can sustain, and lack work/Sabbath synergy. He argues that emotionally healthy leaders display high levels of self-absorption in dealing with their own “shadows,” and he refers to this dark side as “the accumulation of untamed emotions, less-than-pure motives and thoughts that, while largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behavior.”

As leaders are promoted in their leadership roles and responsibilities, there is a need for a higher level of maturity and accountability to establish emotionally healthy cultures and structures. Leaders must learn to cope with and reconcile personal attributes that Scazzero considers unhealthy. Embracing this challenge is paramount in fostering emotional growth, reconstituting spirituality, and aligning oneself with the character of God.

Effects of Immorality

Additionally, noted disenchantments associated with a lack of godly leadership emerge. Again, referring to Blackaby and Blackaby, there tends to be a growing mistrust and skepticism of those in leadership positions. This stigma revolves around the ever-increasing regularity of church leaders’ exposure to unethical and immoral conduct. The bad taste of disappointment

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73 Ibid., 5.


and embarrassment has incited a disdain for participation in any church-related events. Many men take the position of abandoning the church when they associate godly leadership with immorality. Emmett G. Price adds that weak, ungodly leaders have mistreated and burned a high incidence of young Black men within the hip-hop generation.  

Altered Worship Model

A rigid and traditional worship model can distance younger Black males from what they refer to as a “true” worship experience. Jessica Barron describes the increased departure of Black males from ministry participation and leadership in this manner: “Contemporary observers of the Black Methodist church notice that behaviors such as clapping, lifting up hands, affirming spiritual gifts, and dancing, previously rejected by class-conscious Black Methodists in northern urban settings, are now more widely embraced by younger Blacks.”  

Shana Mashego alludes to a mass exodus of younger Black males from Black churches due to a lack of connection. These males leave to seek out other venues and arenas that exude more contemporary worship experiences.  

Pastor/CEO Model

The review of the literature reveals that the “Pastor/CEO” model impedes many males in their desire for growth and leadership within the church. Kunjufu describes this model as an egotistical and dictatorial style of leadership. This particular model leaves men frustrated, in a

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76 Price, *The Black Church and Hip-Hop Culture*, 140.


sense, that their voices and ideas are often rejected and not considered.\textsuperscript{81} Murrow adds that an effective pastoral leader understands that to influence men in a positive manner, one must provide them with training and responsibility. Men will choose to be a part of a movement or vision where they can contribute.\textsuperscript{82} In essence, the CEO model breeds dissention and division amongst the male populace.

The Norm of Fatherless Homes

Loren Harris conveys that the lack of male leadership in the home breeds the reality of father absence in American society. This current trend is mirrored in the Black community and in hip-hop culture. It is a statistical fact that “the majority of Black children are born to unmarried parents who typically part ways before their children reach adulthood.”\textsuperscript{83} There are a plethora of hip-hop artist stories to choose from that depict children growing up in households led by a single mother. In this scenario, young boys become accustomed early on to women in leadership roles. In many instances, Black men abandon their mandated responsibility and post before they can know whether they can contribute to the well-being of their children.

David Blankenhorn adds, “Over the last two hundred years, fathers have gradually moved from the center to the periphery of the family. As the social role of fathers has diminished, so our cultural story of fatherhood has by now almost completely cease to portray fathers as essential guarantors of child and societal well-being.”\textsuperscript{84} The shortage of true male role models in leadership capacities in the home and at church yields men depicted as losing four Scripturally

\textsuperscript{81} Royal, “Increasing the Involvement of African American Men.”
\textsuperscript{82} Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 170.
mandated roles: irreplaceable caregiver, moral educator, head of family, and family provider. Although Blankenhorn assigns these characteristics to the nation as a whole, a mirrored reflection can be seen in the African American community.

Kunjufu also highlights staggering statistics Black home life. He asserts that in 1920, 90% of Black homes had both parents; however, by the turn of the twenty-first century, only 32% had father and mother in the home. Again, these observations support the idea that young Black males exposed to the ideal of women in leadership positions. Since women in leadership are seen in the home on a consistent basis, the idea becomes etched in the mental psyche of young boys, and it is no surprise to them when they see women in governance roles in the church. It is what they have experienced for most of their lives.

Meg Meeker highlights a series of critical statistics that researchers of this issue should not overlook. She suggests that healthy young men are the direct by-products of fathers who purpose to be role models for them. Accumulated data show that compared to the 35% of Hispanic children and 28% of white children who spend a significant amount of time with their fathers, a whopping 80% of AA children can expect to spend a gross amount of their childhood in a fatherless home. When AA fathers are present in the home and exhibit God-mandated character traits, sons respond to this model by subconsciously infusing these same characteristics in their own lives.

Kunjufu further states that children are highly susceptible to the outpouring of messages by people in their circle of influence. AA males desperately need their fathers to be present and

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85 Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 16.
86 Kunjufu, *Developing Strong Black Male Ministries*, 42.
88 Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 146.
to foster strong character development in their lives. An absentee father is incapable of accomplishing this God-ordained assignment, and this is too often what happens in AA families. Kunjufu asserts that there is a growing necessity to implement new paradigms to promote the growth of AA boys into positive and productive young men.

Discipleship and Evangelism

Mostly, the lack of males assuming leadership roles and participating in ministry is the result of failed evangelism and discipleship efforts to appropriately target males. Readers are enlightened to the idea that men’s ministry, coupled with effective discipleship, promotes the spiritual growth of men. Eric Truss teaches that in light of God’s mandate to place Black males in leadership, the obstacle of convincing Black males of the necessity of coming to Christ remains. Church leaders must be ready to implement spiritual and foundational programs to offer the Black male upon entrance into the body of Christ. Also, teaching the importance of a Christ-centered life is paramount.

Wayne J. Vaughan stresses the critical responsibility of pastors and church leaders to provide Christian training that encourages spiritual growth. God issues a key mandate in the Great Commission of Matthew 28 to go teach, evangelize, and disciple all that would hear the gospel of Jesus the Christ of God. This is every believer’s directive and order.

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89 Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 146.
92 Truss, “Decline of Church Attendance in Black America,” 1.
Theological Foundations

This project is founded on the sound biblical principles that undergird the conceptual framework. From the very beginning, the male gender was formed from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7) and immediately given dominion (Gen. 1:26), authority, a role, and responsibility (Gen. 2:15). Adam was created and put in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and maintain it. He was also charged with the task of naming all the living creatures of the earth (Gen. 2:19). Lastly, Adam received first-hand instruction from God on the rules of the Garden (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam was able to eat freely from every tree in the Garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The critical point to remember is that Adam had roles of leadership and responsibility before Eve was ever introduced as his help meet (Gen. 2:20). Adam was charged with coverage and protection for his wife. He was also responsible for passing along the commandments and instructions of God to his wife. Deuteronomy 6:7 teaches that the head of each household was charged with diligently teaching his children, at all times, to love God with all their heart, soul, and might. He was to convey the statues, commandments, and law of God to all under his coverage and to carry on this teaching in the promised land. This is a foundational role and responsibility of every man for his family.

In the Apostle Paul’s first letter to the Church at Corinth, he made it evidently clear that the Lord has established principles of order, authority, responsibility, and accountability.


Corinthians 11:3 states, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” In its full sense, headship bears with it the connotation of leadership and authority. In the simplest of explanations, it means to have the appropriate responsibility to lead—coupled with matching accountability. This role bequeathed to the male gender is important to the plan and design of God. It does not mean that women are inferior or unequal to men, but it does suggest that respect is given to the God-ordained order of leadership and authority.

Joshua 24:14–15 sets another premise by discussing male leadership and responsibility issued by God:

Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

In the last line of verse 15, Joshua took on the leadership role of his family and made it known that he and his family would serve the Lord. As a godly man, it was Joshua’s responsibility to govern his immediate household with instruction to follow God and to present the same instruction to the people of God.

The book of Ephesians is a testament to God’s mandate for the church and family. The Apostle Paul conveys, “For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:23–24). Again, God illustrates a specific role and responsibility of the man in covering his family. The church and home life of many Black males are in disarray due to the disregard of the word of God. The AA male is far beyond the danger threshold due to his seemingly blatant neglect of the mandate of God. Never has there
been an age in which Black males have fallen away from leadership responsibility in such drastic fashion. The abandonment of family principles as displayed in the life of Christ is a direct contradiction to Ephesians 6:4: “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Another theological basis for this thesis project can be understood through God’s charge and use of men throughout the Bible. For instance, the book of Genesis asserts that God created man on the sixth day. Genesis 1:26 states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” This Scriptural text demonstrates the centrality of man in God’s design. God mandates leadership responsibility and the authoritative role to the male gender. What has been seen is the absence of male guidance has left the home and church in disarray. In fact, when Adam failed to assume his ordained leadership role and allowed Eve to lead, mankind was cursed (Gen. 3:6).

In Ephesians 6:4, the Bible is clear in stating men and fathers are responsible for bringing up children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Throughout the Bible, there are a plethora of examples that depict God’s intent for men to lead. God uses men to accomplish His purposes and to establish His kingdom in the earth. God utilized Moses to deliver and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (Ex. 14:1–28). God used Joshua to lead the Jewish nation over the river Jordan into the Promised Land. These men depict the necessity of the man yielding to the will of God through his accepted mandate. God used these men to lead His people and to lead military campaigns of deliverance. In the New Testament, Jesus selected and enlisted twelve men to be His disciples, not six men and six women. Tony Evans alludes to this principle by expressing, “Both male and female were made in the image of God and given headship. Yet
as is revealed in the theology of headship, men have been called to lead in the exercise of this dominion.\textsuperscript{97}

Additionally, at the onset of Christ’s ministry, He expressed the importance of men in His kingdom campaign. Jesus selected twelve men who would become His disciples (Matt. 10:1–6). Moreover, Jesus dwelt with these men and effectively discipled them. Jesus performed many miracles in their presence, and after His resurrection, He issued the mandate to evangelize the world (Acts 1:8, Matt. 28:18). Without a doubt, God loves and desires to use men in His service. He equally loves and desires to use AA men. It is critical that the men of WMBC embrace this truth and form an atmosphere that fosters this mold.

Christ’s intent in evangelizing males is that they would, in turn, evangelize outside of their own walls with the objective of leading all men to salvation. Among the many groups who need the gospel of Jesus Christ are AA males. WMBC must recognize the gravity of this issue and be intentional about evangelism efforts to AA males. Furthermore, it must create an inviting environment for AA men where they can be trained in the art of effective discipleship. With these measures in place, passionate maturation cycles evolve in the life of AA men.

\textbf{In Defense of Male Leadership}

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he provided specific and inspired instructions for the public worship setting. I Timothy 2:8 depicts men taking the lead when the church gathers for meetings and corporate worship. “That the men” in this verse is indicative of Paul’s viewpoint that men would take the lead at meetings of the congregation. In verse 12, Paul is recorded as saying that a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man. Paul’s focus and chief aim here is with relation to public worship in the church. God has established a clear chain of authority in both

\textsuperscript{97} Evans, \textit{Kingdom Man}, 87.
the home and the church setting. David Guzik added to this in relaying, “God has ordained that men are the “head”—that is, that they have the place of authority and responsibility.”

I Timothy 3 further established the theology of male leadership in the home and in the church. In the Apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy (who was left to govern the affairs of the church at Ephesus), he provided clarity to the church for anyone who aspired to take on the position of a bishop or deacon. Paul made clear the qualifications necessary for each office. Inspired by God and directed by the Holy Spirit, Paul made mention of two critical determinates for these offices: (1) 1 Timothy 3:2: The overseer had to be the husband of one wife, sober-minded, respectable, and apt to teach, and (2) 1 Timothy 3:4-5: The potential overseer had to demonstrate the ability to effectively manage the affairs of his own household. Deacons were held to the same standard and had to meet the same qualifications. Verse 11 of this text lends itself to the ideal of the wife having a separate but equally important role and function within the body of Christ.

Although the Apostle Paul worked side by side with many women who made themselves available for the work of the ministry (Rom. 16, Phil. 4:3), he did not appoint any women to the office of elder or pastor. Of note, Junia (Romans 16:7) was well spoken of among the apostles but was never assigned a leadership role. Paul taught that men and women had differing responsibility within the body of Christ. Since women were not permitted to exercise authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12), though spiritual equals, they were excluded from positions of governance over men in the church.

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Theoretical Foundations

This researcher is aware of the contributions of others that allow for a full picture of the growing problem of diminished male ministry participation and leadership. The research and program development already completed helps cultivate a sound understanding of the theoretical background for this project. With the knowledge attained, this researcher sought to delve deeper into the problem.

This dissertation takes shape and foundation in the belief that AA men have a profound impact on the state of the AA family, church, and community. In the absence of godly leadership of AA men, women have no male support, children grow up without fathers, communities are violent, and drug infested, and penal systems are inundated with increasing numbers of AA prisoners. Conversely, when AA men dedicate themselves to ministry participation and mentorship programs, their lives are more likely to lead to results indicative of God’s design. Wilcox and Wolfinger convey one reason why some Black men flourish compared to others is faith. Studies show that AA men attend church at rates notably above the national average: “37 percent of those aged 18 to 60 attend several times a month or more, compared to 30 percent of non-black men, according to the 2008–2014 General Social Survey. And compared to their religious peers, these 6 million or so black men are significantly more likely to thrive.”100 In essence, young Black men who attend church are approximately one third less likely to be incarcerated than their peers who do not regularly attend church.101


101 Ibid.
The church’s involvement in the plight of AA males should take the form of teaching these males how to live lives that are both Christlike and productive. The Black church has been identified as a breeding ground for many Black male leaders. Within this system, roles as deacons, lay leaders, and trustees serve as pivotal developmental stepping-stones of Black leaders.102

Furthermore, education plays a critical role in the establishment of church-based programs that help usher Black men along paths of leadership excellence.103 This message of mentorship, discipleship, and education greatly impacts the lives of AA males—thus producing far-reaching effects. AA men who are strong leaders and involved in church ministry are usually model citizens who are gainfully employed, support their wives and children, and evade the grasp of the prisons.

Prior Research Efforts

Jawanza Kunjufu has spent countless hours of labor-intensive research on the plight of the AA male with relation to church ministry and leadership disassociation. The spiritual epidemic is so widespread that he asserts 75% of attendance in the Black church is by women, with AA males absent from the pews.104 As stated earlier in this section (and throughout this research paper), Black males wrestle with drug addiction and offenses, fatherlessness, incarceration, unemployment, and educational disparities. These struggles contribute to the great falling away of Black men from their God-ordained responsibility and position.

103 Ibid., 48.
104 Kunjufu, Adam! Where Are You? 16.
Men’s Revival

Kunjufu proposes that instead of the observance of Black men for one day (Men’s Day services), men need far more than one day out of 365 days to address their problems. “A greater commitment to AA men would be Men’s Week or Men’s Revival.”\(^{105}\) The transcendence of a single-day observation would provide more of an opportunity to inspire, teach, and train Black men. Kunjufu also suggests the use of a men’s retreat. The retreats offer Bible study, prayer, seminars, sermons, and music. He asserts that retreats can show the leadership and vision of a pastor in that it extracts men from their comfort zone and allows them to come together, cry, share intimate secrets with one another, and experience camaraderie with one another. The movement is powerful. Nothing proves more influential in the life of a man than being in a room full of God-fearing men who are filled with the Holy Spirit.\(^{106}\)

Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study

Kunjufu stresses the use of monthly men’s fellowships and weekly Bible study as a means of establishing a stronger brotherhood. Both ministries foster a greater level of commitment to bringing Black men together to address issues that men experience while examining solutions from a biblical perspective. Julia Duin also adds that Bible study is an effective tool in this endeavor; however, “Ministers are out of touch with what’s happening on the ground, as they are surrounded by a wall of secretaries and voice mail. .. Once a week home Bible study groups lack depth and theological know-how for help with the serious problems many men face.”\(^{107}\) The underlying elements to invoke are consistency and continuity. It is not


\(^{106}\) Ibid.

enough to initiate these impactful concepts and programs. If they are not cultivated and developed, all progress will be for naught.

**Responding to the Incarceration Statistic**

Many researchers on this topic cite mass incarceration of high numbers of AA males as a major contributing factor to decreased church attendance and thus ministry leadership and participation. “According to the NAACP, the percentage of Black drug users in proportion to total drug users in the United States is about 12% but Blacks represent 38% of drug related arrests and 59% of drug offenders in state prisons. . . . [An] estimated 500% increase in the rate of drug related imprisonment for Black males was noted between 1994 and 2004.” This is a staggering statistic and leaves little doubt that drug related incarceration is a leading driver in male decline in ministry leadership. Moore, Adedoyin, Robinson, and Boamah provide an interesting alternative for dealing with the high rate of incarceration among AA Males:

Networks of Black churches working with the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (a nonprofit group) are coordinating and incorporating into church bulletins fact sheets about mass incarcerations, scriptural quotations, and a Jim Crow study guide that educates Black congregations on the need for mass movement to stem the tide of mass incarceration among Blacks in the U.S.109

In addition, “Black churches have been very proactive in developing reentry programs that provide psychosocial and economic reintegration interventions for paroled Black males.”110 Together, these interventions provide a means for Black males to assimilate back into the church community. Once Black men know how much others care and can see the tangible support of godly Black male leaders in the church, the seeds of hope and inspiration are planted. For Black

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110 Ibid.
men to begin to trust and hear and follow the sound doctrine of godly leadership, they must first see and experience commitment to the cause.

**Men’s Discipleship and Evangelism Ministry**

Many researchers claim that the utilization of heightened outreach efforts designed for men who are new to the Christian faith or are new to a church have great impact on a man’s involvement in ministry. Dameion Royal stresses that one quarter of the participants in his research trial alluded to benefits of mentorship, education, callbacks, checkups, and consistent encouragement. Tony Evans adds that there is a dire need for churches to establish an environment that cultivates authentic discipleship. In providing “discipleship opportunities, sound teaching, small groups to connect with, and ways for men to serve,” provision is made for them to become spiritually mature and to assume the responsibility of the kingdom mandate. As the church fosters a community of authentic discipleship for men, the rate of ministry participation and aspirations of leadership increase.

**Theoretical Models and Ministry Practices**

**Commission on United Methodist Men – Ministry Model**

One such model of discipleship was developed by the Commission on United Methodist Men. They created the *UM Men* magazine, which is an official publication on men’s ministry. In its quarterly printing, men are “provided informational and inspirational articles designed to help them become servant leaders. It includes news, ideas, announcements, recognizing men’s ministry, scouting ministry, the UM Men Foundation, and missions from around the world.”

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111 Royal, “Increasing the Involvement of African American Men,” 85.
112 Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 184.
113 Ibid.
114 General Commission on United Methodist Men, *Guidelines Men’s Ministries*. 
The magazine served as a means of keeping the men of the church abreast of the various ministries and opportunities afforded to them. Additionally, it served as a pipeline of guidance for routing men into ministries best suited for their gifting.

The Commission also took small-group meetings and structures to a new level. Instead of meeting for the traditional study of the Bible, they met with the intention of engaging each other in conversations about their souls. The men were to invite other men to join them in discussing eight chapters of *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience* by Kevin M. Watson. These meetings led to the group’s desire to continue meetings that bound the group together in unexpected ways. The bonding establishes true brotherhood and lays the foundation for effective discipleship and ministry leadership.115

**Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Ministry Practices**

National Church Adopt-A-School Initiative

This model emanates from a vision of Evans that sought to utilize men from local churches that have partnered with schools across America to tutor, mentor, and guide the next generation. Through this program, men are equipped to lead the charge across the country on how to restore communities through the partnership of local churches with public schools and meeting social needs.116

Men’s Fellowship

Evans has established the Men’s Fellowship movement to disciple men toward spiritual maturity and reclaiming their lives, families, and communities for the kingdom of God. Through this fellowship, men are educated in their God-mandated authority and responsibility. In an effort

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116 Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 225.
to combat the decline of male leadership and ministry participation, the fellowship provides them with (1) an environment conducive to spiritual growth and maturity, a place that address their specific needs and responsibilities biblically; (2) a spiritual environment that promotes connection with other kingdom men; (3) small group forums that focus on accountability; and (4) an atmosphere that fosters the coming together with other men of God to serve ministries of the church and participate in community outreach projects.

**Redesign: 121 Community Church**

Some churches, like 121 Community Church, have made the innovative move of redesigning their websites and worship edifices to bring men back to the church. Interior spaces have been altered to introduce a more rugged appeal in hopes of captivating a more masculine audience. Other churches are providing their male parishioners a way to participate in fellowship with more manly activities—hunting, outdoor adventures, etc.\(^{117}\)

\(^{117}\) DeCelles-Zwerneman, “Church Management.”
Chapter 3
Methodology

This section of the research project analyzes the paradigm that the researcher utilized to study the problem of declining ministry participation and leadership among Black males at WMBC. David Murrow reveals that in 1998, “a staggering 92 percent of African-American churches reported gender gaps, the highest among faith groups.”118 The observed phenomenon, the strongly disproportionate number of women in AA congregations across the nation, is very real. Black males are absent and uninterested in assuming leadership in the Black church.

The methodology of this thesis project was based on from the theological assumption that the pastors and male ministry leaders serve a vital role in addressing the issue. The researcher bases this assumption on a sound biblical premise from Acts 20:28: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.” The methodology took root in initial collaboration with pastors in the Trinity Gardens locale, who provided a keen and retrospective insight into the basis for the design and implementation of an intervention. The researcher conducted a retrospective review of local churches with demographic constructs like the initial sample (WMBC), followed by a prospective study of adult AA males at WMBC.

Intervention Design

As presented in the purpose statement section of this thesis project, the researcher examined the observed decline of AA male participation in church leadership campaigns at WMBC. This project sought to ascertain how initiation of new mentoring paradigms would impact ministry involvement and leadership of AA men at WMBC.

118 Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church, 239.
Participant Composition

Pastors of local churches in the Trinity Gardens community were approached, with an intent to enroll a maximum of nine pastors into the retrospective review portion of the research. There was no age limit nor limit to the years of pastoral tenure that would exclude a pastor from participation in the research project. Next, a total of seven AA male members at WMBC over the age of twenty-one were approached for participation in the prospective aspect of the research project. Before the field research began, the researcher completed the required prerequisites. The Institutional Review Board of Liberty University (IRB) required the student researcher to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) before submitting the IRB application to complete research with living subjects. Upon successful completion of the mandatory training program, the IRB granted permission for interaction with human subjects for social and behavioral research.

After deep contemplation and prayer for God’s guidance as to what methodology to pursue, the student researcher decided to apply to the IRB at Liberty for authorization to conduct field research among: (1) local pastors in the Trinity Gardens community in Houston, Texas, and (2) WMBC Black males twenty-one years of age and older. The overarching aim was to investigate and collaborate with local pastors in studying the problem of declining ministry participation and leadership of AA males and to analyze the pre/post perceptions and actions of AA males of WMBC on leadership ministry.

The IRB application packet for sought approval included (1) the option of either a recorded or e-mailed paper copy pastoral interview format that commenced early in the spring

semester of 2020, (2) informed consent documentation granting the student researcher authorization to conduct face-to-face recorded interviews or e-mailed member interviews, and finally, (3) an approved PowerPoint presentation administered during the mid-interval workshop.

Retrospective Review

A critical point of the retrospective review involved investigating and analyzing congregation demographics, ministry trends, and leadership perspectives of local pastors of Black churches in the Trinity Gardens community of Houston, Texas. This part of the thesis project laid valuable groundwork for the comparative analysis that ensued.

Protocol for Pastoral Eligibility

An initial telephone call served as the commencement of the screening procedure for pastors, also referred to as subjects or study participants. When contacting a church within the Trinity Gardens locale, the following steps were taken. If the pastor could not be reached with the initial call and if the church were without office staff, the researcher left a message with a request for the pastor to return the phone call on the answering service. Upon contacting the pastor, the investigator determined if the potential participant met the eligibility criteria for entrance onto the research study.

With care, courtesy, and respect, calls included a brief introduction, and interviewees were asked one question: “Is your congregation predominantly Black?” If the response indicated anything other than a primarily Black congregation, the conversation politely and apologetically ended. If the reply was positive for an AA congregation, the investigator’s qualification process was complete, and the pastor met the eligibility criteria.

The next step was to initiate the informed consent process. The researcher provided a brief description of the research study stating that he was conducting research to identify why
ministry participation and leadership among males is declining at WMBC of Trinity Garden in Houston, Texas. He moved forward to seek approval to record a face-to-face interview with the pastor.

Due to the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in February of 2020, the researcher provided the pastors with the option of receiving an e-mailed or mailed copy of the consent form in advance of the interview. If the participant chose the e-mailed consent option, they were to save a copy to their computer upon receipt, type their name and the date on the forms, save again, and return a copy to the investigator via e-mail as an attachment. If the subject chose to have the consent formed mailed, they received a self-addressed, stamped return envelope to use when returning their signed consent form. If they preferred to respond to their interview questions in writing, they received an e-mail or a mailed version of their interview questions along with the consent forms. They returned the signed consent forms and interview responses together by e-mail or mail.

To achieve overarching goal of collaboration between with the participating pastor and the investigator, a significant level of comfort and trust was pursued. Discovering solutions that shed light on the problem of AA males disengaging from ministry participation and leadership stood a higher probability of achievement when comfort and trust were present. For pastors to divulge intimate information, first about themselves, and second about their congregations, a high level of trust was paramount. For instance, a pastor may unintentionally skew a data set by seeking to portray his congregation in the best light, a principle commonly known as the Hawthorne effect.120

Without established rapport, a pastor may not share the truthful yet unflattering results that may prove important to the overall research project. To combat this potential occurrence, the researcher chose to share some details about his own church to breed honesty and trust. The function of the participating pastor was to provide responses to qualitative research questions that answer the queries of how, why, and what in areas of leadership, mentoring, and ministry participation.

The researcher reached out to the pastors of neighboring congregations by calling each church and requesting a time (at the pastor’s convenience) to discuss the research project and ascertain eligibility, with time allowed for the pastor to accept or decline participation in the study. Face-to-face interviews were the preferred method of obtaining data as they were deemed, by the investigator, as most effective in establishing the comfort and confidentiality of the participant. However, amendments were made to the protocol to account for the hindrances of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the COVID-19 restrictions became apparent, the investigator promptly e-mailed informed consent documents along with pastoral interview questions to the participants at their request.

**Protocol for Pastoral Interview**

Due to the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, potential participants were extended the option of receiving an e-mailed or mailed copy of the consent form in advance of their interview. If a participant preferred to respond to their interview questions in writing, they received an e-mailed or a mailed version of their interview questions along with the consent forms.

The interview questions were as follows:

1. How long have you been pastor over this flock?
2. How would you describe God’s plan for African American men about leadership in the church?

3. How would you describe the climate or atmosphere of African American male ministry participation prior to commencement of your pastoral tenure?

4. What has been the observed trend of ministry participation and leadership among Black males, age 21-65, in your congregation? What do you feel is the reason for the decline or rise?

5. What programs have been implemented during your tenure to reverse the decline? Or how have you sustained or improved the level of participation and leadership among African American males in your church?

6. Do your suggestions and design implementations to increase ministry participation and leadership among African American males prove lasting? How so? Or why not?

7. What is your interpretation of discipleship and evangelism of the African American male in the Black church?

8. Do you feel that the Black church lacks effective mentoring programs that affect ministry participation?

9. What do you think adult men in your congregation would say if asked about the effectiveness of mentoring programs under your pastoral tutelage?

10. If I asked adult men in your congregation what they like most about mentoring programs at your church, what kind of responses would I receive?
11. If I asked the adult men in your congregation what they would like to see improved about mentoring/leadership programs in your church, what might be a typical response I would receive?

The interview questions were returned to the student researcher in a timely manner. The project intervention of pastoral interviews was expected to wrap up within two to three weeks after IRB approval was granted. The estimated time frame held true, as the interviews concluded within three to four weeks. Once the pastoral interview portion of the project was complete, a comparative analysis was then executed to determine if WMBC issues and views were consistent with that of the locale.

Phase Two Intervention: Prospective Research

Next, the researcher process selected the participants who would shape the body of the research. The researcher targeted participants which encapsulate the integrity of the thesis project. Face-to-face interviews, again, were the preferred survey tool to gain insights from 10 WMBC AA males, twenty-one years of age and older. However, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions resulted in a need for each potential participant to receive an e-mailed or mailed copy of the consent form to review in advance of enrollment in the study.

The researcher sought voluntary participation in the research project through a general community announcement at one of the 2020 WMBC Brotherhood meetings. This meeting was held at the optimal time to achieve maximum participation in the study. The researcher also made announcements offering voluntary participation in the research study during the Sunday morning announcement period of the Facebook and YouTube live worship services. Announcements were made each Sunday from the start of the approved trial until initiation of data analysis.
At the WMBC Brotherhood meeting (conducted online via Zoom), the researcher utilized a printed, IRB-approved recruitment script to provide a detailed description and purpose of the study. The script flowed as follows:

1. Participation in this research study is completely voluntary.
2. The problem is the observed decline of ministry participation and leadership amid Black males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church.
3. The purpose of the study is to address the decline of AA male participation in ministry leadership. This student researcher seeks to access why there is an observed departure of men from these roles of responsibility and how to restore balance to the initial design of God at the WMBC.
4. The desired outcome of the study is: If new and innovative mentoring paradigms for Black male participation in ministry leadership are constructed, then the adult male populace of WMBC will be positively impacted to incite thriving involvement in Christian ministry.
5. The importance of performing the research revolves around men knowing their worth and seeing themselves in the progressive vision and purpose of the church. With this vital information, they will be more involved in ministry and leadership.
6. The study schema and design require participants to engage in:
   a. A pre-workshop interview conducted face to face in the pastor’s study
   b. Attendance at a leadership workshop/seminar and a question-and-answer session afterward
   c. A post-workshop interview.
7. The participants’ information will be kept confidential.
8. An allotted time was provided for questions.

9. The potential benefits of the study: Participation in the research, (pre-workshop interview, post-workshop questionnaire) may spawn the development of a new mentoring paradigm that may serve as a model to other churches with a similar issue. Also, participation may incite the development of a new mentoring paradigm at WMBC.

The researcher answered questions and concerns to the satisfaction of all present in the online conference. Once questioning was complete, those desiring to participate in the research project provided the researcher with a valid e-mail address or physical address to send the informed consent and interview questions. As stated earlier, seven participants (AA male members at WMBC age twenty-one years and above) were recruited for the study. The participant pool was small, as the overall male population of the church is small. Participants in the study constituted 75% of the overall male population at WMBC.

If a participant chose the e-mailed consent option, they saved a copy to their computer upon receipt, typed their name and the date on the forms, saved again, and returned a copy to the researcher via email as an attachment. If they chose to have the consent forms mailed, they received a self-addressed, stamped return envelope to use when returning their signed consent form.

**Interview Session Procedure with WMBC Participants**

The student researcher allocated a total of four weeks to accrue a maximum of ten participants and allow them to consent to the study and complete the interview process. Face-to-face interview sessions were not conducted considering the COVID restrictions of the state government and World Health Organization advisements. It was the true aim of the researcher to
establish a foundation of rapport and trust. This was viewed as essential to a productive interview session, but the conditions would not allow for such interactions. Instead, interview questions for participants were e-mailed or mailed out with the informed consent documents. The participant was afforded the option of responding to the interview questions in typewritten or handwritten format, and then returning the questions with the consent forms. Great care was taken to reassure the participant of confidentiality and privacy. The participant was reassured that participation in the study was completely voluntary, with no adverse treatment in care and concern if there was a decision to withdraw from the study.

The interview questions were as follows:

1. How long have you been a member of WMBC?
2. What areas of ministry pique your interest?
3. Do you think there has been a decline in male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC? Please explain why.
4. How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?
5. How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since uniting with WMBC?
6. What do you believe the Bible says about the role and responsibility of men?
7. Do you feel that men of the church have assumed a role of Godly leadership and authority as mandated in Scripture?
8. What do you like most about the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? What would you say is a weakness of the Brotherhood at WMBC?
9. Have you ever been in a position of leadership in ministry at WMBC? If so, are you currently serving in this position? If not, do you aspire to lead or participate in ministry?

10. If you were once in a position of leadership and have currently stepped away from that role, please explain why you may have felt the need to vacate the position.

11. Have you heard of and how would you describe “spiritual gifting”?

12. Do you know what your spiritual gifts is? If so, are you currently operating in this gifting?

13. Please describe what you feel are the main reasons why there is a lack of male involvement in church ministry. How do you feel that leadership may be able to increase male participation?

The development of a contextual training paradigm aimed at the education of WMBC males on the roles and responsibilities of the man as orchestrated by God was the desired aim in response to feedback attained from these interview sessions.

**Leadership Workshop**

After the interview process was complete, the next phase of intervention consisted of a Zoom web conference PowerPoint presentation. For those that could not attend the Zoom meeting, the presentation was e-mailed to them for review. The workshop served as a baseline for comparative analysis. The mindset and actions of men at WMBC concerning leadership roles and responsibilities before the workshop were compared to the mindset and activities after the workshop. The assessment tool of choice was a questionnaire that encompassed scaling measures. This allowed the researcher to quantify the results and determine if the workshop/seminar proved beneficial.
The training seminar consisted of a one-hour interactive PowerPoint presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. The workshop was conducted via Zoom web conference. All men of the church were invited to the workshop, but participants in the research study were required to attend the training seminar. This element was part of the inclusion criteria of the informed consent document. The workshop agenda encompassed the following:

- Opening Scripture
- Opening prayer
- Introduction of current male leaders, aspiring leaders, and lay congregants
- Ice-breaker exercise to establish comfort, comradery, and brotherhood
- Song of praise
- Interactive instructional sessions on roles and responsibilities of men as ministry leaders
- Discussion of vision and purpose of men as mandated by God
- Question-and-answer segment
- Closing prayer and benediction

The mindset and actions of men at WMBC concerning leadership roles and responsibilities before the workshop were compared to the mindset and activities after the workshop through the following line of questioning conducted after the workshop:

1. After attending the workshop, please describe your current understanding of the role and responsibility of men at WMBC.

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your desire to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership at WMBC. (0 indicates no desire, 10 indicates anxious and eager willingness)
3. Do you feel that you have been equipped with tools necessary to fulfill the biblical mandate of God for the male gender? Please explain why.

4. How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?

5. How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since attending the leadership workshop at WMBC?

6. How would you assess the teaching and leadership of males at WMBC?

7. How would you assess the effectiveness of the leadership workshop?

8. Please convey your thoughts on the current trend of male ministry participation at WMBC? Express if you are encouraged or discouraged with the current trajectory. Explain why.

9. What is your current attitude regarding the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? Do you recognize any significant strengths or weaknesses?

10. Please describe the ideal setting and circumstance that would boost male ministry and leadership participation at WMBC.

The intended goal was to deduce if a shift or redirection in thought process had taken place amongst the participants in the research project.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design**

After completion of the intervention process, the researcher’s next task involved determining whether the intervention achieved the purpose of the thesis project. To arrive at sustainable and valid outcomes of the study required a systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data.\(^{121}\) This evaluation of collected data was set against the backdrop of the researcher’s goals and aims.

\(^{121}\) Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 70.
In other words, the evaluation focuses on the problem presented to ascertain if the research question had been sufficiently addressed. The investigator rendered detailed accounts of what transpired in the progression of the intervention stage, including presented challenges and successes. Before proceeding, an introduction to the various types of data analysis considered in the evaluation process is warranted.

Types of Analysis

A successful analysis of the data stems from the concept of data triangulation.\textsuperscript{122} Triangulation means comparing data observed to that gained in an interview process. It can also mean comparing the viewpoints and experiences of people against different perspectives.\textsuperscript{123} Four basic types of triangulation exist to facilitate the researcher’s ability to decipher fluctuating perspectives on multifaceted issues. Data triangulation encompasses the use of various data sources in a study. It compares information from observation, documents of official records, questionnaires, and interviews. This straightforward method proved beneficial to analysis of the researcher’s data points and aligned with the researcher’s purpose.

Second, methodological triangulation employs the use of multiple methods such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents to study a single problem or program. The methodological triangulation process was a bit excessive for this research, given that the only tools of intervention were interviews and a mentorship training workshop.

Third, investigator triangulation comprises a group of researchers or evaluators from varying fields to investigate the same issue. This method remotely applies to this research study. Finally, theory triangulation utilizes manifold perspectives to interpret a single set of data. This

\textsuperscript{122} Sensing, \textit{Qualitative Research}, 72.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
process proved too broad for the investigator since his focus is on ministry and leadership decline at WMBC. After careful deliberation on the various triangulation techniques to employ, it was determined that data triangulation was most suitable. This comparative process was most aligned with the investigator’s assessment of qualitative data points.

Interpreting the findings of the intervention project required analysis of qualitative responses and a few quantitative responses. The data were collected and organized for evaluation purposes via MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. This tool allowed for comparative analysis of response segments across various questionnaire data points. Interview questions encapsulated the foundational basis for this thesis project. Since standardized questions dictated the format for the pastoral sessions, interpretation of the data gathered through the participants’ responses to these questions. The researcher intended to categorize the responses of the five pastors together for each question.

Another feature for interpreting involved analyzing interview responses across two separate themes and points in time. The completed interview sessions, pre-workshop, represent one time point, T01. The completed interview sessions, post-workshop, represent time point T02.

Summary

The study description and the composition of the interview sessions account for the format of intervention design. Next, the implementation of the design process honed in on the possible evaluation types and, ultimately, the researcher’s method of choice. The researcher was able to derive a specific protocol methodology from the project evaluation procedures, thereby laying a sound foundation to build upon in the next chapter.
Chapter 4

Results

In implementing this research project, this researcher sought to develop a new and innovative mentoring paradigm at WMBC. This training program endeavored to reverse the observed trend of declining ministry and leadership among African American males at WMBC. A reasonable research goal was to see an observed 20% to 30% increase in ministry participation above baseline status. The baseline status was derived from the e-mailed interviews of WMBC males, completed pre-leadership workshop. The responses obtained in this phase of the research were used to develop the workshop model and future mentorship training paradigm. Once the workshop training was complete, a questionnaire was used to capture data on the mindset, actions, and activities of men at WMBC concerning leadership roles and responsibilities. This qualitative scaling assessment tool allowed the researcher to extrapolate results used to determine the efficacy of the intervention.

The investigator utilized qualitative data obtained from interviews with pastors in the local area to gauge the cultural climate of this issue. Secondly, the researcher used interviews from males at WMBC to determine the shortcomings of the old approach to mentoring and discipleship of AA males at WMBC. The new mentorship paradigm was compared to old approaches to determine efficacy variation. The old system, although established, has not yielded a desired result in the eyes of the investigator. The new system was compared to the old system by measuring the percent increase in male ministry participation and leadership, ease of implementation, and participant arousal or interest.

This chapter analyzes the findings related to the initial problem of the observed decline of African American male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC in the Trinity Gardens.
Community of Houston, Texas. It chronicles and compiles the results of the research project’s intervention plan through two avenues: analysis of the results and evaluation of the conclusion. The results were derived from three viewpoints: trends in neighboring churches and observations of neighboring pastors on the issue, the investigator, and adult AA male members.

The following questionnaire segment of the intervention comprised 11 questions for pastors and 23 questions (13 pre-workshop and 10 post-workshop) for AA adult males of WMBC.

Pastoral questioning comprised four major categories: first, the pastors’ view of God’s plan for the AA male (investigated in Question 2); second, the observed climate and current trend (investigated in Questions 3–4); third, programs, interventions, and perceptions (Questions 5–6 and 8); and fourth, male perception of discipleship and mentoring programs (Questions 7 and 9–11). The pre-workshop member interviews also consisted of four major categories: first, the members’ view of male ministry at WMBC (investigated in Questions 3–5 and 8–10); second, the role and responsibility of men (Questions 6–7); third, effectiveness in ministry and spiritual gifting (Questions 11–12); and fourth, ministry decline and intervention response (Question 13).

Lastly, the post-worship member interview involved four major categories: first, the role and responsibilities of AA males (included in Question 1); second, male perception of discipleship and mentoring programs (Questions 3–7), third, observed climate and current trend (Questions 2 and 8–9); and fourth, programs, interventions, and perceptions (included in Question 10). These interview tools were utilized in generating valuable qualitative data sets that proved beneficial in the development of a new discipleship paradigm for AA males at WMBC and as a guide for other churches that are experiencing similar issues.
Analysis of the Results

Analysis of Pastoral Questionnaire

The COVID-19 pandemic accounted for revisions to the investigator’s original protocol to remain in compliance with Centers for Disease Control recommendations and state mandates. After recruitment letters went out, nine pastors responded to the researcher’s questionnaire. The responses and data analysis are captured in the sections below.

Question 1 of the pastoral questionnaire examined how long pastors had been in leadership over their respective flocks (see Figure 1). As evident in the figure below, pastoral tenures were further categorized into three distinct tenure groupings: > twenty years, ten to twenty years, and < ten years. Tenure was an important component in the research, and it was thought to have a direct correlation with the efficacy of mentoring programs.

Figure 1. Pastoral tenure
God’s Plan for African American Males

This set of questions purposed to allow a comparative analysis of how local pastors in the Trinity Gardens community construed God’s ultimate plan for AA males. On Question 2 (How would you describe God’s plan for African American men about leadership in the church?), all pastors agreed AA men were to typify home, church, and community leadership roles.

Pastor 1 stated that God’s plan for African American men regarding leadership in the church was for them to be a beacon of light, hope, and encouragement to promote positive change in every aspect of life as it relates to the home, church, community, society and abroad. Pastor 2 asserted a specific call for the African American man to return to home and community leadership roles and felt this role or position would not fully be achieved until men reasserted themselves in active service in ministry. Pastors 2, 6, and 8 made additional mentions of observing an increased number of AA men willfully shrugging the biblical mandate of God and thus attributing to the reversal of leadership roles in the church.

Observed Climate and Current Trend

Question 3 asked, How would you describe the climate or atmosphere of African American male ministry participation prior to commencement of your pastoral tenure? The following responses captured the pastoral observations. Only two of the nine participating pastors admitted to a rising and already thriving atmosphere of AA male participation in ministry. Another two of the nine pastors indicated a plateau had been reached with no observed rise or decline in Black male leadership. Five of the nine participants admitted the climate before their tenure was already declining in AA male participation (Figure 2). Pastor 1 explained that the climate or atmosphere of AA male ministry participation prior to commencement of his
pastoral tenure displayed a lack of structure and active participation. Pastor 2 conveyed male participation appeared static, and, in some cases, declining.

![Figure 2. Prior church climate](image)

The responses to Question 4 (What has been the observed trend of ministry participation and leadership among Black males, age 21–65, in your congregation? What do you feel is the reason for the decline or rise?) proved mixed and covered all areas of spectrum between a declining or rising observed trend (see Table 1). Three of the pastors admitted to a declining trend of participation, while conversely, four pastors reported a steady increase. Of note, there were two pastors who observed either maintenance or an increase in ministry participation and leadership, only to end in a gradual and sharp decline amongst Black male leadership in the last few years.

Pastor 3 relayed that participation was thriving and consistent until ten years ago. At that pivotal point, there began a slow and gradual decline in Black male ministry participation due to a traceable deterioration of morals and principles exhibited by those in leadership positions. Pastor 3 believed these corruptive character traits infiltrated the mindsets of all men under these individuals’ tutelage, thus resulting in a mass exodus of Black men from the congregation. The
bottom line was that either the men under the leaders either assumed the same degenerative character of the leaders or could not endure examples of hypocrisy on display. Either way, men left the church.

Pastor 5 experienced a similar rise and then sharp decline within his short tenure (six years). Pastor 5 conveyed a rapid rise in ministry participation due to a new pastor, new ideas, and new programs that appealed to youth and young adults. Pastor 5 was convinced that people are always drawn to new things. As of late, Pastor 5 had noticed a sharp decline in Black male participation. The decaying infrastructure was attributed to the lure of newness fading away. At that point, many men made a quick exit. Women were observed to remain steadfast in their ministries.

Pastors 1, 4, 8, and 9 all observed more involvement, more unity, and more ministry opportunities for Black men within their respective congregations. The reasons for the rise ranged from effective and sustained teaching, godly leadership modeling, and urges for men to step up and to be held accountable. Brotherhood ministries were common focuses in all the congregations in hopes of establishing further support for ministry participation and leadership.

Pastors 2, 6, and 7 asserted there appeared to be a decline in this age group’s participation. They all alluded to the rationale for the decline as a lack of senior male role models, resulting in the younger males electing to sit back and watch versus actively participating. Eventually, the lack of participation leads to their absence.
Table 1. Current ministry trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Male involvement</th>
<th>Male unity</th>
<th>Ministry opportunities</th>
<th>Reasons for rise or decline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Teaching, modeling, accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Lack of senior role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rise/decline</td>
<td>Rising/declining</td>
<td>Rise/decline</td>
<td>Rise: stable programs. Decline: corrupted morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Undoctored preaching and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rise/decline</td>
<td>Rising/declining</td>
<td>Rise/decline</td>
<td>Rise: Lure of the new. Decline: End of a fad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Lack of senior role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>Lack of senior role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Good models, innovative fellowship techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Rising</td>
<td>Strong biblical teaching and leadership models</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programs, Interventions, and Perceptions

Question 5 (What programs have been implemented during your tenure to reverse the decline? Or how have you sustained or improved the level of participation and leadership among African American males in your church?) examined the various programs, initiatives, and strategies utilized by neighboring pastors with the chief goal of either reversing or preventing the decline of Black male participation in church ministry. Figure 3 provides an accurate representation of the programs the proved most beneficial amongst the pastors.
All the pastors agreed on either the initiation or on the resurgence of effective brotherhood activities. Many of the pastors described some sort of training or mentoring for young men in the church. They conveyed that if young boys and men are mentored early on, it would probably promote prolonged and sustained ministry participation.

Pastors 3 and 4 chimed in with interesting views on leadership training. Pastor 3 proposed the development of a mentoring program that would target a small group of males in leadership positions. The program would be designed to incite a change in morals, thinking, and worldly perceptions. After each man went through the program and developed a strong footing in leadership, he would then mentor another young man coming up behind him. Pastors 3 and 4 were working to build from this model to establish the Each-One Teach-One Mentoring Program.

In response to Question 6 (Do your suggestions and design implementations to increase ministry participation and leadership among African American males prove lasting? How so? Or...
why not?), Pastor 1 expressed that his suggestions and design implementations to increase ministry participation and leadership among African American males seemed to prove effective. In many instances, it appeared that the church was the primary place that provided an opportunity for African American males to lead without repercussions. His strategies also proved lasting because men tended to grow and flourish in these leadership positions. The community may view an AA male in the position of a janitor Monday through Friday as a labor-level position; however, at the church, the same male could be the trustee, deacon, worship leader, or minister.

Pastor 2 pointed out that implementations appeared to be lasting with a limited few (those with a proven track record of ministry activity and who have active male figures in their homes and lives). He further expressed that the lack of active participation in the local churches is a direct result of the lack of direct influence in the home.

Pastor 6 was the only pastor pointed out that the programs initiated did not prove lasting, conveying that the attention of men seemed to be on work, sports, and the enticement of worldly vices. He expressed that it is difficult to spark changes in the mindset of males in this age group.

Question 8 asked, “Do you feel that the Black church lacks effective mentoring programs that affect ministry participation?” All pastors admitted to a lack of effective mentoring programs for the AA male. Pastor 1 presented a detailed response that most accurately encapsulates the observations of all the pastors. He referred to an abundance of tools available to facilitate training, such as professional developments, online training, virtual learning, face-to-face encounter training, conference calling, books, curricula, and collaborations with other community and faith-based organizations; sadly, resources were not always fully utilized.
Male Perception of Discipleship and Mentoring Programs

Question 7 asked, “What is your interpretation of discipleship and evangelism of the African American male in the Black church?” Pastor 1 commented that discipleship and evangelism of the AA male in the Black church means coming alongside of a brother and taking a serious interest in mentoring him. In turn, the mentee would assume a mentorship role of another brother by modeling the dos and don’ts of leadership. The mentors exemplify strong leadership characteristics, model integrity, and is accountable for his fellow man. In fostering and environment of trust and building relationships with each other, men are empowered to check on each other and demonstrate genuine interest by exchanging telephone numbers to help build unity and confidence. Once this is accomplished, the AA male is prepared for service not only in the church, but in all areas of his life.

Pastor 2 expressed active discipling and evangelizing to young Black men was sitting under a dark cloud, in large part because those that were willing to evangelize were typically older and did not relate well with the younger parishioners. This seeming disconnect has created a gulf that at times appears uncrossable.

Pastors 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 alluded to more personal and hands-on approaches to leading the AA male to a sustainable walk with Christ. Accountability was once again expressed for each other. Evangelism in this group of pastors all revolved around the key of stepping outside of the comfort zone of the church (literal four walls) to tell others about the benefits of connecting with Christ.

In response to Question 9 (What do you think adult men in your congregation would say if asked about the effectiveness of mentoring programs under your pastoral tutelage?), eight out of nine pastors expressed the implementation of adequate to effective mentoring program under
their tutelage. Only one pastor admitted to non-effective mentoring initiatives. This pastor expressed adult men in his congregation would say that his ideas were noteworthy, but there were simply not enough men to carry out the initiatives.

Pastor 1 speculated that the adult men in his congregation would say the mentoring programs under his pastoral leadership were average. Pastor 2 was convinced that many in his congregation would say that they have seen some improvement, but overall, the long-term effects were limited. Pastor 9 felt the majority in his parishioners would conclude huge strides were made in the ministry programs implemented within his congregation.

Question 10 asked, “If I asked adult men in your congregation what they like most about mentoring programs at your church, what kind of responses would I receive?” Pastor 1 shed much light in his response, expressing that men in his congregation revealed a sincere gladness to see programs put in place since the previous church administration did not have any (e.g., family ministry, marriage support sessions, new member orientation, brotherhood, church school). Pastors 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 relayed the responses received related to the draw and appeal of a recharged and revitalized brotherhood.

A revamped brotherhood proved effective because it allowed men of each generation to communicate with and learn from each other under the guidance of a spiritual leader. They claimed brotherhood meetings fostered an environment for men to build camaraderie and a good rapport with each other. Last, the brotherhood created an environment for constructive criticism.

Pastor 2 also added that overall, the men enjoy the new initiatives, but he would like to see greater participation in the program by some of the younger men with younger boys, which would help bridge the gulf. The active participation from professional men in the congregation would be nice to have in the mentoring program as opposed to only the senior men.
In response to Question 11 (If I asked the adult men in your congregation what they would like to see improved about mentoring/leadership programs in your church, what might be a typical response I would receive?), Pastor 1 expressed a good number of men in the congregation would respond by saying they needed to see more celebrating of the successes and accomplishments of men. He also added that the sponsorship of more leadership conferences would boost leadership development, thus promoting increased male ministry participation.

Pastor 2 conveyed to improve mentoring programs in the church, greater participation, and engagement by a larger group of men would be vital to incite growth. The men would like to see senior and young men alike coming together to learn from and fellowship with each other.

Pastor 3 discussed the men in his congregation favoring a migration, in some shape or form, back to the morals, statutes, and principles of the leaders of the early church. He expressed the consensus of the male parishioners in his congregation view this new era in Christendom as lacking in thought and compassion for the things of God.

Pastor 4 highlighted the desire of men in his congregations to introduce a more hands-on approach to mentoring coupled with greater accessibility to the pastor and leadership. Pastor 5 revealed members of his congregations would attest to the importance of new and edgy programs designed to appeal to the young adult male, but, amid all the innovations and revamps, the older demographic in the church must not be forgotten.

Pastor 6 referred to the men of his congregation desiring to see more of the men in leadership modeling the pattern of mentorship as laid out by the pastor. They recognized the pastor is one man and could not be expected to do everything. They expressed that as one acquires tools to learn to do better, one should do better.
Pastor 7 expressed that men in his congregation would like to see more of an active presence from the pastor during brotherhood meetings. They also were desirous of more accessibility to the leadership of the church.

Pastors 8 and 9 made mention of men in their collective congregations saying that the mentorship program was in a good place but could always be better. Both admitted to men wanting to see increased participation and commitment amid the brethren of the church. Too many times in Black churches have the mandates of responsibility fallen upon the faithful few to execute.

**Analysis of Member Pre-Workshop Questionnaire**

The investigator sought to enroll 10 members of the WMBC adult AA male populace in the study. Seven members consented to participate. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 proved to compound recruitment efforts. Collected data and results have been compiled on the pages that follow.

**View of Male Ministry at WMBC**

Question 1 asked, “How long have you been a member of WMBC?” Figure 4 provides a breakdown of tenure at WMBC for the seven members who consented to participate.

![Figure 4. WMBC member tenure](image-url)
A summary of the responses to Question 3 (Do you think there has been a decline in male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC? Please explain why.) is presented in Figure 5. One of the members expressed there was no decline and the brotherhood seemed to be growing since they became a member of WMBC. Four of the brethren held to the belief that there has not been a decline in male ministry participation; rather, the observed and seeming decline had more to do with the small congregation and small number of men at the church. One member was recorded as saying there was an observed decline, while the remaining participant maintained a neutral stance on this issue.

![Figure 5. Decline in ministry participation](image)

Question 4 asked the participants, “How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?” Five out of seven participants described the male leadership model at WMBC as “good” or “strong.” All commented that the church had good role models and a good pastor. Member 7 exclaimed that the leadership mode is “lacking [and] needs to be beefed up,” while Member 3 described the model as neither good nor bad, and described it as traditional in the sense of the pastor (male) being the leader of the church.
Question 5 asked, “How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since uniting with WMBC?” Although a slight majority of the members said that the mentoring from other male leaders was “on the right path,” “good,” or “excellent,” there were responses that described a “slow to start” mentoring system with “no formal leadership” at WMBC (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Mentoring perception since uniting with WMBC](image)

Question 8 asked, “What do you like most about the brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? What would you say is a weakness of the brotherhood at WMBC?” From the seven participants, there were resounding replies of “fellowship,” “camaraderie,” “respect,” and “genuine love” as what was liked most about the brotherhood at WMBC. Member 7 expressed a deep appreciation for the “down-to-earth conversations about the plight of the Black male.” Members 1 and 2 expressed a fondness of the teaching provided in the meetings. Member 3 was the only participant to provide insight into the weakness of the Brotherhood. He replied, “While being small can be beneficial, I think it is also a weakness. When two or three men have a scheduling
conflict, it really becomes a challenge to move forward because that could be 40%–50% of those that would participate are absent.”

Question 9 asked participants, “Have you ever been in a position of leadership in ministry at WMBC? If so, are you currently serving in this position? If not, do you aspire to lead or participate in ministry?” Member 2 and Member 6 replied they had never been in a position of leadership in ministry at WMBC. The other five participants were all currently engaged in positions of leadership in ministry encompassing assistant to the pastor, Sunday School superintendent, trustee, usher board president, and youth pastor. Members 1 and 2 felt no pressing desire to lead in a specific ministry area at this time. Both admitted to being “young” in their respective Christian walks.

In response to Question 10 (If you were once in a position of leadership and have currently stepped away from that role, please explain why you may have felt the need to vacate the position), all participants except Participant 3 responded that they are currently serving in their leadership positions or have never been in a position of leadership. Participant 3 expressed he had stepped away due to involvement with military and tactical deployment overseas and stateside.

The Role and Responsibility of Men

For Question 6 (What do you believe the Bible says about the role and responsibility of men?), the replies from all participants in this category encompassed at least one of three central themes: lead, provide, or protect. One hundred percent of the members in this group conveyed the Bible instructs and admonishes men to be leaders, providers, and protectors for their families. Four out of seven members agreed that not only should this model be visible in the home, but it should also be reflected in the church.
Question 7 asked, “Do you feel that men in the body of Christ have assumed a role of godly leadership and authority, both at home and in church, as mandated in Scripture?” Only one of the members felt men in the body of Christ have stepped up to heed the call of leadership and authority mandated in the Bible. Member 3 expressed that “godly men,” as compared to unchurched men in general, had taken on the responsibility of leadership in the church and at home. Still, he did recognize there has been a surge in women’s leadership roles in the church and at home driven by absentee fathers and fewer men attending church.

The remaining participants concluded that there has been an observed drop-off of men assuming roles of godly leadership and authority. Member 4 went a step farther, arguing that men in the household and at church were rarely seen operating in God’s authority. Secular humanism had replaced Godly principles in the home.

Effectiveness in Ministry – Spiritual Gifting

Question 11 (Have you heard of and how would you describe “spiritual gifting”?) focused on gaining insight if AA males at WMBC understood their spiritual strengths and where they would be most effective in the body of Christ. The majority displayed a sound grasp of the spiritual gifting concept. Members 2 and 6 said they had never heard of the term and could not describe what it meant.

Question 12 asked, “Do you know what your spiritual gift is? If so, are you currently operating in this gifting?” Four of the participants reported knowing their spiritual gift and were operating in this gifting. The remaining participants said they were not aware of their spiritual gifting.
The responses to Question 13 (Please describe what you feel are the main reasons why there is a lack of male involvement in church ministry. How do you feel that leadership may be able to increase male participation?) are summarized in Figure 7. Members 1 and 2 agreed that the main reason for the lack of male involvement in church ministry could be attributed to a small congregation. Member 3 added to this argument by stating, “There are so few men at the church that the men at the church have to wear so many hats at the church while being leader of their home.” Members 4 and 5 conveyed the lack of involvement was due to the image of the church, calling it “too feminine in its appeal.” Member 6 considered the lack of mentoring programs and off-campus fellowships a major disconnect to male involvement. Member 7 expressed that church leadership is not concerned with the plight and the needs of the lay male of the congregation, stating, “We don’t care what you know until we know that you care.”

![Main Reasons for Lack of Male Involvement in Church Ministry](image)

**Figure 7. Reasons for lack of male involvement**

**Analysis of Member Post-Workshop Questionnaire**

After the pre-workshop questionnaire interview process was complete, the next phase of the research consisted of a Zoom web conference PowerPoint presentation. For those participants
that could not attend the Zoom meeting, the presentation was e-mailed to them for review. The leadership workshop served as a baseline for comparative analysis. The understanding, mindset, thought process, and knowledge attained of men at WMBC concerning leadership roles and responsibilities before the workshop were compared to the same categories after the workshop. The assessment tool was a questionnaire that encompassed qualitative analysis coupled with scaling measures. This allowed the researcher to examine and quantify the results and determine if the workshop/seminar proved beneficial.

The workshop seminar consisted of a one-hour interactive PowerPoint presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. The workshop was conducted via Zoom web conference. All men of the church were invited to the workshop, but the participants in the research study were required to attend the leadership and mentoring session. This element was part of the inclusion criteria of the informed consent document.

The post-workshop member interviews comprised four major categories: first, the role and responsibilities of AA males (included in Question 1); second, male perception of discipleship and mentoring programs (Questions 3–7); third, observed climate and current trend (Questions 2, 8–9); and fourth, programs, interventions, and perceptions (included in Question 10).

Role and Responsibilities of AA Males

When asked Question 1 (After attending the workshop, please describe your current understanding of the role and responsibility of men at WMBC), one hundred percent of the participants displayed retention of the role and responsibility of men at WMBC at a four-week follow-up after the workshop. All the members stated that the role and responsibility of men included leading, providing for, and protecting the family. Six of the seven members alluded to
the transference of the leadership in the home to the church. Last, four of the members made mention of the term “role model,” which speaks to an acquired knowledge and better understanding of mentoring and discipleship.

Male Perception of Discipleship and Mentoring Programs

Question 3 asked, “Do you feel that you have been equipped with tools necessary to fulfill the Biblical mandate of God for the male gender? Please explain why.” All participants answered the first part of the question with “Yes.” When asked to explain why, Members 1 and 5 expressed sound doctrine and biblical exposition were provided in the workshop, Members 3 and 4 expressed sound doctrine with new and provocative tools were presented at the workshop that provide a sure foundation, Members 2 and 7 felt better equipped but conveyed a need for continued mentoring, and Member 5 did not provide a response.

Question 4 asked, “How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?” This same question was asked on the pre-workshop questionnaire. Initially, five out of seven participants describe the male leadership model at WMBC as “good” or “strong.” On the post-workshop questionnaire, all commented that the church had good role models and strong leadership from the pastor (see Figure 8).
Figure 8. Leadership model comparison

Question 5 (How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since attending the leadership workshop at WMBC?) was asked on the pre-workshop questionnaire. In that phase of the project, a slight majority of the members (71%) said that the mentoring from other male leaders was “on the right path,” “good,” or “excellent.” Four weeks after the workshop was concluded, the majority increased to 86%, portraying a shift in Member 3’s original thought process from “no model” to “improved, but still slow” building model. Member 7 displayed a shift from “slow to start” to “on the right track” (see Figure 9).
In response to Question 6 (How would you assess the teaching and leadership of males at WMBC?), all seven participants replied that the teaching and leadership of males at WMBC are good and biblically sound. Members 1, 4, and 7 stated that the teaching rests upon a sure foundation of biblical principles. Members 3, 5, and 6 mentioned the effectiveness of pastoral tutelage and that the pastor is a prime example for men at the church.

Question 7 asked, “How would you assess the effectiveness of the leadership workshop?” The overall conclusion on the effectiveness of the workshop ranged from “very good” to “highly effective.” Member 1 commented the presentation was outstanding and exactly what the men needed. Member 1 thought it would prove to be advantageous to men of the church in the future. Member 2 expressed that it provided a lot of good information that he was not aware of. Member 4 chimed in with sentiments that the workshop was an amazingly effective dissemination of critical biblical principles. Member 5 added it was very enlightening. He admitted to learning a lot about the roles and responsibilities of men at home and in the church. Lastly, Member 3 revealed the workshop was effective in the sense that much sound and thought-provoking
information was presented. The researcher admits to a desire to see many of the ideals put into action.

Observed Climate and Current Trend

Question 2 asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your desire to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership at WMBC?” A response of 0 indicated no desire, while 10 indicated anxious and eager willingness. The results (see Figure 10) pointed toward an increased willingness to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership.

![Desire to Participate in Ministry](image)

Figure 10. Desire to participate in church ministry

Question 8 read as follows: “Please convey your thoughts on the current trend of male ministry participation at WMBC. Express if you are encouraged or discouraged with the current trajectory. Explain why.” In the pre-workshop questionnaire, participants were asked if they thought there has been a decline in male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC. One of the members expressed there was no decline and the brotherhood seemed to be growing since they united with WMBC. Four of the participants expressed there had not been a decline in male ministry participation; rather, the observed and seeming decline had more to do with the small
congregation and small number of men at the church. Two members of the group were captured as conveying there was an observed decline.

In the post-workshop assessment, six of seven members expressed the current trend suggested a marginal increase in the trajectory of the males participating in ministry at WMBC (see Figure 11). Only one participant verbalized a “current stall” in the trend but added that it was “on the precipice of surging upward.”

Figure 11. Ministry participation trajectory

Question 9 asked, “What is your current attitude regarding the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? Do you recognize any significant strengths or weaknesses?” In the pre-workshop questionnaire, participants were asked, “What do you like most about the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC?” Of the seven participants, the overwhelming response encapsulated themes of “fellowship,” “camaraderie,” “respect,” and “genuine love” as what was liked most about the brotherhood at WMBC. Member 7 expressed a deep appreciation for the down-to-earth conversations about the plight of the Black male. Members 1 and 2 expressed a fondness for the teaching aspect of the ministry. Member 3 was the only participant to provide insight into the weakness of the Brotherhood. He replied, “While being small can be beneficial, I think it is also
a weakness. When two or three men have a scheduling conflict, it really becomes a challenge to move forward because that could be 40%–50% of those that would participate are absent.”

In the post-workshop questionnaire, the responses remained consistent. Of note was that increased excitement seemed to have ensued after the workshop presentation. Nearly all the participants still said the fellowship was “awesome”. Member 3 added that the shortage of men in the church was a major weakness, while Member 7 expressed genuine love for one another as a strength of the Brotherhood.

Programs, Interventions, and Perceptions

Question 10 asked participants to “describe the ideal setting and circumstance that would boost male ministry and leadership participation at WMBC.” Member 1 conveyed a stronger evangelism push with a focus on robust communication with the community. This could drive overall church growth, thus prompting a boost in male ministry numbers and participation. Members 2 and 5 described small group settings where they could really talk to and learn from each other. Member 5 stated that he liked the fact that the pastor and leadership were accessible. Member 3 stressed the point of partnering with other local churches in the community to share models, paradigms, and experiences. Member 4 cited the ideal environment would entail a church with a more masculine appeal to boost ministry participation. Member 6 added that boosting male involvement in ministry and leadership could be achieved in “a place with edgy programs that appeal to men” and have a “masculine appeal.” Lastly, Member 7 expressed the ideal circumstance would involve a “setting of, ‘I care about what you are dealing with and taking the time to show me a better, godlier, way’” (see Figure 12).
Extrapolations and Conclusions

Conclusions from the Pastoral Analysis

The results of the data collected from the first phase of the research project with the pastors proved to provide support for the theory that the AA church in the Trinity Gardens community of Houston, Texas, is experiencing a partial decline in ministry participation and leadership among Black males. Of the small sample population, 56% of the participating pastors observed a decline in ministry participation and leadership among Black males, while 22% claimed a plateau had been reached and males’ involvement was at the brink of a decline. Only 20% of the pastors reported a rise in Black male leadership and ministry participation.

Question 1 of the pastoral questionnaire examined how long pastors had been in leadership over their respective flocks. The data revealed a direct correlation between length of pastoral tenure and observed trend of ministry participation and leadership among Black males in each of the neighboring pastor congregations. Pastors with a longer time shepherding a flock tended to have more success in their mentoring programs (see Figure 13). Though the results from this comparative analysis proved mixed and covered all areas of the spectrum between a
declining or rising observed trend, tenure still prevailed as an important component under each pastor’s tutelage.

Figure 13. Tenure vs. trend correlation

Question 2 of this phase of the intervention sought to analyze the perceptions of God’s ultimate plan for AA males in the Trinity Gardens community. The acquired data demonstrated a common belief amongst pastors that AA men are to assume home, church, and community leadership roles. All pastors expressed God’s plan involved the AA male exuding characteristics of vigilance, accountability, tenacity, and resilience to foster or prompt positive change in every aspect of life as it relates to the home, church, community, society, and abroad. The consensus called for the AA man to return to leadership roles in the home and community. They felt that failure to heed this call would lead to a lack of active service in ministry.

Questions 3 and 4 in this phase of the research project took a close look at the climate and current cultural trends of AA male ministry participation in neighboring congregations across the Trinity Gardens locale. The observed responses alluded to a displayed lack of structure in brotherhood program composition as well as active ministry participation. The data also highlighted male participation as static, and in most cases, significantly diminished. The current
trend was shown to be reflective of an influx of female participation in areas of ministry and in the home that was at one time was dominated and actively led by men. These results show alignment and congruency with findings from prior studies and published works.

Another interesting finding unveiled throughout the course of the pastoral analysis was how the perception of discipleship and evangelism served as a foundation from which effective mentoring programs emerged. Eight out of nine participating pastors described discipleship and evangelism as coming alongside of a brother and taking a serious interest in mentoring him, so he can mentor another brother by modeling the dos and don’ts of leadership.

The pastors also concluded a more personal and hands-on approach to mentoring proved to be a significant driver in leading the AA male to a sustainable walk with Christ. Accountability was once again expressed as an important factor. “Evangelism” in this group of pastors revolved around stepping outside of the comfort zone of the church (its literal four walls) to tell others about the benefits of connecting with Christ.

These perceptions have served as a launching pad for a recharged and revitalized brotherhood. This was the mentoring program that many of the participating pastors expected men in their congregations to gravitate toward. It proved effective because it allowed men of each generation to communicate with and learn from each other under the guidance of a spiritual leader and overseer. The pastors claimed the Brotherhood meeting fostered an environment for men to build camaraderie and close personal ties with one another. Last, the brotherhood created an environment for constructive criticism.

Pastor 2 described a similar vision of the effect of discipleship on mentoring programs. He stated that active participation from professional men in his congregation as opposed to only the senior men of the church would prove advantageous.
Conclusions from the Member Post-Workshop Analysis

The data from the post-workshop questionnaire revealed that 100% percent of the participants displayed retention of the mandate, role, and responsibility of men at WMBC at four weeks after the workshop. All members expressed the role and responsibility of men included leading, providing for, and protecting the family. Six of the seven members advocated a transference of the leadership in the home to the church. Four of the members made specific mention of the term “role model,” which lends itself to an acquired knowledge and better understanding of mentoring and discipleship.

Prior to the workshop, five out of seven participants described the male leadership model at WMBC as “good” or “strong.” After the workshop presentation, all participants commented that the church had good role models and strong leadership from the pastor. This change constituted a 28% increase in positive perception of the male leadership at WMBC. The shift in perception was revealed by questionnaire responses supporting the idea that AA males at WMBC are equipped with tools necessary to fulfill the biblical mandate for the male gender post-workshop. Sound doctrine and biblical exposition were recorded by members as amongst the main contributors to the success of the workshop and shift in perception.

The overall conclusion on the effectiveness of the leadership workshop ranged from “very good” to “highly effective.” With commendations that the presentation was outstanding, exactly what the men needed, and advantageous to men of the church in the future, the workshop could be tailored and modified for use in neighboring congregations.

Prior to the leadership workshop, these questions were posed to WMBC males: Have you ever been in a position of leadership in ministry at WMBC? If so, are you currently serving in this position? If not, do you aspire to lead or participate in ministry? The data revealed five out
of seven members were engaged in a position of leadership in ministry ranging from assistant to the pastor, to Sunday School superintendent, to trustee, to usher board president, and youth pastor. Though five of seven participants were in positions of leadership within the church, only three of the seven admitted to a sincere desire to lead in a specific ministry area at the present time. Two of seven participants believed they were too “young” in their respective Christian walks.

Post-workshop, a scaling assessment was utilized to rate desire of AA males at WMBC to participate in ministry. The question was asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your desire to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership at WMBC (0 depicted as no desire, 10 depicted as anxious and eager willingness)?” The results pointed toward an increased willingness to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership after receiving instruction, fellowshipping, worshiping, and praying at the workshop. See Figure 14 for pre/post comparison.

![Figure 14. Pre vs. post desire to participate in ministry](image-url)
Summary

**Trinity Gardens Pastor Perspectives**

Though the sample size was limited in the pastoral arena, the results were still indicative of the following trends. First, 78% of pastors agreed that AA male ministry participation was either negatively plateaued or sharply declining prior to initiation of their tenures. Second, the pastors revealed they had observed a steady decline in AA men pursuing leadership positions in the church. Third, the most impactful mentoring program initiatives were strong brotherhoods, men’s discipleship, and evangelism efforts, outside fellowships, one-on-one accountability programs, new-age leadership, and recognition/celebration of AA males’ accomplishments.

**WMBC Member Perspectives**

Data accumulated from WMBC members revealed slightly differing results than anticipated by the researcher. Of note, 71% of the participants observed a decline in AA male ministry and leadership participation, with 57% of the members feeling the decline was attributed to the church consisting of a small congregation. The overall observed decline could primarily point toward a limitation on male membership and not on the researcher’s original hypothesis of the conscious choice of Black men to live beneath the biblical mandate for man.

Other important conclusions that emerged from the data set revolve around the reasons the participants felt there was a lack of male leadership at WMBC. Although 43% of the men attributed the deficient involvement to a small congregation size, it was interesting to discover that 29% of the participants believed it was because a lack of masculine appeal to the needs of men. Another 29% attributed the decline in ministry participation to a lack of viable mentoring schemes and strategies.
The data also supported a positive male perception of the leadership model at WMBC. Seventy-one percent of the participants in the study expressed a positive perception of the model prior to attending the leadership workshop. A critical point of observance is the marked increase in the positive perception of AA males at WMBC that occurred after the mentoring presentation. Four weeks post-workshop, 100% of the participants expressed a “good/strong” perception of the leadership model.

With the results and analysis provided to this point, the researcher recalls the initial thesis premise that if new and innovative mentoring paradigms for AA male participation in ministry leadership are constructed, then the adult male populace of WMBC will be positively impacted to incite thriving involvement in Christian ministry. At this juncture, the research validates the intricacies of the issue and concludes that at WMBC and in neighboring AA congregations in the Trinity Gardens community, the Black males are in danger of forfeiting their God-ordained responsibility of authority and leadership in the home and in church. The leadership workshop and mentoring program initiated at WMBC was only one of the possible paradigms that could be utilized in this endeavor. The data further supports the use of this model in other congregations.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

The goal of this research project was first to investigate the origins and causes of the observed decline of male participation in leadership and ministry at WMBC and second to use that resultant data to derive ways to bolster WMBC’s ministry to AA males and inspire these men to become active participants within the local church community. As conveyed earlier, prior research suggests that men who live out their God-ordained mandate tend to be more productive and live more positive lives. This research sought to take a fresh look at the issues that drive Black men in the Trinity Gardens community of Houston, Texas, to abandon participation in ministry.

Furthermore, this study examined the potential barriers to the church involvement of AA men. Questions asked of pastors participating in this study included: Do you think there has been a decline in male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC? What has been the observed trend of ministry participation and leadership among Black males, age 21–65, in your congregation? What do you feel is the reason for the decline or rise? What programs have been implemented during your tenure to reverse the decline? Or how have you sustained or improved the level of participation and leadership among African American males in your church?

The researcher anticipated attaining clarity and understanding on the defects and/or successes of the current mentoring paradigms from neighboring congregations, and specifically WMBC. After careful reflection on the actual research project, the investigator expected to see a shift in the mindset of AA males, as would be reflected in the follow-up questionnaire. Specific questions raised in the post-workshop questionnaire were designed to obtain viable data that would reveal an altered and enhanced view of the male role in ministry. The post-
workshop/mentorship training seminar was expected to yield an increase in AA male participation in church ministry and leadership programs at WMBC.

Though the sample size was limited in the pastoral and WMBC member arenas, the results were still indicative of positive influences on the male mindset, fostering increases in male ministry participation. More important than the tangible display of participation was the observed shift in attitudes toward male leadership. The genuine, transparent, and relatable presentation of the biblical mandate for the male, attained through the workshop, served as a turning point in the lives of many men at WMBC.

**Recommendations**

These results show alignment and congruency with precedent research from prior studies and published works. For instance, Eric Truss’s research alluded to the ideal that “today, women display a position of leadership in the family, initially designed for male influence; and now, disrupting the family. These actions have initiated a chain of events that have inundated the church, where the presence of Black males are extinct or at least are at a minimum.”\(^{124}\) Robert Allen O’Neal presented research that highlighted the modern-day composition of the Black church Sunday worship service as consisting of predominantly female members and leaders. “On average, women constitute between 66 and 80 percent of African American Church membership in Johnston County of North Carolina.”\(^{125}\) Unfortunately, this is the observed climate in the Trinity Gardens community.

While seeking to ensure credibility and soundness of this research project’s recommendations, the researcher drew from the data of other researchers’ published material for

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\(^{124}\) Truss, “The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America,” 4.

\(^{125}\) O’Neal, “The Black Church and the Current Generation.”
The researcher was able to identify prominent themes to utilize in igniting AA male ministry participation and leadership in the church: strong communication, masculine appeal, edgy mentoring programs and philosophies, group settings of empathy, partnerships, and bolstered evangelism and discipleship. First, Black male participants of WMBC relished the ideal of a revitalized and resurgent brotherhood offering transparent communication practices coupled with empathetic and edgy mentoring paradigms. Second, the commonality unveiled among all flourishing AA male ministries was the affinity of brethren for congregations and programs that exude a more masculine appeal. Last, enhancements to evangelism and discipleship contributed to a flourishing male ministry. The researcher has submitted three specific recommendations for the development and revitalization of the AA male ministry at WMBC in Trinity Gardens community.

Resurgent Brotherhood

Jawanza Kunjufu stressed the use of monthly men’s fellowships and weekly Bible study as key tools in cultivating a stronger brotherhood. He expressed that both ministries foster a greater level of commitment and bring Black men together to address issues that men experience while examining solutions from a biblical perspective. Julia Duin revealed that Bible study is an effective tool in building a stronger brotherhood; however, “Ministers are out of touch with what’s happening on the ground, as they are surrounded by a wall of secretaries and voice mail. . . Once-a-week home Bible study groups lack depth and theological know-how for help with the serious problems many men face.”

126 With that being said, consistency and continuity of men’s fellowship and Bible study serve as foundations for a revitalized brotherhood.

126 Duin, Quitting Church, 10.
When the pastors were presented the question of what programs had been implemented during their tenure to reverse the decline of AA male leadership and participation, they discussed several programs. At the very top of the list was a solid and strong brotherhood that serves as a springboard from which all other programs stem. The research revealed that Black men appreciate a church environment where they feel they are not tricked or bamboozled into a ministry or relationship with Christ that is superficial and tainted with hypocrisy.

The men of WMBC expressed a deep admiration and respect for hard truth of the word of God that was administered in love. It meant a lot the them to know that the male leadership truly cared about their plight and sought to challenge their respective walks with charges of accountability instead of presenting constant niceties and watered-down versions of God’s mandate for the Black male. Herein lied the plea for the development of strong, efficient, and transparent communication practices aimed at acknowledging the current plight of AA males and utilizing small accountability groups within the Brotherhood to communicate and equip men for service in the church.

Masculine Appeal

Another prominent theme utilized to incite AA male ministry participation and leadership in the church dealt with the presentation of a more masculine framework and foundation within the church. The data and results from the neighboring congregations follow closely with prior efforts established earlier in this project. When the investigator recalled the work of Jawanza Kunjufu, it became evident how the findings from his countless hours of labor-intensive research on the AA male with relation to church ministry and leadership disassociation directly correlate with the perceptions of the local pastors. The spiritual epidemic was so widespread that he
asserted 75% of occupancy in the Black church was by women, with AA males vacant from many congregations.127

As stated earlier in this section and lined in thematic content throughout the entirety of this research paper, scholars Kunjufu, Podles, and Zwerneman expressed deep concern around the issue of overwhelming femininity in the church. First, Kunjufu conveyed that the decline of AA males could be traced to the new-age definition of religion—viewed by many Black males as passive, soft, and full of too many emotions.128 Leon Podles, author of The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity, theorized that Christianity in general has “lost this masculine sense of a struggle against the forces within oneself, having been watered down to passionate feelings and emotional ecstasies that men find difficult to identify with.”129 Even though the clergy in most churches are males, Podles asserted that they have tapered and crafted their messages to cater to females.130 Julia DeCelles-Zwerneman remarked that the decline in male attendance and participation in church “creates a vicious cycle, with more men tempted to view church as an all-girls club where they would not be welcome or comfortable.”131 The same sentiments were evidenced and expressed within the WMBC AA male populace. Hence, fellowship and mentoring programs have been designed with the Black male in mind, tapered to their needs.

The men’s ministry at WMBC will have multifaceted fellowship opportunities with the intent of curtailing the masculine appeal dilemma. At least once a month, a men’s fellowship

130 Leon J. Podles, Losing the Good Portion: Why Men Are Alienated from Christianity (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 2019), 38.
131 DeCelles-Zwerneman, “Church Management.”
activity will be planned by the Brotherhood leadership team. There will be fellowship activities at the church: monthly Men of Power (MOP) Bible studies, weekly men’s Sunday School empowerment hour, prayer meetings, and semi-annual Brotherhood tune-up workshops/seminars, as well as activities outside of the confines of the church, including cookouts, monthly men’s fellowship breakfast, fellowship through sports gatherings, small group accountability sessions, and meet-and-greets with neighboring men’s ministries from other churches. These fellowship environments will encourage men to acquaint themselves with others they do not know or with whom they have no connection or tie. Leader and lay members alike will be afforded opportunities to share a word of encouragement at fellowship events. Transparency, relatability, and caring are the trademarks of this new-age ministry.

**Bolstered Evangelism**

An initial hypothesis of this research project was based heavily upon the diminishing aspirations of males to assume leadership roles and participate in ministry as the result of stalled evangelism and discipleship efforts to appropriately address the needs of AA males. Readers were made privy to the idea that men’s ministry promotes the spiritual growth of men when exercised in tandem with effective discipleship. \(^{132}\) Eric Truss taught that in the effort to usher Black males to leadership positions, the hurdle yet remains in convincing Black males of the necessity of coming to Christ. Church leaders must be ready to implement spiritual and foundational paradigms to offer the Black male upon entrance into the body of Christ. Also, the teaching of the importance of a Christ-centered life is of the highest priority. \(^{133}\)

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\(^{133}\) Truss, “The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America,” 1.
Wayne J. Vaughan stressed the critical responsibility of pastors and church leaders to ignite Christian training that encourages spiritual growth. God issued a key mandate in the Great Commission of Matthew 28—to go teach, evangelize, and disciple all that would hear the gospel of Jesus the Christ of God. This is every believer’s directive and spiritual mandate.\(^\text{134}\)

The dominant theme from the pastoral data was indicative of the need to come alongside of a brother and take a serious interest in mentoring him, so that he, in turn, could mentor another on the intricacies of leadership, integrity, and accountability. This discipleship involves a personal hands-on approach to leading others into a sustainable walk with Christ. To many of the pastors, evangelism is defined by those in the church getting out of their comfort zone and outside of the walls of the church to proclaim to other men the benefits of a life with Christ.

**Beyond Phase One**

By the Spirit of God, along with the implications of the resultant data, the researcher unveiled and was made privy to the tactic of immobilization that suspends AA men in a state of spiritual limbo that the investigator refers to as “phase one.”\(^\text{135}\) This is a baseline level or mindset of introduction into the Christian faith (infancy stage). This is the point in the life of the believer where they receive salvation from God through Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9). But just as a person grows physically from a child into a mature adult, the proselyte should grow spiritually from salvation into deep intimate relationship with Christ. In other words, new believers should move beyond phase one and realize that salvation is for a specific purpose. Black men are saved to serve and to carry the good news of the gospel to the rest of the world.

\(^{134}\) Wayne Vaughan, *Keeping Your Church Alive* (Minneapolis: MCP, 2016), 30.

The inherent problem that paralyzes the leadership movement of Black men in the body of Christ today is that many in leadership may prize their individual salvation but fail to advance the mandate of Scripture to other males. “I am saved and that should be enough,” is what many Black men tell themselves. They feel as though they are not required to do anything else once they have accepted Christ as their personal Savior. They are drawn to this way of thinking because this is what they have been taught over the years.

Sadly, AA men have been misinformed and improperly educated, and they have not received adequate mentoring for leading in the home and in the church. Where the Black male leadership model fails in its evangelism effort is that it does not continue with the discipleship process after salvation. Evangelism is continuous and incessant, always building upon the solid foundation of salvation. Black male leadership is in no position to adopt a laissez-faire approach to evangelism. This is in contradiction to the model and mandate that Jesus has instructed his disciples to carry out.

The Bible conveys in John 9:4, “I must work the works of him that has sent me,” and Luke 9:62 informs the reader that “no man having put his hands to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven.” These Scriptures are amongst many that signify that salvation alone is not enough. Men in leadership positions at WMBC and in Trinity Gardens neighboring churches alike are charged with an awesome responsibility and task. The work of evangelizing and discipling the AA male is paramount. A judgment of works awaits each Christian to see how he fared in advancing the kingdom of God.136

It is critical that evangelistic efforts move beyond the infancy stage and promote the gospel because the war for the Black male is on, whether it is accepted or not. The investigator

believes that the spiritual assault witnessed in this era is unparalleled when compared to other eras throughout history. The Bible declares that Satan desires to sift the believer as wheat (Luke 22:31). The enemy launches precise yet subtle schemes to hinder the evangelism movement.

Once the AA male’s eyes are truly opened to the beauty of the work of Christ on the cross, Satan then knows that his worldly kingdom is in danger of collapse. A strong evangelism ministry is a detriment to Satan’s throne. He attacks the root of this problem by devising every scheme imaginable and unimaginable to weaken the ministry effort. It is the belief of this research investigator that the enemy uses two principal tactics to render the evangelism ministry ineffective: traditionalism and formalism.

First, Matthew 15:3 states, “But he answered and said unto them, why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” Second, Matthew 15:9 states, “But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” In these Scriptures, Jesus was pointing out how man was more concerned about the traditions, doctrines, and formalities of men than about pleasing God.

This is the origin of how the kingdom mandate for Black men has lost sight of the true plan of God. The basis of Christianity stems from the fact that Jesus (the Christ) gave himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the restoration and reconciliation of mankind to God. The things that are creating the void in AA male leadership participation are instituted and enforced man-made doctrines. The evangelism effort is falling upon hardened hearts and deafened ears.

Leadership and mentoring practices cannot afford to get caught in the trap of instituting opinions and beliefs as doctrines of God. Traditionalism and formalism are two types of dogmatic ideology that are infiltrating and infecting the body of Christ and keeping the Black male from developing a true relationship with God. These idiosyncrasies of thought produce
smothering effect that suffocates anything that tries to grow toward the true Son (Jesus Christ)—thus accounting for the decline, decay, and deficiency in AA male leadership participation.

Evangelism must adopt properties of sincerity, understanding, and passion to be most effective. It should reflect the mindset of how Jesus ministered and how Paul ministered. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul taught that those in leadership must assume whatever is necessary to reach the nonbeliever at their level. Paul brought the gospel message to each group in a unique way. He did not seek to alter their customs but delivered the gospel message to each within their customs. This is what the body of Christ must do even today to connect with AA men who feel as though they are on the outside looking in.

The life of Jesus Christ depicts eight principles that church mentoring and leadership programs can model to have an effective evangelism ministry:

1. Teachers must instill in AA males they are created with a specific purpose to fulfill. They have worth and value (Jer. 1:5).
2. AA males must be helped to understand that instruction and preparation for leadership are necessary (Luke 2:46-49).
3. Black men need to grasp and hold to the significance of baptism (Matt. 3).
4. They must understand that prior to leading comes a time of proving (Matt. 4:1–10).
5. No one assumes a position of leadership within the church without the proper mentorship.
6. After the time of proving comes a period of refreshing, strengthening, and restoration (Matt. 4:11).
7. They are now ready to share the good news of the gospel and lead others to salvation in Christ (Matt 4:1–Matt. 7).
8. Last, Black men are to duplicate themselves through principles of discipleship and evangelizing (Matt. 8–Matt. 28).

**Evangelism Ministry Goal**

The evangelism ministry program will endeavor to promote the promulgation of the gospel message in the life and ministry of the church. In relation to AA men of the body of Christ, the ministry will seek to foster a firm relationship and walk with Christ in the life of each male. In fulfilling the ministry goal, the evangelism ministry initiative will focus on the following areas of contribution to the life of the church:

1. **Evangelism leadership:** The male leadership will work with the pastor in planning and scheduling efforts to provide training in personal witnessing and in scheduling local witnessing efforts for sharing the Christian faith directed at reaching the male populace. Church leadership promotion: Those males in positions of authority and leadership will partner with the pastor to (a) coordinate efforts for promoting awareness of the church in the Trinity Gardens community area through brochures, posters, flyers, radio announcements, and brotherhood informationals, (b) maintain a supply of brochures in locations where AA males frequent, and (c) work toward the maximum exposure of the church and its ministries to the residents of the Trinity Gardens locale and then branch out to other regions of the city and state.

2. **Special events leadership:** Leadership in the church will work with the pastor in planning participation of the church in special events in the WMBC locale where the brethren of WMBC will have optimal opportunity to interact with other AA males. For each evangelism effort, the leadership team would seek to establish visibility and presence within the community.
3. Website leadership: Leaders of the website team will work with the pastor in developing and maintaining the church’s website. Specifically, this team will pioneer the effort to reach and minister to AA males in the community through content and advertisements posted on the website. Strides have already been made in this regard, with more to be included in the church website to push the evangelism effort.\textsuperscript{137}

Once a strong physical presence is achieved within the Trinity Gardens locale, the church should begin transitioning some of the community related events to the physical church grounds. This will aid those men who may not be accustomed to attending church services to gradually become acquainted with the church without being overwhelmed by formality and tradition.

Further outreach could include a variety of events to meet the needs of men in the community. There could be food and clothing distributed to those in need, connections with drug rehabilitation/addiction counseling centers and men’s shelters, health screenings, or even job fairs. These kinds of services would be a huge blessing to many men who live in low-income communities and would tangibly demonstrate the love of Christ. It would show that the brothers of WMBC were taking a genuine and active interest in the well-being of men in the community.

These events could serve as a segue into brief testimonials from men who would like to share the love of Jesus and how their own lives have been changed by Him. Those men outside the confines of the church may be more susceptible to hearing and responding to the testimony of male members who have experienced the life-changing power of Jesus. After testimonies are shared, a simple invitation to Christian discipleship will be extended, and prayer will be offered for men who desire it.

Ambassadors for the MOP ministry will pray for the specific need of the person requesting prayer. The brothers of MOP will gather demographic information from men who make decisions to give their lives to Christ or who desire to know more about what a walk with Christ entails. Within three days of the initial contact with the new convert, a mature brother from the church will be assigned to follow up with him. The intent of the follow-up will be to inquire about how the brother is doing and to encourage him in the faith. Furthermore, if the new convert wishes, he will be invited to a worship service at WMBC with hopes of gradual integration into the fellowship of other believers and men of faith.

Bolstered Discipleship

Evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand. From this researcher’s point of view, evangelism serves as a feeder and foundation for discipleship. Once a brother begins his journey or walk with Christ, mentoring programs, paradigms, and training are crucial in their maturity and development. Throughout this research endeavor, discipleship has been described in various ways and forms. Ultimately, the research reveals a consistent reference to discipleship as coming alongside of a brother, taking a serious interest in his spiritual growth and development, and then working within a system or paradigm to cultivate the growth of the individual. A bolstered discipleship effort involves a conscious and deliberate return to the sagacious mentoring paradigm implemented by Jesus in Scripture.

Prior research has demonstrated that throughout recent years, Black males have struggled with drug abuse and addiction, educational disparities, incarceration, fatherlessness, and unemployment. The falling away of Black men from their God-ordained responsibility and position is a direct result of these persistent issues. Bolstered discipleship is a strategic design to provide a remedy to the problem.
Each-One Teach-One

The Each One Teach One initiative is reflected in the ideal of a person taking what has been imparted and then using that teaching to disciple and mentor someone else coming up after them. The principal concept is demonstrated in how Jesus trained and discipled the twelve that were entrusted to his tutelage. At the end of his earthly tenure, Christ required each of his disciples to go, to teach, to baptize, and to impart. This is what the believer has come to know as the Great Commission (Matt. 28). In essence, Jesus conveyed that He had taught, mentored, and instructed his disciples; now they were to go and train someone else.

In the “Each-One Teach-One” discipleship aspect of ministry, mature church male leaders who are tried and proven in their faith mentor others who are seeking to grow in their spiritual walk with Christ. The goal of this discipleship initiative will be to help bring men to maturity and stability in Jesus Christ and then replicate the process. The discipleship ministry will be accessible to all males who feel they need the extra support in maturing in a manner pleasing to Christ and mandated in Scripture. Upon initial salvation in Jesus Christ and becoming a member of WMBC, individuals will be assigned a discipleship mentor.

Discipleship mentors will make initial introductions to the men whom they will guide on this journey of maturity. The mentor will establish a regular schedule to meet with or to call the mentee who has been assigned to him. The discipleship mentor will emphasize the importance of church attendance, support groups, and brotherhood meetings for spiritual enrichment and growth. He will also encourage the mentee he is assisting to complete new member orientation and discuss with the mentee the dominant themes taught in each class. Each encounter with the mentee should provide a time for him to ask questions and discuss his concerns with his discipleship mentor.
A brief recap of the discussion from the previous encounter will be given by the discipleship mentor at the start of every meeting. This will allow for a short question-and-answer period before commencement of the next session. The discipleship mentor will take the time to discuss issues of salvation, the Person of the Holy Spirit, the importance of maintaining Christian character, falling short of the glory of God, and forgiveness, amongst many other topics of conversation. The point is to engage in a real and meaningful dialogue with the mentee that breeds trust and relatability.

The discipleship mentor should seek to contact the person he is helping on a weekly basis. There may be instances when short follow-up calls or additional meetings for training and teaching are deemed necessary. The times of instruction and discussion should be centered around the mentee and could last approximately thirty minutes to an hour. Discipleship mentors should prepare to assist their mentee for six months to one year, depending on the need.

Summary

This research project sought to formulate ways to reverse and prevent the decline of ministry participation and leadership amongst AA males at WMBC and in the greater Trinity Gardens locale of Houston, Texas. It has investigated factors that hinder AA males’ ministry involvement and ideologies that drive the continued deterioration. AA church leadership must endeavor to rise to the occasion and stop the plight of the AA male. As those in authority and leadership demonstrate a compassionate heart for the difficulties of Black males and commit themselves to consistently acting upon this cause, adequate strides can be made toward reconciling the present dilemma.

This study has already shown clear indication of improving the ministry participation of AA men at WMBC. The project revealed that men of WMBC were more inclined to participate
in ministry after taking part in the leadership workshop. As they began to understand the call upon their lives and the Scriptural mandate for the AA male, their mindsets began to shift. As more programs were initiated and designed that appealed to them, the more excited they became to involve themselves in ministry.

On a more personal and intimate note, the investigator emerges from this research project with renewed vigor and a tenacious spirit to minister in the lives of AA males. This study has broadened his perception concerning the plight of the Black male and the many disconnects that often drive him away from the ministry participation and from the church. WMBC will continue to devise programs and initiatives aimed at overcoming these hurdles and foster a church environment that will cater to the needs of AA men. This study has incited vigilance toward the schemes, tactics, and subtleties of the enemy to breed separation from God and his holy mandate. WMBC will be deliberate in its planning of semiannual leadership workshops, Brotherhood fellowship opportunities, the Each One Teach One mentoring program, and any other method that yields higher ministry participation and leadership of AA men in the body of Christ. The researcher’s life has been enlightened and impacted by this project and he will endeavor to do all that is necessary to reverse the decline of ministry participation at WMBC.
Bibliography


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http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/2024


Appendix A

Questionnaire for Pastors

Dissertation Title: The Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

Basics Demographics

Name of Pastor _________________________________________________________________

Church Affiliation ______________________________________________________________

Number of Years Pastoring this church ____________________________________________

Denomination _________________________________________________________________

Peer to Peer Interview Questions

1) How long have you been pastor over this flock?

2) How would you describe God’s plan for African American men about leadership in the church?

3) How would you describe the climate or atmosphere of African American male ministry participation prior to commencement of your pastoral tenure?

4) What has been the observed trend of ministry participation and leadership among Black males, age 21-65, in your congregation? What do you feel is the reason for the decline or rise?

5) What programs have been implemented during your tenure to reverse the decline? Or how have you sustained or improved the level of participation and leadership among African American males in your church?

6) Do your suggestions and design implementations to increase ministry participation and leadership among African American males prove lasting? How so? Or why not?
7) What is your interpretation of discipleship and evangelism of the African American male in the Black church?

8) Do you feel that the Black church lacks effective mentoring programs that affect ministry participation?

9) What do you think adult men in your congregation would say if asked about the effectiveness of mentoring programs under your pastoral tutelage?

10) If I asked adult men in your congregation what they like most about mentoring programs at your church, what kind of responses would I receive?

11) If I asked the adult men in your congregation what they would like to see improved about mentoring/leadership programs in your church, what might be a typical response I would receive?
Appendix B

Questionnaire for Worthington Baptist Church Adult Males

Dissertation Title: The Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

Basics Demographics

Name of Participant _____________________________________________________________

Participant age __________________________________________________________

Number of years a member at this church __________________________________________

Denomination __________________________________________________________________

Interview Questions

1.) How long have you been a member of WMBC?

2.) What areas of ministry pique your interest?

3.) Do you think there has been a decline in male ministry participation and leadership at WMBC? Please explain why?

4.) How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?

5.) How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since uniting with WMBC?

6.) What do you believe the Bible says about the role and responsibility of men?

7.) Do you feel that men in the body of Christ have assumed a role of Godly leadership and authority, both at home and in church, as mandated in scripture?

8.) What do you like most about the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? What would you say is a weakness of the Brotherhood at WMBC?
9.) Have you ever been in a position of leadership in ministry at WMBC? If so, are you currently serving in this position? If not, do you aspire to lead or participate in ministry?

10.) If you were once in a position of leadership and have currently stepped away from that role, please explain why you may have felt the need to vacate the position?

11.) Have you heard of and how would you describe “spiritual gifting”?

12.) Do you know what your spiritual gifts is? If so, are you currently operating in this gifting?

13.) Please describe what you feel are the main reasons why there is a lack of male involvement in church ministry? How do you feel that leadership may be able to increase male participation?
Appendix C

Post-Workshop Questionnaire for Worthington Baptist Church Adult Males

Dissertation Title: The Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

Basics Demographics

Name of Participant _____________________________________________________________
Participant age _______________________________________________________________
Number of years a member at this church _________________________________________
Denomination _________________________________________________________________

Interview Questions

1) After attending the workshop, please describe your current understanding of the role and responsibility of men at WMBC?

2) On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your desire to participate in ministry or positions of church leadership at WMBC? (0 depicted at no desire, 10 depicted as anxious and eager willingness)

3) Do you feel that you have been equipped with tools necessary to fulfill the Biblical mandate of God for the male gender? Please explain why?

4) How would you describe the male leadership model at WMBC?

5) How would you describe mentoring and leadership received from other male leaders since attending the leadership workshop at WMBC?

6) How would you assess the teaching and leadership of males at WMBC?

7) How would you assess the effectiveness of the leadership workshop?
8) Please convey your thoughts on the current trend of male ministry participation at WMBC? Express if you are encouraged or discouraged with the current trajectory? Explain why?

9) What is your current attitude regarding the Brotherhood exhibited at WMBC? Do you recognize any significant strengths or weaknesses?

10) Please describe the ideal setting and circumstance that would boost male ministry and leadership participation at WMBC?
Appendix D

Recruitment Phone Script for Pastors

Dear Pastor:

As a student investigator in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a DMIN degree. The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project is to address the decline of African American male participation in ministry leadership at Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. I am calling to request your permission to record a brief interview with you—preferably at your church, but if not convenient, then at a secure location of your choice. The interview should take no more than 25 minutes. I appreciate your consideration of my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by calling [redacted] or send email confirmation to [redacted], indicating that you have given me permission to contact you to set up a time to conduct the interview. Before conducting the interview, the research project will be explained in its entirety. You will have the opportunity to ask as many questions as you deem necessary; and then you will have to sign an IRB approved consent document before participating in the study.

Participation is completely voluntary.

Kind regards,

Joseph Ray Davis
DMIn Candidate
Phone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form: Pastors

Title of the Project: A Study to Address the Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

Subtitle: Pastoral Interview Consent

Principal Investigator: Joseph Ray Davis, MACM, MDIV, Liberty University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a pastor of a church in the Trinity Gardens or Jensen community. There will be a maximum accrual of 5 pastors enrolled in the retrospective review portion of the research. There is no age limit nor limit to the years of pastoral tenure that would exclude a pastor from participation in the research project. The only exclusion factor is if the potential subject is pastor of a congregation that is not predominantly Black. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.</td>
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Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

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<tr>
<th>What is the study about and why is it being done?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The purpose of the study is addressing the decline of ministry participation and leadership among Black males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, TX.</td>
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Black churches across the nation are amid a spiritual crisis. A high preponderance of women has assumed the mantle of participating in ministry leadership. Even in churches where there is a near-even divide between the number of women and the men, women still represent a disproportionately high incidence of the total amount in governance roles. The continuance of males in the current pattern of diminished leadership, and, in the exhibited falling away from roles and responsibilities in active church ministry, moves further and further away from the balanced spiritual design of the Church of God depicted in scripture. Therefore, the investigator hopes that conducting this research will aid in reversing the current trend.

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<tr>
<th>What will happen if you take part in this study?</th>
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<tr>
<td>If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.) Allow me to conduct an initial telephone call that will serve as the commencement of the screening procedure for pastors, also referred to as subjects or study participants. When contacting your church, (a church within the Trinity Gardens/Jensen locales); if the pastor cannot be reached with the initial call and if the church is without office staff, the researcher leaves a message request for the pastor to return the phone call on the answering service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.) Allow me to determine if the potential participant meets the eligibility criteria for entrance onto the research study.</td>
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<td>3.) Allow me to conduct a recorded interview at your church or wherever is quiet and</td>
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convenient for you. The interview should take no longer than 25 minutes.

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<tr>
<th>How could you or others benefit from this study?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participants will not receive any personal benefits. The investigator is hoping that the findings of this research may serve as a comparative tool to assess where the plight of diminishing ministry participation and leadership in the Trinity Gardens locale ranks among other locales across the nation. The findings could also add depths of knowledge to already established theoretical foundations.</td>
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<th>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</th>
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<td>The risks of participation in this study are minimal (no more than the participant would experience in everyday life).</td>
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<th>How will personal information be protected?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The records of the study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I may publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home office, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared. The records will be retained for 3 years. After 3 years, the records will be deleted.</td>
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<th>How will you be compensated for being part of the study?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.</td>
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<th>Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?</th>
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<td>This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Is study participation voluntary?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.</td>
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<th>What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?</th>
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<td>If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The researcher conducting this study is Joseph Ray Davis. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [redacted] or [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher/study team using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________
Printed Subject Name

____________________________________
Signature & Date

____________________________________
Signature of Investigator Date

Legally Authorized Representative Permission

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the person named below participating in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a
copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

_I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I agree for the person named below to take part in this study._

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record the person named below as part of their participation in this study.

_________________________________________________
Printed Subject Name

_________________________________________________
Printed LAR Name and Relationship to Subject

_________________________________________________
LAR Signature Date

_________________________________________________
Signature of Investigator Date
Appendix F

Informed Consent Form: Congregants

**Title of the Project:** A Study to Address the Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

**Subtitle:** Adult Male of Worthington Missionary Baptist Church Interview Consent

**Principal Investigator:** Joseph Ray Davis, MACM, MDIV, Liberty University

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**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an adult male member of WMBC, over the age of 20. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

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**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is addressing the decline of ministry participation and leadership among Black males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, TX.

Black churches across the nation are amid a spiritual crisis. A high preponderance of women has assumed the mantle of participating in ministry leadership. Even in churches where there is a near-even divide between the number of women and the men, women still represent a disproportionately high incidence of the total amount in governance roles. The continuance of males in the current pattern of diminished leadership, and, in the exhibited falling away from roles and responsibilities in active church ministry, moves further and further away from the balanced spiritual design of the Church of God depicted in scripture. Therefore, the investigator hopes that conducting this research will aid in reversing the current trend.

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**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1.) Allow me to conduct a recorded interview in the pastor’s study at WMBC or wherever is quiet and convenient for you. The interview should take no longer than 25 minutes.

2.) Attend a mandatory leadership workshop on a designated Saturday. This will be a half day (4-hour session), followed by a question and answer session.

3.) Two to four weeks after the workshop, complete a mandatory follow-up questionnaire.

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**How could you or others benefit from this study?**

Participants will not receive any personal benefits. The investigator is hoping that the findings of this research may serve to facilitate an increase in ministry participation and leadership at WMBC.
What risks might you experience from being in this study?
The risks of participation in this study are minimal (no more than the participant would experience in everyday life).

How will personal information be protected?
The records of the study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I may publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home office, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared. The records will be retained for 3 years. After 3 years, the records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?
Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?
This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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### Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records/you can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher/study team using the information provided above.

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*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

________________________
Printed Subject Name

________________________
Signature & Date

________________________
Signature of Investigator    Date
Legally Authorized Representative Permission

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the person named below participating in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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_________________________________________________
Printed Subject Name

_________________________________________________
Printed LAR Name and Relationship to Subject

_________________________________________________
LAR Signature               Date

_________________________________________________
Signature of Investigator
Appendix G

IRB Approval Letter

May 1, 2020

Joseph Davis
Kenneth Warren

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-70 A Study to Address the Decline of Ministry Participation and Leadership amid Black Males in the Worthington Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas

Dear Joseph Davis, Kenneth Warren:

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

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

Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of
continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office