

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

IMPROVING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
INCREASING MULTIETHNIC PRESENCE
WITHIN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

A Dissertation-in-Praxis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership

by

Marquita Nicole Davie

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

The program is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within a religious organization by increasing the participation of individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. The validity of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement regarding the most segregated time in Christian America being Sunday mornings will be evaluated through observation, exploration, and scholarly articles. The Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel will serve as a framework for program design and implementation. The program serves to boost the presence of multiethnic members and leaders by 10% and 5%, respectively. This program will adhere to a logic model that will include five (5) objectives, outputs, and outcomes that showcase the considerable advantages of participating in the proposed service.

Keywords: multiethnic church, multiracial, multicultural, segregation, diversity

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Dedication

I am honored to dedicate this research program to my beloved husband, Larry. Your unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement have been instrumental in my success, and I am forever grateful for your invaluable contribution. Additionally, I dedicate this program to my exceptional children - Christian, Anthony, Elisha Grace, and Sophia Faith - and to every person God has graced my life with throughout this journey. I persevered until the end, always keeping you all in mind. I hoped to serve as an example and demonstrate that all things are possible with God.

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Special thanks to the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel organization for allowing me to plan and implement a program to increase the presence of multiethnic women within the membership and leadership. I appreciate the Collaborating Team Members and Coach for supporting the program design and implementation.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the US Army Chaplains assigned to Fort Leonard Wood and the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel Senior Advising Chaplain for supporting the program and providing invaluable advice on program implementation.

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List of Abbreviations

CRT-Critical Race Theory

FLW-Fort Leonard Wood

FU-Fisk University

HBCU-Historical Black Colleges and Universities

NT-New Testament

OT-Old Testament

PWOC-Protestant Women of the Chapel

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM IN PRAXIS

Introduction

On April 17, 1960, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made an appearance on *Meet the Press*. Four prominent journalists interviewed him - Frank Van Der Linden, May Craig, Anthony Lewis, and Lawrence E. Spivak (NBC-NA, 1960, Stanford University, 2023). During the interview, Dr. King was credited with developing a new strategy to end racial discrimination through sit-in demonstrations by black students protesting segregation in public eating places. The nonviolent approach was a shock to the South, which was too familiar with bombings and violence to uphold laws that separated blacks and whites. During the interview, Frank Van Der Linden posed the following, "...Do you mean the president should issue an order that the schools and the churches and the stores should all be integrated?" (NBC-NA, 1960; Stanford University, 2023). Dr. King responded by stating:

I think it is one of the tragedies of our nation, one of the shameful tragedies, that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours, if not the most segregated hour, in Christian America. I definitely think the Christian church should be integrated, and any church that stands against integration and that has a segregated body is standing against the spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ, and it fails to be a true witness. (NBC-NA, 1960; Stanford University, 2023)

Dr. King's response sheds light on how cultural tenets can impact Christian America, even in the face of biblical teachings that openly denounce race-based inequities. As scholars peer into church congregations today to evaluate this occurrence, it's worth noting how much has changed since Dr. King's initial observation.

A Lifeway study revealed that in 2015, more than 8 in 10 congregations comprised one predominant racial group (Smietana, 2015). The researchers surveyed 994 churchgoers on race and the church and highlighted that more than half (53 percent) disagreed with the statement--

“My church needs to become more ethnically diverse” (Smietana, 2015). Additionally, Evangelicals (71 percent) are more likely to affirm that their church is already diverse enough and that their congregations do not need to improve diversity (Smietana, 2015).

For decades, sociologists examined the turbulent relationship between race and religion, with many suggesting that religious segregation promoted separation in other spheres of life (Burns, 1949; Emerson & Smith, 2001; Lindsay, 2008; Tisby, 2020). A division that becomes clearer during increased social conflict and in pews across America on Sunday mornings. Pastor Brandon Cormier of Zeal Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is credited with developing the first successful multiethnic church within the area; a church that attracts as many as 1,300 people from various ethnic groups to one of its three Sunday morning services (Rabey, 2022, Zeal Church, 2022). The church intentionally targets diverse groups and markets itself as a spirit-filled and life-giving church that centers on Acts chapter 2 as its foundational message (Rabey, 2022, Zeal Church, 2022). The organization believes that “In and through Jesus Christ, everyone is healed, renewed, redeemed, forgiven, transformed, and loved, despite of race, ethnicity, or color” (Zeal Church, 2022). Cormier affirms that this framework drives Zeal Church’s success and increases the church’s positive impact on the city (Rabey, 2022, Zeal Church, 2022).

The Strategic Problem

Research shows that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s observations remains unchanged even after almost 60 years, but with America's increasing diverse population, scholars are assessing the church's future (Smietana, 2015). Although scholars report moderate success in breaking down racial barriers, certain customs, and traditions still fuel monoracial church growth. In efforts to research the prevalence of these observations, the researcher will develop and implement a program in the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC)

organization that aims to increase the multiethnic presence amongst its leaders and membership. Through varied marketing and evangelistic practices, the researcher hopes to enhance diversity and inclusion within the organization's membership.

Despite the fact that religious gatherings in the United States were once segregated by race, even after the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there is a growing desire for racial reconciliation within religious communities. Researchers assert that black Americans, in particular, have a strong desire to worship freely in inclusive spaces (Mohamed et al., 2021). In fact, a recent study conducted in Charlotte, North Carolina, surveyed a limited population and found that participants more than likely chose their congregation based on their desire for acceptance. The study revealed that black Americans were more likely to attend services where attendees and senior clergymen shared their same race thus perpetuating the presence of monoracial congregations and embracing “black church” (Mohamed et al., 2021).

The study participants expressed the importance of preserving black church, even in the face of a diversifying America. The participants asserted that black churches openly address the concerns inherent to their communities; is a provider of familiar rituals, worship styles, and music; a shelter from discrimination; and a link to the history and struggles associated with their past” (Mohamed et al., 2021). Black churchgoers affirm that the church also plays a critical role within their communities by offering job and educational programs and pastors who advocate for racial equality (Mohamed et al., 2021). According to the survey, 47 percent of black churchgoers who attend African American Protestant churches report hearing a sermon that addressed race related topics within the last year (Mohamed, 2021). By comparison, only 35 percent of black Protestants who attend white Protestant churches report hearing a sermon involving similar topics (Mohamed, 2021).

For decades, Christians presented polarized arguments on sociopolitical topics such as race, inequality, segregation, and the generational effects (De Young, 2007; Boesak & De Young, 2012; Cleveland, 2013). In a report titled, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 59 percent of black adults and 39 percent of white adults believe racism is a past problem (Eberhardt & Fiske, 1998; Barna Group, 2020). Racism is not a fabrication of the most active imaginations but poses tangible, unfair disadvantages for minoritized groups (Jones, 1991; Eberhardt & Fisk, 1998; DeYoung et al., 2004). Within the study, nearly half of practicing Christians agreed that slavery and systemic racism significantly impacted black Americans and that the church should proactively respond to the transgressions (Jones, 1991; Eberhardt & Fiske, 1998; Barna Group, 2020). Additionally, 28 percent assert there is nothing the church can do to right historical wrongs, and therefore, 1 in 4 report a lack of understanding of how to confront racism today (Jones, 1991; Eberhardt & Fiske, 1998; Barna Group, 2021).

By comparison, research still validates that Sunday is the most segregated time of the week in the U.S., but in an alarming twist, research affirms that congregants often welcome the separation (Emerson, 2008). The U.S. is growing increasingly diverse, which calls into question the role of religious congregations for immigrant groups and group survival (Emerson & Blum, 2008). Emerson & Blum (2008) validate the importance of churches by calling them mediating institutions-- private, volunteer sections that mediate between the small, private worlds of individuals and the larger public worlds that encompass politics, the educational system, and the economy (Emerson & Blum, 2008). Considering the growing, diverse populations within the U.S., researchers explore the idea of multiethnic churches, which provide a better framework for understanding race and religion within the context of American institutions and organizations (Emerson & Blum, 2008).

Religious congregations are vital to understanding American life and race relations (Emerson &Blum, 2008). Emerson (2008) reports there are over 300,000 congregations in the United States, making them more abundant than all McDonald's, Wendy's, Subways, Burger Kings, and Pizza Huts combined (Emerson, 2008). Interestingly, although many researchers report the gaping number of millennials leaving the church, a study released by Barna Group, *A New Chapter in Millennial Church Attendance*, revealed that Americans will regularly participate in a religious congregation each year (Emerson, 2008; Barna Group, 2021). In a fifteen nations study, the U.S. is the second highest in religious membership (55 percent), which is twenty percent higher than every other nation that participated in the study, except for Northern Ireland (Emerson, 2008; Barna Group, 2021). Although, church attendance fluctuates annually, researchers assert that church is still a vital part of the American experience.

Despite the fluctuating numbers in church membership and invariable attendance, religion remains a dependable source for most Americans. Clergy are often sought after to help in complex situations, indicating the important role that religious congregations play in shaping cultural norms and worldviews. Sociologist Nancy Ammerman's research identified seven main national networks that categorize most U.S. congregations, including Mainline Protestant, Conservative Protestant, African American Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox Jewish, Sectarian, and Other (Ammerman &Farsley, 1997; Ammerman, 2003; Emerson &Blum, 2008). These groups operate independently and produce different education materials, worship styles and songs, conferences, scripture translations, and worldviews. While all of these denominations believe in the one true God, each produces different doctrines of salvation that may lead to separation (Ammerman &Farsley, 1997; Ammerman, 2003, Emerson &Blum, 2008).

Problem and Response: Program, Process, or Product

This program will use Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel organization as a study framework to test the validity of Dr. King's observation. The organization's membership and attendance fluctuate, but at the time of program design, there were 30-35 women who attend facilitator-led Bible studies on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1130 a.m. The researcher will focus on intentional steps to implement greater representation of the multiethnic population within the Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and its surrounding areas (>30-mile radius). The goal is to enhance diversity and inclusion within the organization's membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

Defining Reality: The Current Need

In recent years, improving diversity and inclusion and incorporating increased multiethnicity is a concept that is gaining traction in America and challenging traditional, conservative evangelicalism. As racial justice becomes an even more polarized topic of discussion in the U.S., nearly 80 percent of practicing Christians believe the church can improve racial dynamics by welcoming people of all ethnicities into congregations (Barna, 2021). In a recent study, Michael Emerson partnered with the Racial Justice and Unity Center to explore what U.S. adults believed about racism and racial justice issues and examined whether multiethnic churches could be the answer to some of this topic's toughest factions (Barna, 2021). The study found that 29 percent of black practicing Christians have experienced racial prejudice on some level in a multiethnic church (Barna, 2021). The reports indicate that although racial prejudice may still exist in the monoracial environment; even in some predominately black churches, there are cases of colorism—prejudices based on skin tone within the same ethnic or racial group (Barna, 2021). Even with these indicators, research found that only 11 percent of

black practicing Christians report facing prejudice in a monoracial black church which may be a greater cost for the black worshipper who moves into a more diverse congregation (Barna, 2021).

Additionally, this study highlights that more than a quarter of black practicing Christians feels pressured to give up part of their racial identity to adopt the principles in a multicultural church; 27 percent find it difficult to build relationships, and 33 percent find it hard to move into a leadership position within the multicultural congregations (Barna, 2021). As a follow-up, the researchers conclude that other factors that are not accounted for include—church size, beliefs about gender roles, and overall organizational structure, which consequentially pose hindrances to navigating the multicultural church (Barna, 2021). Additionally, multicultural churches are most often previously predominately white churches that have made some effort to become more diverse. The researchers state that most of these churches have predominately white leadership, as a result, the existing norms and traditions do not significantly change (Barna, 2021).

Multiethnic church planters, like Brandon Cormier of Zeal Church, are no longer satisfied with the business-as-usual structure, but instead, through faith-based perspectives, they object to longstanding patterns of racial homogeneity within the religious culture and expressively advocate for social change, antiracism, and civic engagement (Emerson, 2008; DeYmaz, 2020). Traditional Christian leaders assigned racial issues to the social arena, therefore undeserving a biblical response. Many are pushing against this rhetoric and using scripture to create a connected community where men and women of diverse backgrounds are one with God individually and can walk together as one through the local church (Emerson, 2008; DeYmaz, 2020). Although the concept of race being a biblical mandate sounds reasonable, many churches find it difficult to enact intentional steps towards diversifying groups and embracing a

multicultural concept for their church. Considering the lack of diversity in America's churches, researchers suggest religious leaders must be prepared to ask the following questions:

- What caused this segregation within God's church?
- What does the Bible have to say about becoming a multiethnic church and what evidence can be found within the Bible for this mandate?
- What are some actions we can take to overcome these barriers and develop a church that indemnifies the Spirit of Christ in race and religion? (Malphurs Group, 2022)

Defining a Preferred Future: The Visionary Focus

In his book, *Oneness Embraced*, Dr. Tony Evans believes that no one has a valid excuse for placing culture above Christ or race above righteousness (Evans, 2015). Oftentimes, religious leaders attempt to reconcile biblical teachings with cultural tenets, but what is this biblical mandate that so many have believed is the key to restoring humanity back to God? Revelations 7:9 states, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (KJV, 1971).

This verse represents the multitude that will be saved, they represent every nation, tribe, people group, and language which is a vivid reminder that all people are precious to God, and no race, ethnicity, or background is exempt from His love (Evans, 2015). This message displays how racism and separation are inherently antithetical to God's message (Evans, 2015). God acknowledges our differences and has people from every background and demographic representing His kingdom (Lai, 1992; Abadeer, 2009; Woodley, 2010; Evans, 2015).

Vision Statement

To improve diversity and inclusion within the organization by increasing the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

Purpose Statement

The FLW PWOC's motto is "We are workers together for Christ," which rests on the following four aims; (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God's Word, (3) to develop women's spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2022). PWOC is not a non-denominational program, instead, it represents a multi-denominational organization, thus honoring different church backgrounds. The four aims help the leaders to focus on what they have in common and not on the differences that can strike discord between members. In connection with the established motto and purpose, the program reaffirms that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity is welcomed within the organization. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, this program showcases Christ's power to unify people and reconcile racial disparities.

Objectives

- OBJ 1. If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.
- OBJ 2. If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.
- OBJ 3. If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.
- OBJ 4. If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization.

- OBJ 5. If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create a safe space for multiethnic members.

Outputs

OBJ 1

- The researcher will provide relative reading material that highlights historical segregation within religious organizations.
- The researcher will utilize Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith's, *Divided by Faith* to provide an overview of historical segregation in religious spaces and the impact thereof.
- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborating team members as participants to discuss how historical segregation currently impacts Christian America.

OBJ 2

- Using Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9, the researcher will uncover Godly convictions that urges collaborative team members to break the monoracial worship barrier.
- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborative team members as participants that discusses this biblical conviction of all humans being equal.

OBJ 3

- The researcher will collaborate with the team members to revive evangelism and discipleship amongst organizational members.
- The team will receive training on the aforementioned topics as well as learning how to extend an invitation to a collective worship service.
- The researcher will work with Publicity to collaborate with organizations like AAFES, DECA, and MWR to distribute flyers invitations to the religious organization.

OBJ 4

- The researcher will explore leadership selection practices and protocols.
- The researcher will highlight trends that may hinder multiethnic leadership selection.
- The researcher will discuss these practices with Senior Leadership Selection Member.

OBJ 5

- The researcher will facilitate a focus group to discuss different experiences and provide a safe space for collaborative group members to discuss their experiences with race and religion.

Outcomes**OBJ 1**

- The researcher hopes to increase awareness of historical racial division within religious organizations and how this occurrence perpetuates monoracial churches within America.

OBJ 2

- The researcher hopes to perpetuate an understanding of God's love towards humans, despite race or ethnicity. As Christ leads, the researcher intends for his followers to mimic His [Christ's] example.

OBJ 3

- Through the intended outputs, the researcher hopes to develop better evangelistic practices that target all races and ethnicities within the community.

OBJ 4

- The researcher hopes to increase diversity on the leadership board. The 2022-2023 board consists of 15 personnel: 12-White, 2-Hispanic, and 1-African American. The researcher hopes to increase the multiethnic presence on the board by 5 percent.

OBJ 5

- In relation to the proposed output, the researcher hopes that the collaborative team will develop concurrent safe spaces for organizational members to discuss other race related experiences. By providing this space, the researcher hopes the leaders will cultivate an area for others to be transparent and open about their personal experiences.

The Collaborating Organization, Team, and Coach

This section will focus on introducing the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel (FLW PWOC) organization as the study framework. This section will include the organizational description, organizational vision statement, organizational setting, organizational

demographics, and collaborating team. The FLW PWOC is a derivative organization of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy that supports ministry to women on military bases. The Fort Leonard Wood commanding general's vision for spiritual support is to 1) be the spiritual community of choice, which builds spiritual fitness, (2) practice faith through a full spectrum of worship and religious education opportunities, and (3) support one another in fellowship, (4) serve others compassionately, and (5) support and strengthen the Army Values (Albertson, 2001; Wood, 2014).

Organizational Description, Mission, Vision

The Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC) is a derivative organization overseen by Chaplaincy and designed to help minister to women associated with the military, especially those who participate in a military chapel (PWOC Hub, 2022). The Army Chief of Chaplains sponsors the PWOC is sponsored and is recognized by the Chaplain leadership of the Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. It is a military-wide, non-denominational ministry that originated in Europe in 1952 (PWOC Hub, 2022). The collective organizational motto is "We are Workers for Christ." Four guiding principles are as follows: (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God's Word, (3) to develop women's spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2022). This organization serves as a frontline servant to help women see that they are a part of a worldwide network of women who diligently seek after the Lord (PWOC Hub, 2022).

Organizational Mission Statements

- To lead women to accept Christ as their personal Savior and Lord
- To teach women the history, beliefs, and programs of the Church, all built on a solid foundation of worship and Bible study.
- To develop in women the skills of prayer, evangelism, stewardship, and social service against a background of personal spiritual development

- To involve women in the work of the chapel, in keeping with their abilities and interests

Organizational Vision Statements

- To LEAD women to Christ
- To TEACH women God's Word
- To DEVELOP women's spiritual gifts
- To INVOLVE women in Chapel ministries

Organizational Setting

The fort was honorably named after Maj. General Leonard Wood for his dedication and devotion to the military during wartime (FLW, 2023). Fort Leonard Wood's original mission was to be the home of the 6th Infantry Division. However, as time passed and the missions changed, Fort Leonard Wood became home to four other infantry divisions, including the 8th, the 70th, the 75th, and the 97th divisions trained at this location. During WWII, more than 300,00 Soldiers passed through Fort Leonard Wood to receive training on their way to service in every theater of operation (Wood, 1917; McCallum, 2005). Although Fort Leonard remained a training post, it adopted the mission for Engineer training and became the leading training site for the U.S. Army Engineer Corp (Wood, 1917; McCallum, 2005).

Fort Leonard Wood's mission is to develop competent leaders and warriors of character. Currently, this military post hosts 5,400 Active-Duty Soldiers, 12,183 Family Members, 3,825 DA Civilians, 12,322 Trainees, and 55,170 Retirees and Family Members (Wood, 1917; McCallum, 2005). Two significant communities surround Fort Leonard Wood—St. Robert and Waynesville, are situated on Interstate 44 and historic Route 66 (Google Maps, n.d.). Additionally, these towns support the local military post by providing a plethora of religious

organizations, national franchises, and local merchants give way to the main entrance of Fort Leonard Wood, home of the U.S. Army's premier training post (Google Maps, n.d.).

The commanding general's vision is for Fort Leonard to be the spiritual community of choice for Soldiers and Family Members stationed within the area. Fort Leonard Wood houses nine chapels and performs different religious services—Catholic Mass, Adoration, Gospel Protestant, Traditional Protestant, and Crossroads Community Contemporary Service. These services occur throughout the week and aim to help build Soldier's and Family Member's spiritual fitness and resiliency. Offering a service to fit the different spiritual needs of military members offers a way to fulfill the commanding general's vision of being the spiritual community of choice instead of the thirty surrounding religious organizations.

Organizational Demographics

The FLW PWOC currently serves 30-35 women weekly. It welcomes women of any Protestant background and from various military services as well as those who attend church off of the military installation. The selected officers, who make up the Executive Board, may include the following: President, 1st Vice President-Spiritual Life, 2nd Vice President-Programs, Administrative Coordinator, and Financial Liaison/Treasurer. The ministry team leaders may include the following: Historian, Hospitality, Leadership Selection, Outreach/In reach, Participation, Praise and Worship, Prayer, Publicity, Retreat/Special Events, Titus II Advisor(s), Training Coordinator, Watch Care Coordinator, Web/Social Media Manager, Women's Ministry Coordinator(s) and any other deemed necessary by the President and the Board.

Organizational Leadership and Collaborating Team

This collaborative team will include five (5) participants selected from the general organizational members and board leadership and one (1) Collaborating Coach, who also serves

as the organization president. The participants will be arranged to serve as the team that will lead and support program planning, implantation, and assessment. The program aims to improve Diversity and Inclusion Within FLW PWOC Membership, thus reflecting and promoting greater multiethnicity within its membership and board-selected leaders by 10 and 5 percent, respectively. The researcher selected collaborating team members that can support the overall vision by either functionality, experience, or role assignment.

Organizational President and Collaborating Coach (Participant A)

Models servant leadership; leads the board and the PWOC body to seek and do the will of God, personally and corporately. Has the authority and responsibility to apply the principles in Matthew 18:15-17 to behavior inconsistent with Biblical principles within the board.

Additional Duties:

1. Prayerfully selects the appointed board members with consensus of the executive board and the guidance of the PWOC Chaplain
2. Leads the board to seek God's will and vision for the PWOC.
3. Holds a planning meeting/board retreat early in her term, working with the Administrative Coordinator to complete the details.
4. Equips and encourages the board collectively.
5. Provides wisdom, guidance, and encouragement to each board member on an informal basis.
6. Prays for each board member.
7. Prepares for and presides at all board meetings seeking to cultivate a loving, open, and cooperative environment.
8. Communicates regularly with the PWOC Chaplain and all board members about upcoming activities.
9. Appoints women to lead special projects, as needed, such as Newsletter, Librarian or Volunteer Hour Coordinator
10. Plans a joint board meeting with the incoming and outgoing boards at the end of her term, during which all AARs are submitted by the outgoing board.

Past Organizational President (Participant B)

Modeled servant leadership within the president position during previous year. Oversaw the board and membership, oversaw board selection team, and sought to do the will of God in a corporate setting.

Organizational Vice President of Programs (Participant C)

Prayerfully selects Bible studies and Bible study leaders; trains, equips, and encourages the Bible study leaders assumes the office of the President if it becomes vacant before the end of the term. Seeks wisdom and guidance of the President and keeps her informed

Additional Duties:

1. Researches and selects Bible studies using the yearly theme (if available) and four Aims according to the needs of the women Prayerfully selects leaders for Bible studies.
2. Proposes selected Bible studies and leaders to the board and Chaplain for approval.
3. Estimates quantity of materials and submits orders, working within budget constraints and chapel guidelines.
4. Coordinates with the President to schedule meeting times and facilities for Bible studies.
5. Plans training opportunities for Bible study leaders as needed.
6. Meets with Bible study leaders one-on-one and in meetings for feedback, encouragement, and support.
7. Provides or arranges for devotions at regular meetings and as requested, at board meetings and program meetings.
8. Assumes the duties of the Prayer ministry team leader if the position is vacant.

Outreach Coordinator (Participant D)

Coordinates ministry projects to meet needs in the community (Outreach) and within the PWOC body (In reach). This ministry team leader position could be divided into two: In reach and Outreach.

Additional Duties

1. Prays over, plans, coordinates, and evaluates outreach and in reach projects.
2. Works closely with the Women's Ministry Coordinators to determine how PWOC might be able to serve the various chapel communities.
3. Presents projects to the board for consensus.
4. Oversees the projects.

Publicity (Participant E)

Publicizes PWOC events in the chapel and community.

Additional Duties:

1. Coordinates with other board members to publicize PWOC activities.
2. Works closely with the Women's Ministry Coordinators to ensure that every chapel community is receiving relevant information about PWOC activities.
3. Follows installation and chapel guidelines in creating and distributing publicity releases.
4. For clarity, spells out "Protestant Women of the Chapel" on all publicity releases.
5. Works closely with Website/Social Media Ministry Team Leader to ensure all publicity information is posted in a timely manner.

General Member (Participant F)

Serves as a general member in the Fort Leonard Wood PWOC organization.

Chapter Summary

The FLW PWOC is an ecumenical, inter-denominational organization that is designed to help minister to women associated with the military, especially those who participate in a military chapel (PWOC Hub, 2022). Although attendance fluctuates during the semester, the organization generally serves 30-35 women in weekly Bible studies. This program will aim to increase diversity and inclusion within the religious organization. The researcher will accomplish this goal using five (5) objectives which will inherently impact the rate of inclusion within the

organization. The overall vision of this program is to increase the multiethnic presence of organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Surveys predict that by 2045, America will become a minority white country (Frey, 2018). As a result, religious leaders are calling for more multiethnic churches and programs to accommodate the impending shift. (Emerson, 2001; Woodley, 2010). The United States of America has always been a diverse nation, with a variety of states, regions, and ethnic and cultural groups. The country's motto, "E Pluribus Unum," which translates to "out of many, one," recognizes this diversity and highlights the significance of coming together through the amalgamation of different cultures and states (Emerson, 2010). This chapter discusses the advantages of multiethnic churches and religious programs in relation to the United States' growing diversity. Additionally, the researcher will present a theological, theoretical, and thematic framework based on recent studies on multiethnic churches and religious programs and underscores the importance of reconciling the issue of race with God.

Biblical and Theological Framework

This section delves into the correlation between well-known biblical stories and racial tenets, while also contemplating how humanity can reconcile race with God. The pressing question that drives many conversations is determining whether racism is a sin and if so, how can Christians reconcile what the Bible says with what they see in the culture. The scriptures noted below are not an exhaustive list but are a foundational response to the argument that plagues Christian America.

- Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor (KJV, 1971; Leviticus 19:15).

- Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts (KJV, 1971; 2 Chronicles 19:7).
- A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another (KJV, 1971; John 13:34).
- Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (KJV, 1971; Acts 10:34).

Biblical Imperatives and Principles

According to the Equal Justice Initiative, nearly 86 percent of American churches lack racial diversity (Cotto, 2022). In response to this phenomenon, Nicholas Pearce, assistant pastor at Chicago's Apostolic Church of God, stated, "Not only have racism and racial inequality been tolerated by the church, but it has also in many cases been perpetuated and theologized by the church" (Cotto, 2022, para. 4). Considering the heightened racial climate in America, many church leaders have grappled with the effects of racism and segregation within religious organizations. For evangelical Christian leaders, crafting a reasonable response to racism and injustices are complicated by their view of sin in individuals and not in societal terms. Darrel Harrison, an ordained Baptist deacon and co-host of the *Just Thinking* podcast, weighed in on the topic. He believes that biblically, ethnic prejudice is not a social issue or a typical "ism". However, he argues, [prejudice] is hate--period, and the only way to end hatred is by repenting and believing the gospel (Gjeltén, 2020). Likened to Harrison's response, religious leaders have taken a prominent stance against racism and segregation within the churches by adding that the only way to reconcile this situation is for a people to reconcile to God first (Evans, 2015; Perkins, 2018).

Race and the Bible

The Bible addresses ethnicity far more than it does racial categories (Perkins, 2018). The Greek word *ethnos* is used in the NT to illustrate people who make up different groups based on

a common history, language, or geographic region (Smith, 2010; Perkins, 2018). Although racial distinctions based primarily on physical characteristics did not permeate first century thought, there were basic distinctions between ethnicities that stratified nations, i.e., Jews and Greeks. Larkin (1984) stated the Jews and Greeks classified the rest of mankind in a category over against themselves. “If one were not a Greek, he was a Barbarian. If one were not a Jew, he was a Gentile” (Larkin, 1984, para. 1). Overtime, Greeks developed a strong ethnic pride which often translated into prejudice against the Barbarian which resulted in polarization. Aristotle quoted approvingly from Euripides the sentiment that it was reasonable “For Greeks to rule over Barbarians, but not Barbarians over Greeks; for Barbarians are by nature slaves but Greeks free men” (Larkin, 1984, para. 5).

According to many scholars, Christianity and the OT played a significant role in shaping the Westernized racial ideal, as evidenced by the works of European and American race scientists in the 19th century (Larkin 1984; Smith 2010; Burrell, 2021). Racism is rooted in prejudiced beliefs about the differences between various human groups, and it emerged in the modern West. However, European colonization of foreign territories, starting with Portugal and Spain in the latter half of the 15th century, exploited the concept of race to expand their empires (Larkin 1984; Smith 2010; Burrell, 2021). By the 19th century, race had become a popular and scientific concept that dominated both American and European thought, used to classify and define humans based on biological factors.

Robert Knox, a renowned lecturer of anatomy, expounded on the significance of the nineteenth century racial imaginations in his earlier writings. In his book titled, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations*, Knox asserted that, “Race is in human affairs everything, is simply a fact, the most remarkable, the most comprehensible, which

philosophy has ever announced. Race is everything: literature, science, art—in a word, civilization depends on it” (Biddiss, 1976 p. 16). Considering Knox’s assessment of racial concept, his words are emblematic of nineteenth century epistemology and is characterized as the foundational attempts at using race as the primary source to explain the innerworkings of society and politics (Burrell, 2021). Scholars posit that race is a scientific problem that is firmly tied to the emergence of modern biology, but how exactly did it [race] arrive at its threshold? And how is it tied to biblical roots?

The Fallen World

Abrahamic faiths (Judaism and Islam) assert that Christianity is predicated on the literalistic acceptance of the Genesis account of human origin and descent (Burrell, 2021). This doctrine asserts that Adam and Eve were the first humans God created and therefore the forerunners for humankind. The belief in the historical sin and fall of Adam is an essential part of Christian theodicy—the belief that Adam and Eve committed the first sin at a particular point in time and God did not create an inherently fallen world (Mason, 2017). The full account of the Fall in Genesis 3 describes a tragedy, where Adam’s abrupt fall into sin resulted in the loss of the perfect, symbiotic relationship between mankind and its Creator (KJV 1971; Genesis 3; Johnson, 1995). Therefore, the fruits of this sin are displayed in every human life since, apart from Jesus Christ, who was born inherently sinless (KJV, 1971; Genesis 3; Johnson, 1995).

The rapid spread of sin, and its effects, are evident in the early chapters of Genesis, but we can also see an even greater spread of God’s grace as He works within the fallen contextual world to buy back sinners. Immediately after Adam sinned against God, both he and Eve were dispelled from the garden of Eden—an oasis where the first humans shared an intimate relationship with God (KJV 1971; Genesis 3). Sin uncovered their eyes and within a moment,

they equally knew both good, evil, and were covered with shame. Sin is a problem with no, real human response, or solution (Johnson, 1995). It [sin] blinds, maims, and hardens human's heart to the point of death leaving only one way to deal with it and that is through God, himself (Johnson, 1995).

In his book, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, David Clines reveals a common motif that identifies five recurring cycles evident throughout the OT—the Fall, Cain and Abel, the sons of God, the Flood, and Babel (Johnson, 1995; Clines, et.al, 1997). From his perspective, each of the cycles contains elements of an act of sin, a divine speech of judgement, God intervening and mitigating the judgment, and an act of punishment for the pronounced sin (Johnson, 1995; Clines, et.al, 1997). These stories outline an increased number of sinful actions taking place in the world as well as an increased action of God mitigating sin by imposing severe punishments for these actions (Johnson, 1995; Clines, et.al, 1997). Genesis 4:8 states, “And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4:8). Prior to this occurrence, scripture states that God accepted an offering from Abel, but rejected a different sacrifice from Cain. Although the scripture doesn't give an explicit reason to why God rejected Cain's offering, but it seems to surround a matter of Cain's attitude towards the sacrifice. Verse four mentions that Abel brought “the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect unto Abel for his offering” (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4:4). Contrastingly, the scripture depicts Cain as a tiller of the ground and him bringing the fruit of the ground unto the Lord. In verse five, it highlights that God had no respect for Cain's offering and this made him very angry—his countenance fallen (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4).

God attempts to correct Cain's actions by stating in verse 7, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4:7). God's correction is met by more of Cain's anger and it is within this refusal of God's standards would predicate Cain's fall to sin (Bible Reference, 2023). Within the story, Cain talks to Abel and proceeds to murder him—the first recorded murder in human history (Bible Reference, 2023). In this action, Cain outright rejects God and even further, this single action altered his life's course.

In keeping with Clines' sin and punishment motif, verse 11 outlines the curse God pronounced on Cain, "Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood" (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4; Bible Reference, 2023). He [God] continues, "When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth" (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4; Bible Reference, 2023). Cain cries out to the Lord that the punishment is more than he could bear; in response, God inherently mitigates the punishment by amending the punishment, "Not so, anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over. Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him" (KJV, 1971; Genesis 4). Abel's murder left Cain vulnerable to being killed himself, which from a human perspective would be likely retribution. But, God, in all his power, who is about to banish Cain, shows him mercy and is determined to stop people from seeking revenge for the Abel's murder (Bible Reference, 2023). He [God] promises to take revenge on anyone who kills Cain and places a mark on his him to further ward off other murders (Bible Reference, 2023). Scholars have asked, why would God do such a thing? And, why not let Abel's blood be avenged? Although many have posed different answers to this familiar question, later in the Bible we see God administer law procedures that both bring justice on wrongdoers

and for helping murders seek sanctuary (Bible Reference, 2023). Additionally, scholars suggest that God's overlining intent is to prevent the never-ending cycle of revenge in which humans are prone--"Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" (Bible Reference, 2023). God insists on being the one to take just vengeance on injustice which is a role in which he still assumes today.

From the garden of Eden to Cain, Lamech, and the sons of God generation, which proceeded the Flood generation, mankind has incurred an ever-growing avalanche of sin, which continues to widen the chasm between God and man (Johnson, 1995). But, within these stories, we see this avalanche sized sin countered by God's severity of punishment and grace. Adam and Eve are not killed, but are provided clothes, Cain is not killed, but given a protective mark and decree that God will avenge him seven times if anyone takes an attempt on his life, and Noah and his family are preserved from the growing wickedness that covered the face of the earth (Johnson, 1995).

Is Racism a Sin?

Since Adam, sin has become the undoing of humankind and is relentless unto death. Scholars argue that Adam's sin is not the actual digestion of the forbidden fruit, but in the willful disobedience of the direct and explicit command of God (Johnson, 1995). The sin was therefore forged in the idea that man could possibly be their own god, thus independent of the Creator's rule, which is not only foolish, but sinful in nature, thus deserving the punishment of death. One of the first effects of the Fall was their eyes being opened and discovering the shame of their nakedness. The second consequence was deserving of death, but as we've highlighted within the motif, God consequentially stepped in and clothed them with fig leaves. He [God] covered their sin, their shame, and guilt, but as a result, the two were expelled from the Garden of Eden, to be separated from their Creator for eternity. Throughout history, religious leaders and scholars have

battled whether racism is a sociological issue that is remedied through political reform, or whether it is a sin issue that can only be remedied through reconciling to God. Man tends to destroy what God has made good, but no matter how drastic the man's sin becomes, God's grace never fails and there is a chance to be reconciled to God.

In the article, *The Sin of Racism*, Dr. Timothy Keller writes that biblically, sin is anything that falls short of God's will and glory, that violates his law and character (Keller, 2020). Dr. Keller asserts that because mankind is made in God's image, it is a sin to violate in thought, word, or deed, the divine truth that all humans have equal dignity and worth as persons created in his image (KJV, 1971; Genesis 1:26-28). He adds that by treating people unequally solely based on race is only one version of this sin, but equally pernicious is to presuppose one's own race or nationality is inherently superior to another (Keller, 2020). The Apostle Paul wrote about divisions that arose based on racism. In the first century AD, one of the primary divisions in the church was between Jews and Gentiles. Some of the Jews that joined the church movement attempted to force Gentiles to perform Jewish rituals. They argued that to be a good Christian, they had to do all the right Jewish religious activities in addition to following Christ's principles and rituals (New Spring, 2023). Romans 10:12 records Paul's response to the Jewish leaders, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." (KJV, 1971; Romans 10:12).

Politicians and religious leaders remain deadlocked on the race discussion, with some scholars suggesting intermingling concepts from political reform and biblical precepts to eradicate racism. The social gospel began in Protestantism in the 19th century and gained prominence in the 20th century (Luker, 1998; Slick, 2021). Originally, the social gospel was rooted in Christianity and centered on bringing biblical principles into modern society to solve

social problems such as racism, class distinctions, crime, economic inequality, etc. (Luker, 1998; Slick, 2021). Over the years, scholars suggest the social gospel movement pivoted and rejected the conservative individualistic social ethic, instead developing a distinctively optimistic rationale rooted in theological liberalism that emerged out of attempts to reconcile the Christian faith with evolutionary thought (Luker, 1998; Slick, 2021). Baptist Theologian, Walter Rauschenbusch popularized the social gospel approach in the 20th century and calls for the church to give more attention to social action based on theological vision of the kingdom of God (Luker, 1998; Slick, 2021). Although it is an approach to the Christian faith, scholars assert that social gospel is rooted in critical race theory and is only partly based on scripture's admonition to take care of the poor, help the downtrodden, promote justice, resist oppression, and advocate for equality for all people (Luker, 1998; Slick, 2021).

The social gospel places culture at the helm of all power, thus stating that the second coming of Christ would not happen until the culture frees itself from all social evils, to include racism and economic oppression (Daniel, 2012). Social gospel adherents are focused on cultural involvement which narrows the Biblical Gospel. Although Christians are called to engage the culture, the overall biblical gospel—creation, fall, redemption, and final restoration, is much larger than a cultural mandate; Rauschenbusch overemphasized cultural power which resulted in minimizing Christ, the agent of true cultural transformation (Daniel, 2012). In a recent interview, Pastor Rick Warren offered the following statement concerning social gospel, “Social gospel is Marxism in Christian clothing...we shouldn't choose between cultural restoration and personal salvation, the gospel contains both with Christ at the center” (Christian Today, 2008 para. 1).

Racism, America's Original Sin

Likened to Adam's first sin in the Bible, scholars suggest racism as America's original sin in the world. When Barack Obama, the first African American president, was elected, many believed that America was entering a post-racial era, where color would not matter, and racism would be eradicated as a social construct (Luker, 1998; Ponds, 2013). According to a recent Associated Press poll, racial prejudice has slightly increased since the 2008 election (Associated Press, 2012; Ponds, 2013). Studies show that 51 percent of Americans expressed explicit anti-black attitudes compared to 48 percent in a similar 2008 study (Associated Press, 2012; Ponds, 2013). Anti-Hispanic sentiment by non-Hispanic whites also rose from 52 percent a year earlier to 57 percent in 2012 (Associated Press, 2012; Ponds, 2013).

Race is neither a biological nor a genetic reality, but a social construction devised by the human initiative to categorize their world. Prejudice based on color alone carries questionable emotional attachments to a falsehood about someone with a different appearance (Associated Press, 2012; Ponds, 2013). Although scholars assert that color blindness and boundaries are fictional and maintain no biological credibility, the impact of race is no doubt a reality that has definitive measures that affect individual lives.

Brian Bantum (2016) believes that racialized religion functions as an alternate, a form of discipleship into what humans recruit or deem acceptable for their sect (Ponds, 2013; Bantum, 2016). He claims that whiteness is the center of superiority within this religion and places all other racial classes in a hierarchal form of worship. The racial religion has followers, a centerpiece god, and carries an expressed message of superiority that is reinforced daily through social interactions, traditions, education, the media, and history (Ponds, 2013; Bantum, 2016). Exodus 20:3-5 states:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...” (KJV, 1971; Exodus 20:3-5)

This scripture explicitly warns against constructing or worshipping any other gods in place of the living God. Throughout biblical history, we see a pattern of His people worshipping God in addition to graven images. This practice is prohibited and should not take place. No deity, natural or imagined, can rival the living God. Scholars suggest that idol worship provides a false sense of security from another source other than God. Some place their confidence in money, careers, nationality, and race. But the Bible asserts that no little "g" god can take the place of the great I AM, and humans should avoid this practice at all costs. Racism is a religion that presents a solid gospel centered on superiority. Many subscribe to its principles and theories, sometimes unknowingly. But the Bible asserts that worshipping ideas or idols is like building a house on sinking sand. When the winds and waves swell, the house will not stand. Likened to this scripture, building a foundation on racism will collapse and is considered sinful.

Biblical and Theological Themes

This section delves into biblical themes that are applicable to program design. The utilization of diversity to bring unity among God's people will be explored. Though some scholars propose that racial reconciliation is crucial in addressing division within Christian America, others contend that this idea is insignificant unless it is accompanied by tangible efforts to reconcile a divided people with a whole God. Our objective is to unveil the authentic significance of diversity in God's Kingdom.

Diversity and God's Kingdom

Diversity is a significant part of God's design. Scholars used terms like “color-blind,” “unification,” and integration to describe the desire to unify God's people. Although well-

intentioned, Evans (2015) challenged the use of such terms in that they lacked clarity and insufficient information regarding one's personhood in the kingdom of God (Abadeer, 2009; Woodley, 2010; Evans, 2015). He [Evans] insists that until this point, unification was overdone by conferences and meetings that, although well and good, did not produce active steps towards reconciliation but only gave way to more tolerance (Abadeer, 2009; Woodley, 2010; Evans, 2015). God created a uniqueness to be used within the context of His [God's] kingdom and to advance its principles. Before reconciling to others, God commands reconciliation to Him. Upon this mandate, humans are to be one with Him (vertically) and one with each other (horizontally) (Abadeer, 2009; Woodley, 2010; Evans, 2015).

Throughout the OT and NT, God's invisible traits are visibly clear through His love for humanity. The Bible depicts a history of the world in four stages: (1) creation by God, (2) human's fall into sin, (3) redemption through Christ, and (4) the final restoration which is the new heaven and earth (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020). Often, scholars view the stages as individual presets during biblical history, they are also presented collectively as the grand narrative of the Bible (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020). Put another way, the Bible presents a worldview that suggests the following notes about the world around us, first, everything is a part of God's good creation, yet it is fallen and affected by sin (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020). Everything that is presented in the world is distorted, somehow broken, and falling short of its original purpose (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020). The good news about this is that everything that we see is being, and can be, redeemed (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020). The ultimate purpose of God is to wipe all creation clean of the effects of sin until it is restored to wholeness, beauty, and reflects His glory. Adam and Noah's story, just to name a few, reflect the pattern: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Both dealt with curses that would impact generations to come, but

God provided a fail-safe plan whereas everything is being redeemed and restored to its original glory (Wolters, 2005; Keller, 2020).

Racial Reconciliation

During a *Meet the Press* interview in 1960, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

...any church that stands against integration and that has a segregated body is standing against the spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ, and it fails to be a true witness. But this is something that the Church will have to do itself. I don't think church integration will come through legal processes. (NBC-NA, 1960, Stanford University, 2023)

In this interview section, Dr. King emphasized that the integration of Christian America would require the concentrated, individual efforts of congregants desegregate the pews. Churches are private, volunteer organizations that are protected under the First Amendment, which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." (Congress, 2023). The Establishment Clause is embedded within the First Amendment and prohibits the government from providing some types of support to religion and requires some separation between church and state (Congress, 2023). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 enforced the following constitutional rights:

1. The right to vote.
2. To confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States
3. To provide relief against discrimination in public accommodations,
4. To authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect rights in public facilities and public education,
5. To prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs,
6. And to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity (Library of Congress, 2023)

Dr. King's response to the question conveyed that while the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination and segregation in public facilities, it does not apply to private organizations such

as the church. Therefore, the Supreme Court cannot compel churches to enhance their diversity in the congregation.

Similar to Dr. King's statements, Dr. Tony Evans suggests that reconciliation cannot be achieved through a series of seminars, Bible studies, and conferences, but will take deliberate actions to overcome the historical and systemic differences inherent in cultural norms (Evans, 2015). The Samaritan woman is a common, biblical example of taking actionable steps towards racial reconciliation (KJV, 1971; John 4). As a woman from a minority group, it was taboo for Jesus to ask for a drink of water from a modern-day perspective. The Samaritans are unique whose unique, ethnic history can be traced throughout biblical times; they were half-Jews, half-Gentiles, and completely rejected by both factions (Stewart, 2020). The race was established after the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel around 721 B.C. (Stewart, 2020). After the Northern tribes were deported, the colonists blended their religious practices with those of the Israelites, resulting in the creation of a new race called the Samaritans (Stewart, 2020).

In the story of Jesus and the woman at the well, there were significant differences between their factions in terms of customs, cultural norms, and beliefs about worship. Despite this, Jesus was able to find common ground and connect with the woman on that level (KJV, 1971; John 4:1-42). Dr. Evans notes that it is uncommon for people of different races to naturally merge, which is why intentional efforts to break down barriers are necessary for building unity. Rather than forcing oneness, intentional actions can prevent polarization and prejudicial behavior. Jesus went beyond simply being in her presence and engaged with her in a genuine and intentional way. He drank from her cup, broke down divisive walls, and fostered a relationship with her that was authentic and meaningful.

It is a common misunderstanding in the church that in order to be accepted and achieve unity, an individual must conform to the group. Conversely, some believe that to be a member of the church, one must abandon their unique qualities. However, Jesus did not compromise his identity to connect with the Samaritan woman. Although he was a Jew, there were no physical differences that could deny his cultural background. The woman acknowledged this and recognized him as a prophet. Both individuals embraced their God-given identities and engaged in a conversation that ultimately led to the woman's conversion. Jesus revealed to her that he was the Messiah, and she went on to tell others about him. He stayed in the town for two days, during which many people heard his message and believed. Through this encounter, Jesus broke down racial barriers and brought people together.

Racism is a disease rooted in superiority, high-mindedness, and personal edification, all discussed in the Bible. Evans (2015) suggests that for far too long, humanity has relied on governmental systems to heal this biblical problem (Evans, 2015, p. 34). The church is divided, and this is hindering the nation's spiritual progress. Dr. Evans recalls a time when America united despite the racial, denominational, and class differences that existed in the culture (Evans, 2015, p. 71). He believes that the devastating impact of 9/11 caused people to prioritize the national tragedy over race and class divisions (Evans, 2015, p. 72). After the attacks, humanity faced a common threat that united people of all races, genders, denominations, and ethnicities. People gathered in various locations to provide support, comfort, and pray for the nation (Evans, 2015, p. 72). Cultural divisions ceased to matter, and the priority became protecting and preserving the inherent rights of the American people. The people passionately rallied against a common enemy with equal or greater fervor.

Theoretical Framework

The idea behind this framework is to promote the need for more multiethnic churches and religious programs that can accommodate the diverse population of America. According to reports from 2020, white Americans make up the majority of the racial and ethnic demographic, with non-Hispanic whites representing 57.8% of the population (Jensen et. al., 2021). However, the US Census in 2021 has shown an unprecedented growth in the multiracial population, with the white population declining for the first time in history (Quarshie & Slack, 2021). Reports suggest that the 20th century saw a significant shift in the demographics of the United States, with a transition from a predominantly white population rooted in Western culture to a society rich in diversity with a variety of racial and ethnic minorities (PRB, 2023). At the start of the century, the US population was almost 87% white, but by the end of the century, the minority population was made up of almost as many Hispanics as Blacks, an increase in Asian numbers, and a small but growing Native American population. By the middle of the 21st century, non-Hispanic whites are predicted to make up a slim and dwindling majority of Americans, with Hispanics approaching one-fourth of the population (PRB, 2023).

Many scholars believe that the United States needs more multiethnic churches and religious programs to keep up with the country's growing diversity. According to Garces-Foley (2010), while multiethnic congregations are not new, they are rare in America and have perpetuated racial inequality and white hegemony. The author points out that even after nearly four decades since the Civil Rights movement, churches have not done enough to conquer the racial divide and are now more separated than ever. However, over the past decade, there has been positive growth in the multiethnic church movement, especially among evangelical

Christians, but also among Catholic and mainline Protestant Christians. These movements are challenging racial division and gaining momentum.

Leadership and Organizational Theory

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith's, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, quickly gained traction and became a must read for evangelicals concerned about racism within Christian America (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Garces-Foley, 2010). Within the text, the authors argued that white evangelicals espouse a colorblind approach to race which severely limits their understanding of the underpinnings of racial injustice and their ability to combat this phenomenon from the pulpit (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Garces-Foley, 2010). Additionally, the authors believe that homogenous white and black churches help perpetuate socioeconomic inequality of race, and generally fragment and drown out religious prophetic voices that call for an end to racialization (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Garces-Foley, 2010). After nearly decades of racial reconciliation efforts, Emerson and Smith argue that the racial landscape is changing and making room for those hard conversations concerning race and inequality (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Garces-Foley, 2010). Especially the dramatic statements imposed by the Southern Baptist Convention at the 150th Anniversary, which stated the following Resolution on Racial Reconciliation:

WHEREAS our relationship to African Americans has been hindered from the beginning by the role that slavery played in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention; and WHEREAS many of our Southern Baptist forbears defended the right to own slaves, and either participated in, supported, or acquiesced in the particularly inhumane nature of American slavery; and WHEREAS, in later years Southern Baptists failed, in many cases, to support, and in some cases opposed, legitimate initiatives to secure the civil rights of African Americans; and WHEREAS, Racism has led to discrimination, oppression, injustice, and violence, both in the Civil War and throughout the history of our nation; and WHEREAS, Racism has divided the body of Christ and Southern Baptists in particular and separated us from our African American brothers and sisters..." (Southern Baptist Convention, 1995)

Emerson and Smith (2000) believe that religion has tremendous potential for alleviating racial division and inequality because majority of its doctrine focuses on love, respect, and equality of all peoples (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 153). Additionally, these teachings include inaccuracies that are essential in racial prejudice and discrimination and declare need for all people to embrace all people, despite differences (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 153). Throughout American history, evidence shows how Christianity motivated the fight against slavery and undergirding the Civil Rights Movement, but why the consistent breakdowns in talks concerning racial reconciliation and tolerance? Emerson & Smith suggest two primary structural arrangements that perpetuate racial separation within the church; racially homogenous religious ingroups and the segmented religious market contribute to the racial fragmentation of American society and promote group biases (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 154).

Racially Homogenous Ingroups

A homogenous group is defined as a group or thing which has members or parts that are all considered the same; likewise, a racially homogenous group is a group in which members consists of the same racial or ethnic background (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Sociologists have long noted that religious congregations tend to be racially homogenous and many case studies assert that members of the minority groups face both individual and group pressures that lead them to leave congregations faster than majority group members (Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010). Despite congregational efforts to diversify, racial homogeneity creates a constant pull within the congregations that widen the gap between minority and majority groups (Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010). Although racially homogenous church groups are unaware of its effects of separation, congregations that participate in such a manner contributes to racialization-- the act of giving a

racial character to someone or something and is used as a process of categorization and marginalizing an individual or group by race (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

The Segmented Market

In 1931, sociologist W.E.B DuBois minced no words about the Christian church, thus describing it as mainly a social organization, pathetically timid and human; an organization that stands on the side of wealth; and only espouses the simple causes that gains attention and popularity (DuBois, 1931; Emerson & Smith, 2000). Although many would disagree with W.E.B DuBois' analysis of the church, hindsight, there are some accurate assumptions he discovered by referring to the overall structure as the white church and pathetically timid and human (DuBois, 1931; Emerson & Smith, 2000).

Although, it is evident that America is not composed of only blacks and whites, but there are evident divisions that run within racial and ethnic groups. In the United States, there are at least 33,000 religious denominations and 45,000 overall denominations reported globally (Coffey, 2022). The earlier church, which spans from the start of Jesus' ministry, was primarily divided based on geography, hence the letters the Apostle Paul wrote to different churches throughout different regions. Although joined by the letters about Jesus, scholars report there were also major breaks, or schisms, over Christian theology during this time (Coffey, 2022). One of the major divisions arose during the early fourth century, when Arius, a priest from Alexandria, claimed that because Jesus was begotten by God, he was a lesser divinity than God. In contrast, Athanasius, and Alexandrian theologian, claimed that Jesus was God incarnate. This schism caused a major upheaval in the Roman Empire that split Christians in half. From this break, the Council of Nicaea sided against Arius, but despite the church's official view on the

subjects, Christians continued to be divided on the subject for more than a century (Coffey, 2022).

In hindsight of the various breaks and schisms that have resulted in a segmented market within religious organizations, scholars propose that the racial divide has perpetuated hundreds upon hundreds of denominations and sects and even more ideas about what a religious person looks like (Emerson & Smith, 2000). One of the key functions in most religions is to proclaim what ought to be, what is universally true, and what is right and just. Some call this the prophetic voice, but through differences and regional customs, American religion fragments this prophetic voice, even within the same religion, into thousands of different voices (Emerson & Smith, 2000). There are some churches that believe in the gift of tongues, while others don't. Some churches focus on spiritual gifts, while others primarily give their attention to overseas missions. Some churches focus on their social and political reform, thus fighting the fight of injustice, while others focus only on building programs that impact change within their congregations. So, what are the effects of this fragmented voice? Ultimately, exactly what DuBois concluded, "The church is nothing more than a social organization" (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 162).

Teaching, Learning, and Group Theory

This section will identify teaching, learning, and group themes that directly correlate with the project design. The researcher will demonstrate an ability to synthesize these concepts as foundational elements for effective leadership and is relevant to the praxis problem.

Race as a Social Construct

Before the 1500s, race was not a common term and primarily used to indicate familial or group connections (Roediger, 1994; Jacobson, 1999). Most sociologists agree that the current definition of race is a human-made concept that sorts individuals into distinct social groups based

on physical characteristics such as skin color, physical features, and genetic inheritance (Roediger, 1994; Jacobson, 1999). However, despite lacking scientific validity, race poses significant challenges as a social construct. Historically, people used these categorical differences to grant exclusive benefits and privileges to certain groups while denying basic human rights to others (Roediger, 1994). Scholars have employed various methods to understand the construction and socialization of race, with some suggesting that the United States leveraged these differences and its adverse effects to justify the rise of capitalism and European colonization (Roediger, 1994; Jacobson, 1999). As Michael Yudell, a professor of public health at Drexel University, put it, “Race is a concept that is ‘too crude to provide useful information, but is one that has social meaning that interferes in the scientific understanding of human genetic diversity’” (Simama, 2023).

W.E.B. Du Bois explored race through a collection of essays and books. As a person of mixed race, he drew from his personal experiences of living in a country that was divided along racial lines. He also discussed how the education system traditionally reinforced the idea of race as a social construct. In one of his more notable works, *Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois stated, “It is generally recognized today that no scientific definition of race is possible...Race would seem to be a dynamic and not a static conception and the typical races are continually changing and developing, amalgamating and differentiating” (Mostern, 1996, p. 27). Although there is no scientific definition of race, Du Bois highlights that the concept is ever evolving and its definition ever-changing and developing alongside generations.

In W.E.B DuBois’ follow-on essay, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, he emphasized that education played a massive role in cognitively developing racial themes in a child’s life (DuBois, 1940; Mostern, 1996). Reflecting on his

formative years, he stated that teachers used geographic illustrations that depicted Indians, Negroes, and Chinese as barbaric, uncivilized, and bizarre and contrastingly depicted whites as distinguished-looking philanthropists willing to save the lesser race from savagery (DuBois, 1940; Mostern, 1996). These illustrations shaped DuBois' worldview of how the majority valued whites. He believed whites were ranked as a superior race and given a superior place in history, while others were deemed lesser in cognitive and historical development or having no value or history at all.

Continuing this journey, DuBois entered Fisk University (FU), an elite Historical Black College and University (HBCU). During DuBois' enrollment, FU offered a vastly different perspective on race and cultivated the students to reject and openly defy black inferiority labels through education and experience (DuBois, 1940; 2014). Unfortunately, upon graduation, DuBois realized that FU was a closed-circuit struggle for equality that later shattered in the face of his re-introduction into the world beyond the HBCU ideology. He attended Harvard University and was again faced with the previous scientific, racial dogma that encapsulated nonwhites as, lower races that were distinguished and classified by physical developments (DuBois, 1940;2014; Mostern, 1996). In DuBois' summation of society, he responded in the following manner, "In the folds of European civilization, I was born and shall die, imprisoned, conditioned, depressed, exalted, and inspired" (Mostern, 1996, p. 29).

Understanding race through a bibliocentric lens has proven problematic and struck discord between fractioned groups. Many practicing Christians assert that race and racism are sociological issues remedied through increased legislature and political reform (Jones, 1991; Fiske, 1998; Carter & Pieterse, 2005; Lindsay, 2008). Others propose that racism is antithetical to Christianity, thus making it a gospel issue that requires fallen people to be reconciled to a

Holy God through repentance (Niebuhr, 1951; Williams, 2004; Cross, 2014). For years, the tie between religion and social issues has been evident, leaving many Civil Rights leaders to address racial issues and promote social reform from the pulpit (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Calhoun-Brown, 2000; Pinn & Pinn, 2001; Billingsley, 2003; Taylor et al., 2003).

Obstacles to Racial Reconciliation

Today, nearly 86 percent of American churches lack any meaningful racial diversity. Although many Protestant pastors attempt to achieve racial diversity within their congregations and see it as a viable goal, few are achieving it (Postell, 2022). Lifeway Research conducting a study that surveyed 1,000 Protestant pastors to learn their views on race and racial reconciliation in the church. The findings from the report reveal that there are some invariable gaps among churches, including the difference between what pastors say they want for their churches as far as racial diversity, and what that looks like in real time (Postell, 2022). The report also shows variations in what African American pastors are doing to lead their churches towards racial reconciliation and what steps white pastors are taking to meet similar results (Postell, 2022). Since a large population of Protestant pastors have expressed an earnest desire to have more ethnically diverse churches, the study aims at checking the progress of selected churches towards achieving that goal. Here's the reality, churches in America aren't that racially diverse, with 76 percent of Protestant pastors reporting that their church is predominately one racial ethnic group. There has been some progress over the past five years, there are indicators that most churches are predominately one racial or ethnic group (Postell, 2022).

Additionally, the report revealed that the higher the education the pastor has the more likely that pastor's congregation consists of one racial or ethnic group. Eighty-two percent of pastors with master's degrees were most likely to pastor a monoracial church, with the likelihood

decreasing among pastors with a bachelor's degree (73%) or no college degree at all (66%) (Postell, 2022). As it stands today, 88% of Protestant pastors say that every church should strive to achieve racial diversity, which is a noticeable decrease from the 93% who believed the same in 2017 (Postell, 2022). Why is this important? Pastors within the survey recognize racism as a threat to the church today which resembles the threat to the first-century churches when the apostle Paul frequently addressed the growing divisions between the Gentile and Jewish Christians. Additionally, with the recent rise in conversations concerning Critical Race Theory (CRT), pastors speculate the need for more racial tolerance to divert the growing threat of racism impacting the church (Postell, 2022). One impactful way pastors are addressing issues of racism and racial reconciliation in the church is by preaching on the topic. Instead of avoiding racism, 40 percent of pastors say they preach on racial reconciliation several times a year, with 19% saying they preach on the topic at least once a month (Postell, 2022). In response to the study, Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research, stated, "Attitudes, cultural traditions, and friendships within the community do not change themselves; if someone doesn't call for change, it won't happen" (Postell, 2022, para. 17).

Although America has been instrumental in implementing separate worship, but as diversity is growing, many pastors are calling for more racial diversity within the pews. As we've studied within this section, breaking barriers hasn't been easy for pastors, but few are dedicated to overcoming historical wrongs. The nation's population is growing more racially and ethnically diverse—and so are many of its religious groups. In reviewing different denominations, reports show the Seventh Day Adventists are the most racially diverse with a score of 9.1: 37% whites, 32% black, 15% Hispanic, 8% are Asian, and another 8% are another race or mixed race (Lipka, 2014). In contrast, the least diverse denomination are the members of

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with members reporting 90% white (Lipka, 2014). In the book, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, scholars are confronting the racial issues within the church and boldly making the case for multiracial congregations (Garces-Foley, 2010). Although many scholars are skeptical that multiethnic churches can work, others have boldly taken up the challenge and are proving that diverse church can succeed under the right leadership (Garces-Foley, 2010). This theoretical framework has established adequate data that call for the need for more multiethnic churches. In continuing this study, the researcher will present common features of successful multiethnic churches how intentional racial diversity is evident in God's kingdom.

Thematic Framework

This thematic framework will use themes to help the reader to better conceptualize past events and to place people into historical context. These historical themes will highlight key ideas that have contributed to the evolution of multiethnic churches and religious programs and provide a forecasted outlook for multiethnic worship in America.

Current Literature Themes

In 2019, Mosaix multiethnic church conference, Dr. Michael O. Emerson released long-awaited statistics concerning the progress of the Multiethnic Church Movement. Emerson stated the following in his plenary talk:

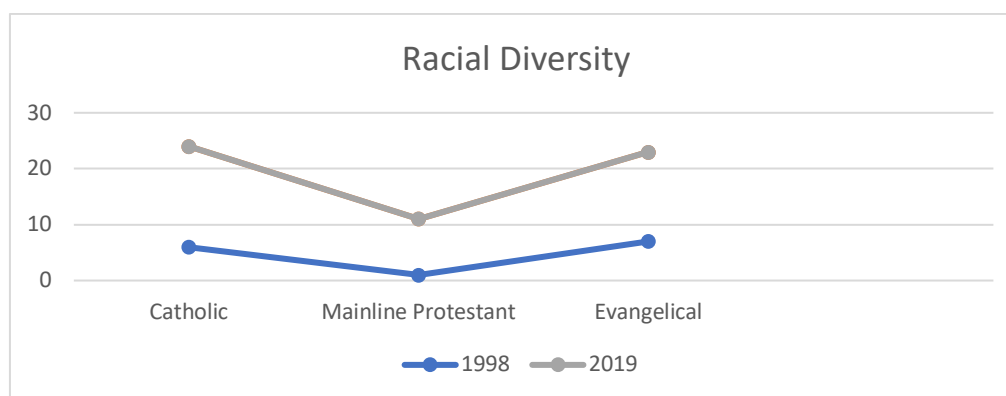
Using the National Congregations Study directed by Mark Chaves of Duke University, we've been tracking multiracial congregations in the United States since 1998... He did a national representative study in 1998, 2007, 2012, and now just as of two weeks ago 2019. (Mosaix Global Network, 2020, para. 2)

In 1998, only 6 percent of all congregations studied could be described as having at least 20 percent racial or ethnic diversity in their attending membership. As of 2019, 16 percent of all congregations surveyed across all faiths could be so described (Mosaix Global Network, 2020).

Next, more specifically, Emerson discussed the findings in relation to different denominations in the U.S. Emerson stated, among the Catholic Congregations: from 17% (2006) to 24% racial diversity (2019); Mainline Protestant: from 1% (2006) to 11%. (2019), having previously reached 12% in 2012; Evangelical Churches: from 7 % (1998) to 23% (2019), up from 15% in 2012 (Mosaix Global Network, 2020).

Table 1

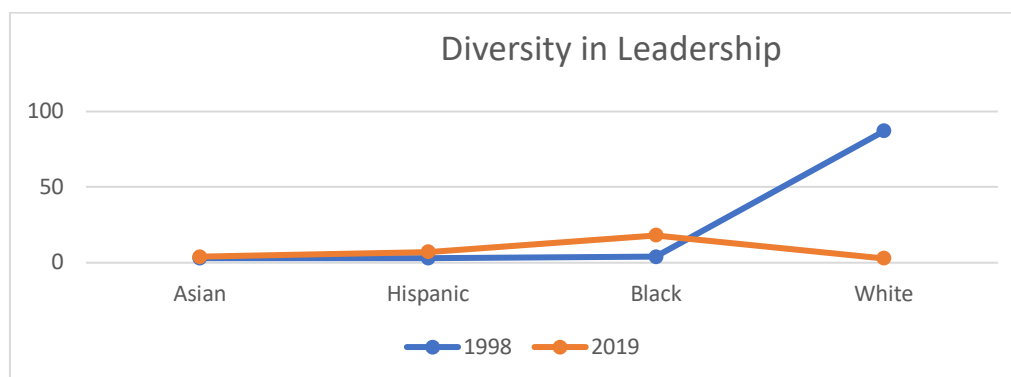
Racial Diversity in Congregations (2020)



Additionally, Emerson discussed who's leading these diverse congregations or who is the head pastor of successful multiethnic churches? He reported the following race statistics: Asian 3% (1998) to 4% (2019); Hispanic: 3% (1998) to 7% (2019); Black: 4% (1998) to 18 % (2019); and white 87% (1998) to 70% (2019) (Mosaix Global Network, 2020).

Table 2

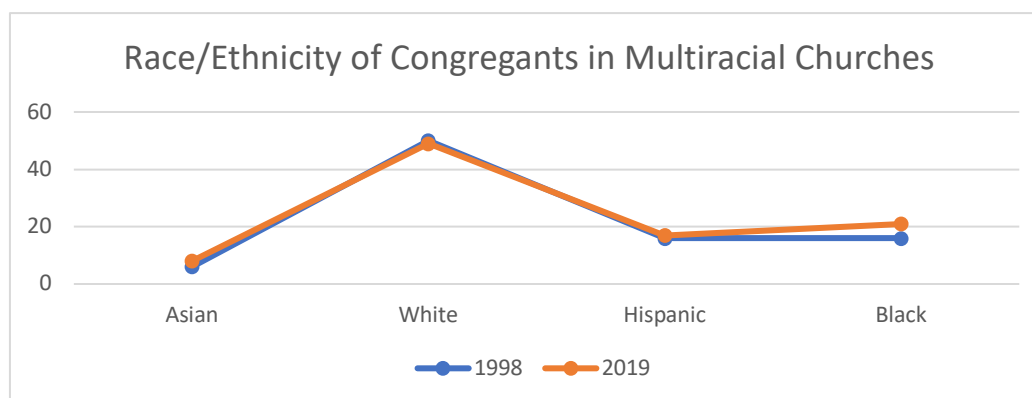
Diversity in Leadership (2020)



Most of the data reported was welcomed good news and displayed increases in both diversity in churches and leadership. Yet, in consideration of advanced movement to Multiethnic churches, reports revealed that although, Asians, Hispanic, and Whites attending such churches remained steady through the years, the percentage of Blacks attending multiethnic churches significantly declined between 2012 and 2019. The data depicted the following: Asian: 6% (1998) to 8% (2019); White: 50% (1998) to 49% (2019); Hispanic: 16% (2006) to 17% (2019); Black: 16% (1998) to 21% (2019) (Mosaix Global Network, 2020).

Table 3

Ethnicity in Multiracial Churches (2020)



In viewing the data, Emerson concluded:

This movement – the Multi-racial, Multiethnic Church Movement – has come so far, farther than I could have ever let myself imagine in this period of time. May God reveal for us and empower us that this vehicle called the church makes right what is broken in this world. Let's work for churches that are truly hope for all. (Mosaix Global Network, 2020, para. 13)

Relevant Model

This section will showcase an established model that highlights the importance of establishing multiracial churches to tackle the growing divide in Christian America. The researcher employed a systematic approach to plan, develop, and implement the FLW PWOC

initiative with the aim of increasing the percentage of multiethnic members and leaders by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

Planting Multiethnic Churches

With social change and growing diversity statistics in the U.S., there is an increased interest in planting multiethnic churches; therefore, scholars of American religion are paying close attention to survey data and congregational studies that have identified key characteristics in growing multiethnic religious organizations (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2003; Anderson, 2004; DeYoung, et.al., 2004; Garces-Foley, 2010). Though, there are many evangelical churches that strive to meet the generalized 80% rule to qualify as a multiracial church—less than 80% of participants are of the same race, scholars note there are common features within these diverse places of worship that constitutes success. Garces-Foley (2010) proposes that one of the key characteristics that exist is that most successful multiethnic churches are intentional about signaling that racial diversity is valued. Ben Pilgreen, lead pastor of Epic Church; a multiethnic church located in San Francisco, California, has centered his organization on the following quote, “All of us need a place to call home. Whoever you are and wherever you come from, we believe Epic is a place where you can find home” (Epic, 2022. p. 1). Additionally, the leader’s belief system rests in the understanding that there is one God who conditionally loves all people, regardless of their race, gender, or nationality (Epic, 2022).

In the book, *Ethnic Blends: Mixing Diversity into Your Local Church*, Michael Emerson quoted within the Forward:

Let’s be blunt about this. Race really is that important in the United States. And this is indeed why churches are racially homogenous. But Christians are called to bring down dividing walls, not live comfortably behind them. (DeYmaz & Li, 2010, p. 15)

Since the publication of foundational works concerning creating a multiethnic church, to include, but not limited to *Divided by Faith* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001); *United by Faith* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003); *Multicultural Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004); and *One Body, One Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2005), increasing numbers of religious leaders and researchers are recognizing that the multiethnic church is not only biblical but also critical to the advancement of the gospel (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2003; Anderson, 2004; DeYoung, et.al., 2004; Garces-Foley, 2010; DeYmaz & Li, 2010). For decades, church leaders cited large growth and development governed by the homogenous unit principle.

The homogenous unit principle suggests that churches grow fastest when they're homogenous, therefore, made up of people from the same ethnic, economic, and educational background. For the most part, religious leaders have found significant success within this model and this principle has contributed to building larger, effective churches. Contrastingly, the problem with the homogenous unit principle is that it justifies unintended segregation of local congregations along ethnic and economic lines. Although the success is evident, the homogenous unit principle steers churches further away from the principles and practices found in the NT churches that existed at Antioch and Ephesus (Emerson & Smith, 2001).

Intentionality is key to creating a multiethnic church. In the book, *Divided by Faith*, the authors suggested that evangelicals spent more than 70 percent of their social time with people from their own congregation (Emerson & Smith, 2001, p. 107). Although, this may seem harmless, but studies showed that when evangelicals invite others into their homes, to go out for dinner, or to enjoy a weekend away, most often they invite people who attend their own local church (Emerson & Smith, 2001, p. 107). Again, although harmless, studies show that the vast

majority of evangelicals attend churches composed of individuals who are similar to them in race and social class; and it is unlikely individuals associate with people who are not likened to themselves, nor do we experientially understand the unique challenges of diverse individuals with whom we work, go to school, or share a neighborhood (Emerson & Smith, 2001, p. 107). Although, these churches are rooted in love and may be founded on biblical principles, most evangelical churches fail to address the underlying problem that hinder cross-cultural engagement (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2003; Anderson, 2004; DeYoung, et.al., 2004; DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Garces-Foley, 2010)

In the article, *Cultivating Racial Diversity in the Local Church*, Brandon D. Smith offers a response to the Biblical storyline and shows how his church is intentionally cultivating racial diversity (Smith, 2019). Smith's church is in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where the population is 16% African American with the highest concentration of that 16% and most of his congregants commuting from the Suburbs (Smith, 2019, para. 4). Smith believes that the term racial reconciliation is becoming a modern-day political buzzword, lacking actionable results. Smith insists that Christians should see beyond the political rhetoric and view racial reconciliation instead as a modern-day conviction; a core issue that is addressed within the scripture and that we [the church] should pursue it in response to the overall Biblical storyline (Smith, 2019).

In October 2017, Smith watched a group of white supremacists march the streets of his city—Murfreesboro, Tennessee—carrying Confederate and Nazi flags, screaming racial slurs, and hailing Hitler as king (Smith, 2019, para. 1). The supremacist groups met in his church's parking lot to strategize because the city intervened and cancelled the rally (Smith, 2019).

Though, the rally was cancelled for obvious reasons, Smith witnessed the sheer evil display of

hatred within the group that reaffirmed his desire to cultivate racial diversity in the local church (Smith, 2019, para. 3).

Brandon Smith's experience is becoming all too common within America and religious leaders are taking a stance to eradicate these hate and racism by understanding its root cause, not just superficial rhetoric. Throughout scripture, an evident thread surfaces that shows God's interest in spreading his glory to the ends of the earth through a succession of image-bearers; additionally, in His words, God makes it clear that he wants diverse image-bearers from every nation, tribe, and tongue singing praises to his name (Bible Gateway, 2022; Revelations 7:9). Smith points out in scripture, that the hardest part was already done where is states in Ephesians 2, that God is destroying all divisions between Jews and Gentiles through the blood of the cross (Bible Gateway, 2022). So, what is the church's part? Smith offers a few ways his church pursued the journey toward intentional and sacrificial diversity:

1. Prayer is essential. Smith believes that although it is easier have church that looked more like the Tower of Babel, everyone with the same ideas, backgrounds, and speaking the same language, this is not a part of the Christian life (Smith, 2019). However, the sacrifice is a major part of the Christian lifestyle and since we [humans] most often lean towards their personal inclination of comfort, we [humans] need God's help to break the boundaries. His church is led to pray often and ask God to convict them of selfishness and pride (Smith, 2019).
2. Listening is essential. Smith asserts that Christians are called to be humble, teachable, peacemaking, and welcoming ministers of reconciliation (Smith, 2019). He leads his church to acknowledge the first instinct is to listen, not to close your ears, but to recognized that systemic issues exist within America. As an actionable step, Smith begins with asking questions. He continuously asks the minorities within the congregation to provide insight and speak into some of the sermons and classes on the racial issues that plague them individually and what they see within their local community. Though, he adds, they don't always agree on every nuance and political policy, but recognition stands as their primary baseline instead of starting with opinions and character defense (Smith, 2019).
3. Pursuing unity within diversity. Smith adds that his church fights the temptation to be homogenous and seek diversity (Smith, 2019). He believes the not only should church's fight for diversity on Sunday mornings, but to also bring

diversification to their dinner tables. Personal relationships are important and shouldn't only be reserves for stadium room seating, but also in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods (Smith, 2019).

4. Smith recognizes that in this process, his church has had its fair share of blunders, missteps, and outright sins, but he adds that by the God's grace, they are pressing forward anyway and hoping to represent Christ more today than they may have done the day before. As a final addition to his list, he prescribes his church members should read black authors and seek their view on racism and racial reconciliation (Smith, 2019).

Diversity in Leadership

Another common element found in multiethnic churches is hiring racially diverse staff persons and mentoring a racially diverse team of lay leaders (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2003; Anderson, 2004; DeYoung, et.al., 2004; DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Garces-Foley, 2010).

Although, many churches claim to desire an ethnically diverse congregation, but such desires are far-fetched if the leadership teams remain mono-ethnic (Akin et. al., 2018). Pastors may say, anyone can be an elder here, but when faced with putting actions to words, many fall by the wayside due to their inability to acknowledge the invisible barriers that keep ethnic minorities out of church leadership (Akin et. al., 2018). When it comes to power and authority, scholars assert that the church's leadership is far more influential than any written vision or mission statement. The church's leadership shapes the overall environment and can lack direction without ethnic diversity (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2003; Anderson, 2004; DeYoung, et.al., 2004; DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Garces-Foley, 2010).

Indeed, voted #1 job site, believes there are many benefits of hiring diverse teams in the workplace (Indeed, 2021). Whether it's a secular company or religious organization, scholars around the globe can agree that imputing diversity in the workforce can improve overall productivity, creativity, and innovation within a team (Indeed, 2021). Additionally, employers agree that a diverse team can enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills; furthermore,

diverse teams are more likely to analyze data and information carefully before making decisions that impact a company (Indeed, 2021). From the church's standpoint, religious leaders assert similar results to seeking diversity within leadership.

Ed Stetzer added to this discussion by offering three reasons why a diverse church leadership is almost necessary to implement change within our separated societies. Stetzer believes that diverse leadership allows us to experience more of what we will see in eternity (DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Stetzer, 2022). Revelation 7:9 states,

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; (KJV, 1971)

Stetzer asserts that the church should be the visible representation of the invisible kingdom; without diversity reflected in its leadership, those outside of the church will find other places to turn for salvation (DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Stetzer, 2022). The second point Stetzer offers is that diverse leadership helps to reflect eternity to those outside of the church (DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Stetzer, 2022). Finally, he [Stetzer] believes that diverse leadership requires us to take the time to learn about others (DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Stetzer, 2022). Stetzer asserts that learning distinctions of different cultures, contexts, and people is when we most resemble the acts of Jesus (DeYmaz & Li, 2010; Stetzer, 2022). Jesus didn't favor anyone, nor did he place himself above even his disciples. We see in John 13, that as the disciples prepared for the Passover Feast, he washed his disciple's feet. When he'd finished, he asked, "Do you understand what I have done for you?" and therefore, instructed them [the disciples] to go out and do the same for others (Bible Gateway, 2022).

In addition to diversity in leadership and intentionality, Garces-Foley (2010) asserts that other common features of a multiethnic church include using a variety of musical genres in worship, diverse opportunities signaled on a church's website and the images in which they use

to attract diverse peoples, and finally the pastoral leadership is crucial for successfully transforming the congregational culture or planting a new multiethnic church (Garces-Foley, 2010). Scholars pose that larger churches are becoming multiethnic faster than smaller congregations. In the analysis of the latest National Congregations Survey, Michael Emerson stated, “Protestant churches with over 1000 weekly attendance were three times more likely to be multiethnic in 2007 than in 1998, and evangelical churches of this size were five times more likely to be multiethnic in 2007” (Garces-Foley, 2010). Scholars mark a similar shift in many Catholic and mainline Protestants as well.

Chapter Summary

Mark DeYmaz offered this statement when asked about the further development of Mosaix and the Multiethnic Church Movement:

Recently I was asked to comment on whether or not the American Church is prepared to reach the global village. My response? “We’re not yet able, nor even willing, to reach diverse people living right here at home across the street!” It’s sad, but true. (DeYmaz, 2010)

Additionally, he added a few facts to consider about the current and future status the multiethnic churches in America. A recent study showed that 92.5% of churches in the U.S. are racially segregated, churches in the U.S. are 10 times more segregated than the neighborhoods in which they are located and 20 times more segregated than the public schools in their neighborhoods, as well, and between 1990 and 2007, church attendance in the U.S. increased by 446,540 people though the population increased by 56,819,471 (DeYmaz, 2010). What can we say about this statistic? Scholars concluded that while the population in America is steadily increasing, the church is not. DeYmaz asserts that Christ-followers should sit up and take notice of this phenomenon and understand how segregation in the local churches unintentionally perpetuates systemic racism in society (DeYmaz, 2010).

Scholars assert that whites will comprise less than half of the U.S. population by 2042, which is about eight years earlier than once predicted by the Census Bureau (Dougherty, 2008, para. 1). With this transition, demographers assert there will be big changes for the nation's schools and workforce; this change will inevitably affect the church and the normal range of operations. So, here's a valid question posed by most American religious leaders, how is the church beginning to adjust to the upcoming changes? In short, most leaders would agree to start now in modifying the integrating churches to represent change that will impact the nation.

Racial tensions still exist in the United States, but religious leaders must face certain demographic realities that will come into play by 2045. The country is becoming more diverse and will continue to do so over the next few years. Scholars predict that the all-white church will slow and become significantly older. Gen Zers are more ethnically diverse and will gravitate to churches that look like their schools and colleges (Cox, 2022). Although some all-white congregations will continue to thrive in areas where they reflect the community, healthy multiethnic churches will grow gradually as they intentionally make efforts to equip, train, and hire people of color (Cox, 2022). So, how should pastors prepare their congregation to accept diversity within their church? Scholars suggest pastors should teach what the Bible says about diversity, possess the courage to correct cultural mistakes, encourage congregants to explore and educate themselves about different cultures, cultivate diverse social interactions, and remain in faith that the Holy Spirit will tear down the walls that racially divide people (Evans, 2006; Lewis, 2023).

CHAPTER THREE: THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

This chapter presents a strategic plan for implementing a program, process, or product to address a practical problem within a specific context. The researcher employed a logic model which provided a framework for examining and defining the program elements in different, concise phases (Kettner, 2017, p. 132). The logic model for this program included (1) Inputs or resources and raw materials, (2) Outputs, and (3) Outcomes which are the demonstrated benefits to those receiving the service (Kettner, 2017, p. 132). The researcher developed and implemented the program in the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel organization. The researcher selected the collaborative coach and team members based on roles that directly impacted organizational change. The readers should note that all objectives, outputs, and outcomes within this plan are stated in the future tenses just as they were formulated for this project. The assessment of these objectives, outputs, and outcomes can be found in Chapter Four.

Praxis Problem Summary

Many scholars have analyzed Dr. King's statement that Sunday mornings are the most segregated day in America. Despite attempts to disprove it, recent studies show that this phenomenon still exists nearly 60 years later. In 2015, a Lifeway study found that almost 8 out of 10 congregations in America were made up of just one racial group. While there is a national trend towards more diverse churches, progress is slow. However, some places of worship are making strides towards increased diversity. Religious leaders believe that this is due to reports indicating that America will become more diverse in the coming years.

In a Lifeway Research Poll titled, *US Pastors Want Racial Diversity on Sunday Mornings but Still Have Little*, results showed that although a vast majority of Protestant pastors believe churches should strive to be racially diverse organizations, almost the same number report that their local congregations remain predominately one racial or ethnic group (Lee, 2014). In relation to these findings, Ed Stetzer, president of Lifeway Research, believes the reason why many churches lack diversity is partly due to human nature (Lee, 2014). He [Stetzer] adds, “...everyone wants diversity, but many don’t want to be around people who are different” (Lee, 2014, para. 3).

It's possible that Stetzer's remarks could explain why religious organizations are struggling to diversify. Despite the fact that many religious leaders claim to want diversity, they may be hesitant to acknowledge how challenging it can be to welcome people who are different. DJ Chuang, the founder of The Social Media Church, thinks that achieving racial diversity in a congregation is tough because many churches don't have enough resources, energy, or dedication. (Lee, 2014). Chuang adds,

It’s a lot of hard work...It’s a harder thing to do to be diversified versus being homogenous and so human nature is going to pick the path of least resistance. (Lee, 2014, para. 4)

According to a survey of 1,007 Protestant churches, 91% of them believe that it is important for churches to have racial diversity. Furthermore, 80% of the respondents stated that their local congregations already reflect the diversity of their neighborhoods (Lee, 2014). However, as neighborhoods are expected to become even more diverse by 2030, it may become increasingly challenging to maintain this level of diversity in churches. (Lee, 2014). As the United States experiences an increase in racial diversity, researchers have observed some interesting attitudes emerging within religious communities. Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones has reported that while individuals may be in favor of laws that would prohibit racial segregation or

discrimination in public spaces, both conservatives and liberals are hesitant when it comes to integrating with individuals of different races in their personal lives. Scholars Stetzer and Chuang have also noted that many Christians prefer to remain in their familiar surroundings, which can hinder efforts to promote diversity, despite it being a desired goal for many churches. (Lee, 2014).

Experts have projected that the number of Caucasian individuals in the US will decrease, while racial minorities, especially Hispanics, will experience significant growth and become the primary driving force behind demographic change (Poston, 2020). At the start of 2020, the US population was slightly over 331 million, making it the world's third-largest country after China and India, whose populations range between 1 to 2 billion people, respectively (Poston, 2020). Over the next decade, the US population is expected to increase slightly and reach almost 350 million individuals. As of 2020, non-Hispanic Caucasians were the majority, representing 59.7% of the US population (Poston, 2020). Following Caucasians, Hispanics are the second-largest group, accounting for 18.7% of the population, followed by blacks and Asians (Poston, 2020).

. Generally, churches tend to be racially homogeneous, with many Protestant pastors acknowledging that their congregations are primarily comprised of one ethnic or racial group (Postell, 2022). However, there are some who are making efforts to promote diversity in the church, while others hold on to traditions that reinforce monoracial themes. Despite denominational differences, almost 90% of pastors believe that promoting racial diversity is important (Postell, 2022). Religious leaders argue that diversity is consistent with God's intentions for His people, especially in the context of America's current racial climate. In her article, *Why Diversity in the Church Matters*, Myers (2023) suggests that diversity is a fundamental aspect of God's nature (Myers, 2023). The Bible portrays God as a Trinity,

consisting of three distinct yet united personalities—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This depiction of God's Trinity illustrates that the image of God is as diverse as the people in which He represents (Myers, 2023).

The researcher created a program to address the lack of diversity within religious organizations. Using the FLW PWOC as a framework, the researcher launched the program to improve diversity and inclusion within organizational membership and leadership. The researcher used Acts Chapter 2 as a foundational message and to understand diversity in God's kingdom. The FLW PWOC had fifteen board members who hold different leadership positions and an average weekly attendance of 30-35 female members. The members attend Bible studies led by facilitators every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The researcher aimed to take deliberate actions to better reflect the multiethnic community of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and the surrounding areas within a 30-mile radius.

Vision Statement

To improve diversity and inclusion within the organization by increasing the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

Purpose Statement

The FLW PWOC's motto is "We are workers together for Christ," which rests on the following four aims; (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God's Word, (3) to develop women's spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2022). PWOC is not a non-denominational program, instead, it represents a multi-denominational organization, thus honoring different church backgrounds. The four aims help the leaders to focus on what they have in common and not on the differences that can strike

discord between members. In correlation with the established motto and purpose, the program aims to reaffirm that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity is welcomed within the organization. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, this program showcases Christ's power to unify people and reconcile racial disparities.

Objectives

- OBJ 1. If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.
- OBJ 2. If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.
- OBJ 3. If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.
- OBJ 4. If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization.
- OBJ 5. If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create a safe space for multiethnic members.

Outputs

OBJ 1

- The researcher will provide relative reading material that highlights historical segregation within religious organizations.
- The researcher will utilize Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith's, *Divided by Faith* to provide an overview of historical segregation in religious spaces and the impact thereof.
- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborating team members as participants to discuss how historical segregation currently impacts Christian America.

OBJ 2

- Using Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9, the researcher will uncover Godly convictions that urges collaborative team members to break the monoracial worship barrier.

- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborative team members as participants that discusses this biblical conviction of all humans being equal.

OBJ 3

- The researcher will collaborate with the team members to revive evangelism and discipleship amongst organizational members.
- The team will receive training on the aforementioned topics as well as learning how to extend an invitation to a collective worship service.
- The researcher will work with Publicity to collaborate with organizations like AAFES, DECA, and MWR to distribute flyers invitations to the religious organization.

OBJ 4

- The researcher will explore leadership selection practices and protocols.
- The researcher will highlight trends that may hinder multiethnic leadership selection.
- The researcher will discuss these practices with Senior Leadership Selection Member.

OBJ 5

- The researcher will facilitate a focus group to discuss different experiences and provide a safe space for collaborative group members to discuss their experiences with race and religion.

Outcomes

OBJ 1

- The researcher hopes to increase awareness of historical racial division within religious organizations and how this occurrence perpetuates monoracial churches within America.

OBJ 2

- The researcher hopes to perpetuate an understanding of God's love towards humans, despite race or ethnicity. As Christ leads, the researcher intends for his followers to mimic His [Christ's] example.

OBJ 3

- Through the intended outputs, the researcher hopes to develop better evangelistic practices that target all races and ethnicities within the community.

OBJ 4

- The researcher hopes to increase diversity on the leadership board. The 2022-2023 board consists of 15 personnel: 12-White, 2-Hispanic, and 1-African American. The researcher hopes to increase the multiethnic presence on the board by 5 percent.

OBJ 5

- In relation to the proposed output, the researcher hopes that the collaborative team will develop concurrent safe spaces for organizational members to discuss other race related experiences. By providing this space, the researcher hopes the leaders will cultivate an area for others to be transparent and open about their personal experiences.

Essential Terms

1. *Church Goers*: (n)- People who attend church at least on holidays or more often (Emerson. 2010).
2. *Colorism*: (n)- Prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, among people of the same ethnic or racial group (Emerson &Smith, 2001).
3. *Disciple*: (n)- A personal follower of Jesus during his life, especially one of the twelve Apostles (Bible Gateway, 2023).
4. *Diversity*: (n)- The state of being diverse; variety (Emerson &Smith; 2001).
5. *Diversity and Inclusion*: (n)- These interconnected concepts refer to the variety of unique individuals that make up a group of people and the environment that allows them to work together as equally valued contributors (Smith &Turner 2015).
6. *Evangelicals*: (n)- a member of the evangelical tradition in the Christian Church (Larsen, 2007).
7. *Homogenous Congregation*: (n)- A homogenous congregation or group is a section of society in which all members have some characteristic in common (Scheitle &Dougherty, 2010).
8. *Mediating Institutions*:(n)- private, volunteer organizations that mediate between small, private worlds of individuals and families and the large public worlds that encompass politics, the educations system, and the economy (Emerson &Blume, 2008).

9. *Millennials*: (n)- Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 23 to 38) (Britannica, 2023).
10. *Minoritize Groups*: (n)- A social group that is devalued in society and given less access to its resources (Britannica, 2023).
11. *Monoracial*: (n)- of a single race (ethnicity) (Ssenid-Ssenalo, 2001; Garces-Foley 2010).
12. *Mulatto*: (n)- offensive, derogatory term referring to a person of mixed white and black ancestry (Emerson &Smith, 2000; DuBois, 1931).
13. *Multi-Generational*: (n)- Relating to several generations (Zeal Church, 2022).
14. *Multicultural*: (n)-Relating to or comprising of several cultural or ethnic groups within a society (Bowers, 2010).
15. *Multiethnic*: (n)-Made up of or relating to people of several ethnic groups (Garces-Foley, 2010; Bowers, 2010).
16. *Multiethnic Church*: (n)- A church that has persons of different ethnic backgrounds who attend (Garces-Foley, 2010; Bowers, 2010).
17. *Multiracial Church*: (n)- a church having no more than eighty percent of one racial group (Graces-Foley, 2010; Bowers, 2010).
18. *Race Relations*: (n)- the way in which members or communities of different racial or ethnic groups feel about and behave toward each other within a particular area (Mohamed, 2021).
19. *Racial Inclusivity*: (n)- a measurement of racial segregation and diversity in different areas (Mohamed, Cox, Diamant, &Gecewicz, 2021).
20. *Racial Integration*: (n)- Enacted practices to enforce desegregation (Britannica, 2023).
21. *Racial Reconciliation*: (n)- Recognizing, supporting, and understanding the underrepresented; making peace through reparation of wrongs (Evans, 2015).
22. *Racial Segregation*:(n)- The practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or separate institutions (Evans, 2008; Perkins, 2018).
23. *Racism*: (n)- prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group (Larkin, 1984; Smith 1994).

Operational Plan

This section presents the proposed operational plan for the program. The researcher expected only slight enhancements as the majority of Fort Leonard Wood's population is Caucasian (Data, 2023). To establish a cause-and-effect relationship, the researcher devised five objectives through if-then statements (Schmidt, 2021). Furthermore, the researcher incorporated success measures using the SMART acronym (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound), assuming that this method would produce more precise and efficient outcomes. (Schmidt, 2021). Details of the plan as proposed appear below in Tables 4-9.

Table 4

Program Vision and Purpose Statements

VISION	To improve diversity and inclusion by increasing the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.
PURPOSE	The program aims to reaffirm that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, is welcomed within the organization. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, this program showcases Christ's power to unify people and reconcile racial disparities.

Table 5

Action Plan for Objective 1

OBJECTIVE 1	INPUTS	SUCCESS MEASURES
If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The researcher requested participants to read "<i>Divided by Faith</i>" by Christian Smith & Michael O. Emerson. -The researcher scheduled a focus group to discuss top tenets of the book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants completed assigned reading. -Participants committed to focus group. -Participants highlighted at least one "take away" from historical factors.
ASSUMPTION	PARTICIPANTS	RESOURCES
By completing assigned reading, participating in focus group, and highlighting a "take away", the researcher assumes that the participants will notice racial tenets that effect the Christian church today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Program Coach 5- Collaborative Team 1- Focus Group Facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Divided by Faith" by Christian Smith &Michael O. Emerson. -Coordinated room at Main Post Chapel for Focus Group.

Table 6*Action Plan for Objective 2*

OBJECTIVE 2	INPUTS	SUCCESS MEASURES
If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.	The researcher requested participants read Acts chapter 2. -The researcher scheduled a focus group to discuss top tenets of the book and how it relates to Acts 2, the foundational scripture.	Participants completed assigned reading. -Participants committed to focus group. -Participants highlighted at least one “take away” from biblical factors.
ASSUMPTION	PARTICIPANTS	RESOURCES
By completing the assigned reading, participating in focus group, and highlighting a “take away”, the researcher assumes that the participants will see all races in the image of God.	1-Program Coach 5- Collaborative Team 1- Focus Group Facilitator	-Copy of Acts chapter 2

Table 7*Action Plan for Objective 3*

OBJECTIVE 3	INPUTS	SUCCESS MEASURES
If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.	Collaborated with different marketing agencies to distribute flyers, i.e., MWR, AAFES, DECA. -Social Media: Facebook, Instagram -Trained members on evangelizing to diverse communities.	Multiethnic membership increased by 10 percent within allotted summer season, leading into the fall session.
ASSUMPTION	PARTICIPANTS	RESOURCES
By collaborating with different marketing agencies, we can distribute flyers through mass efforts and attract different ethnicities to the organization. We can revive evangelism by teaching methods of communicating faith-sharing.	1-Program Coach 5- Collaborative Team 1- Program Coordinator	-Coordinated with existing marketing agencies in area to distribute media. -Designed marketing banner to distribute. -Distributed to marketing agencies and social media platforms.

Table 8*Action Plan for Objective 4*

OBJECTIVE 4	INPUTS	SUCCESS MEASURES
If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization	-Leadership is selected from existing membership base.	Multiethnic leadership increased by 5 percent for 2023-2024 leadership election
ASSUMPTION	PARTICIPANTS	RESOURCES
By increasing multiethnic leadership, the organization may see more multiethnic presence within membership	1-Program Coach 5- Collaborative Team 1- Program Coordinator	

Table 9*Action Plan for Objective 5*

OBJECTIVE 5	INPUTS	SUCCESS MEASURES
If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create a safe space for multiethnic members.	- The researcher requested participants to read “ <i>Divided by Faith</i> ” by Christian Smith & Michael O. Emerson. -The researcher scheduled a focus group to discuss top tenets of the book.	-Impact on following Fall session. Celebration of diversity.
ASSUMPTION	PARTICIPANTS	RESOURCES
By completing assigned reading, participating in focus group, and highlighting a “take away”, the researcher assumes that the participants will be able to develop strategies to develop a “safe space”.	1-Program Coach 5- Collaborative Team 1- Program Coordinator	

The *Action Plan for Objective 1* (Table 5) focused on promoting diversity and inclusion by acknowledging the legacy of racial segregation in religious institutions and to assess how these challenges impacted present-day congregations. Using chapters 7 and 8 of the book, *Divided by Faith*, the researcher asked the collaborative team members to read and provide two take-away points to discuss with other members at the focus group. The researcher desired to cultivate an environment of mutual understanding. The researcher selected chapters 7 and 8 for relevancy and

time constraints. These chapters correlated with the purpose and operationalized plan for implementing the program.

The *Action Plan for Objective 2* (Table 6) focused on fostering diversity within the organization by studying scriptures that showed inclusivity. Participants examined Acts Chapter 2 to identify the various ethnic and racial groups that received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, with no regard to race or ethnicity. By reading through Acts Chapter 2 as a group, the facilitator introduced the notion of racial harmony as a biblical imperative and highlighted the "Imago Dei" concept, which underscores that all humans are created in God's image.

The *Action Plan for Objective 3* (Table 7) aimed to attract a diverse range of individuals to the organization. This was achieved through targeted marketing efforts on social media and partnerships with other organizations, specifically geared towards inviting individuals from different ethnic communities to participate in the organization's Spring and Fall sessions, as well as various Summer activities. Additionally, the researcher suggested implementing changes to the recruitment policies and tactics.

The *Action Plan for Objective 4* (Table 8) focused on promoting diversity within leadership by electing individuals from various races and ethnicities. The goal is to attract a more diverse group of people to the organization and accurately reflect the general membership. To achieve this, the leadership will be selected from the existing membership, aligning with Objective 3. To increase the presence of multiethnic leadership by 5%, the general membership must also become more diverse. The implementation of this objective will impact the leadership selections in 2023-2024.

The *Action Plan for Objective 5* (Table 9) aimed to establish a secure and welcoming atmosphere for people of different ethnicities to congregate and worship. To achieve this

objective, it was crucial to utilize appropriate language and visuals that could instill confidence and motivate minorities to share their experiences regarding racial and religious matters. To facilitate this goal, the researcher suggested that the team read the introduction and chapters 7 and 8 of the book *Divided by Faith* by Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, which offer valuable insights into the intersection of race and religion in today's church. Moreover, the team was encouraged to brainstorm strategies to create a safe space.

Assessment Plan

This section introduces the assessment plan for the program as it was proposed, which includes restating the objectives, highlighting the success measures, and providing a method to verify whether the measures were met. The researcher served as the primary instrument for verifying the objectives and validating that success measures were met. The following goals guided the assessment process.

- **Goal 1:** The researcher will verify that goals are met through focus group participation and that each member was able to highlight at least one (1) takeaway for the reading concerning how historical racial tenets impact the church today.
- **Goal 2.** The researcher will verify that goals are met through focus group participation and that each member could highlight at least one (1) takeaway from the reading concerning developing biblical conviction about racism.
- **Goal 3.** The researcher will verify that goals are met by collaborating with local marketing agencies to increase multiethnic presence within the organization. The researcher will use accountability sheets (Appendix D) to verify attendance.
- **Goal 4.** The researcher will verify that goals are met by increased ethnic leadership for the 2023-2024 board leadership selection and installation.

Table 10 below provides the assessment plan as it was created and implemented for this praxis study.

Table 10*Assessment Plan*

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS MEASURES	VERIFICATION
If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.	<p>-Participants completed assigned reading.</p> <p>-Participants committed to focus group.</p> <p>-Participants highlighted at least one “take away” from historical factors.</p>	During focus group, participants were able to highlight at least one (1) “take away” from the reading concerning how historical segregation impacts Christian churches today.
If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.	<p>-Participants completed assigned reading.</p> <p>-Participants committed to focus group.</p> <p>-Participants highlighted at least one “take away” from biblical factors.</p>	During the focus group, participants were able to highlight at least one (1) “take away” from the reading and develop a sense conviction about how God views racism.
If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.	<p>-Multiethnic membership increased by 10 percent in 6 months.</p> <p>-Currently, PWOC serves 30-35 women, which equates to 3-5 new multiethnic members</p>	Researcher will count, verify, and validate new membership.
If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization.	<p>-Leadership is elected based on current organizational membership.</p> <p>-Multiethnic leadership increased by 5 percent.</p>	Researcher will work with electoral board to verify multiethnic leadership.
If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create	Participants completed assigned reading.	During focus group, participants were able to develop strategies to develop a “safe space”.

a safe space for multiethnic members.	<p>-Participants committed to focus group.</p> <p>-Participants highlighted at least one “take away” from historical factors.</p>	
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Summary and Significance

This program aimed to raise awareness about the racialized history of religion and break down the racial barriers that have permeated the Christian faith. Researchers have reported that although evangelical Christians have made efforts to bridge the racial gap, churches continue to remain highly segregated (Smith & Emerson, 2001; Lipka, 2015). By implementing this program, the researcher aimed to promote unity within the local church community by providing education and highlighting common religious traditions that unite the body of Christ. The program aimed to enhance diversity and inclusivity within the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel by increasing the membership and leadership of multiethnic groups by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Chapter four discusses tenets of the program implementation. The researcher developed two implementation phases, *Phase I and Phase II*, and used different models to confront the complexities associated within each phase. Phase I depicted a logic model that includes a series of “if...then” statements presenting a hypothesis and a conclusion. The conclusions are deduced from evidence and reasoning rather than explicit data and aligns with the expressed purpose and vision statements. Phase II employs an action/change model that surfaces and confronts underlying assumptions within a given culture that perpetuates actions within an organization. The underlying assumptions about race and religion perpetuates actions that directly impacts the current religious landscape. Underlying assumptions are subconscious thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings that are not easily detected, but can hinder organization programs and stall change. Phase II highlights underlying assumptions that threatened to derail the program and discusses how the researcher and collaborative team members identified and confronted these threats.

Praxis Project Plan

The praxis program focused on increasing diversity and inclusion within FLW PWOC. The FLW PWOC served as the collaborating organization, it’s purpose is to help minister to women associated with the military, especially those who participate in the military chapel (PWOC Hub, 2022). The organization is multi-denominational and is founded on four leading aims: (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God’s Word, (3) to develop women’s spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2022). The program unfolded in two phases, presenting two frameworks; logic and action/change models. The logic

model provided sequential steps that aligned the objectives with the program's vision and purpose statements. The action/change model confronted underlying assumptions that impeded program implementation. This section includes the following subsection: vision statement, purpose statement, objectives, intended outputs, and intended outcomes.

Vision Statement

To improve diversity and inclusion within the organization by increasing the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

Purpose Statement

The FLW PWOC's motto is "We are workers together for Christ," which rests on the following four aims; (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God's Word, (3) to develop women's spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2022). PWOC is not a non-denominational program, instead, it represents a multi-denominational organization, thus honoring different church backgrounds. The four aims help the leaders to focus on what they have in common and not on the differences that can strike discord between members. In correlation with the established motto and purpose, the program aims to reaffirm that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity is welcomed within the organization. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, this program showcases Christ's power to unify people and reconcile racial disparities.

Objectives

- OBJ 1. If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.
- OBJ 2. If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.

- OBJ 3. If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.
- OBJ 4. If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization.
- OBJ 5. If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create a safe space for multiethnic members.

Intended Outputs

OBJ 1

- The researcher will provide relative reading material that highlights historical segregation within religious organizations.
- The researcher will utilize Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith's, *Divided by Faith* to provide an overview of historical segregation in religious spaces and the impact thereof.
- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborating team members as participants to discuss how historical segregation currently impacts Christian America.

OBJ 2

- Using Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9, the researcher will uncover Godly convictions that urges collaborative team members to break the monoracial worship barrier.
- The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborative team members as participants that discusses this biblical conviction of all humans being equal.

OBJ 3

- The researcher will collaborate with the team members to revive evangelism and discipleship amongst organizational members.
- The team will receive training on the aforementioned topics as well as learning how to extend an invitation to a collective worship service.
- The researcher will work with Publicity to collaborate with organizations like AAFES, DECA, and MWR to distribute flyers invitations to the religious organization.

OBJ 4

- The researcher will explore leadership selection practices and protocols.

- The researcher will highlight trends that may hinder multiethnic leadership selection.
- The researcher will discuss these practices with Senior Leadership Selection Member.

OBJ 5

- The researcher will facilitate a focus group to discuss different experiences and provide a safe space for collaborative group members to discuss their experiences with race and religion.

Intended Outcomes

OBJ 1

- The researcher hopes to increase awareness of historical racial division within religious organizations and how this occurrence perpetuates monoracial churches within America.

OBJ 2

- The researcher hopes to perpetuate an understanding of God's love towards humans, despite race or ethnicity. As Christ leads, the researcher intends for his followers to mimic His [Christ's] example.

OBJ 3

- Through the intended outputs, the researcher hopes to develop better evangelistic practices that target all races and ethnicities within the community.

OBJ 4

- The researcher hopes to increase diversity on the leadership board. The 2022-2023 board consists of 15 personnel: 12-White, 2-Hispanic, and 1-African American. The researcher hopes to increase the multiethnic presence on the board by 5 percent.

OBJ 5

- In relation to the proposed output, the researcher hopes that the collaborative team will develop concurrent safe spaces for organizational members to discuss other race related experiences. By providing this space, the researcher hopes the leaders will cultivate an area for others to be transparent and open about their personal experiences.

Praxis Project Assessment (Intended v. Actual)

This section reviews the actual results of the program using the logic model in Phase I and the action/change model in Phase II. The models present intentional steps to improve diversity and inclusion amongst organizational members, reflecting and promoting greater multiethnicity within its membership and board-selected leaders by 10 and 5 percent, respectively. The researcher ensured that measures were committed in good faith and used to confront traditional mindsets that impeded change and program implementation.

Assessment of Project Antecedents

In this section, the researcher compares their expectations before starting the project to what they experienced during the implementation process. The topics covered are in line with the presented vision and purpose statements and identify obstacles that hindered the improvement of diversity. To gather information about underlying tenets that hindered improving diversity, the researcher conducted a focus group as the primary research instrument. The focus group had five (5) participants: Participants A, B, C, E, and F; participant D was unavailable. The focus group aimed to answer the following questions:

Table 11

Focus Group Questions

(1) From your perspective, do you believe that religion is a powerful agent of racial change? If so, how is religion a powerful agent of racial change? 1a. Do you believe denominations are separated based on racial lines? 1b. How can we change this?
(2) From your perspective, what is religion's role in today's racial conflicts?
(3) From your perspective, what can we learn from <i>Divided by Faith, chapters 7 and 8</i> by Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith?
(4) The participants will highlight at least one (1) take-away or fact, point, or idea remembered from the reading to contribute to the group discussion. 4a. Do you believe we disciple in our comfort zones? 4b. How can we overcome this obstacle?
(5) The participants will highlight at least one (1) take-away or idea gleaned from reading Acts 2. 5a. Do you believe race plays a role in church choice? 5b. Do you think the church today represents the church described in Acts?
(6) From your perspective, is the Acts 2 church still applicable today? If so, how?

Intended Antecedents

- **Intended Antecedent 1:** The researcher expected the organization to possess an awareness of historical racial conflict that perpetuated monoracial religious organizations.
- **Intended Antecedent 2:** The researcher expected group members to notice, recognize, and acknowledge the lack of diversity within the organization and possess a willingness to change through biblical conviction.
- **Intended Antecedent 3:** The researcher expected group members to understand evangelism and discipleship principles, venturing out of comfort zones.
- **Intended Antecedent 4:** The researcher expected group members to desire creating a safe space to address race-related matters within a biblical framework.

Actual Antecedents

Intended Antecedent 1: The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps recognizes the importance of diversity in meeting the needs of Soldiers and their families worldwide. Chaplains are held to the highest standards of discretion, integrity, and professional ethics. They provide religious support in a setting that pluralistic religions and ensures the freedom to practice religion (U.S. Department of the Army, 2022). The FLW PWOC supports the mission of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, aligning with the local Commander's Religious Support Plan and Senior Chaplain's objectives (PWOC Hub, 2022). The team members acknowledge the historical divisions between denominational groups and religious organizations, but finding a solution to address these issues while promoting diversity remains a challenge.

Intended Antecedent 2: Currently, the FLW PWOC reflects less than 5 percent multiethnic presence within the organization, and 2 out of 15 board members represent a diverse ethnicity. The researcher expected members to notice, acknowledge, or recognize the lack of diversity within the organization, but the results varied when asked about this occurrence. During

the focus group, 2 out of 5 participants acknowledged the lack of diversity within the organization. Participant A desired change and provided no remedial action to confront this occurrence. Participant B believed that many churches are divided by racial lines and committed to bridging the gap during her time as president (2022-2023). Participant B crusaded to different churches, despite denomination, promoting unity in the body of Christ.

Intended Antecedent 3: The researcher identified that a significant part of increasing multiethnicity within a religious organization hinged on understanding evangelism and inviting people to church. Scholars assert that many people base their church or religious affiliation on relationships, emphasizing family and people they know and trust who invite them to church (Wright, 2008). Evangelism and discipleship are a large part of uniting the faiths and increasing diversity and inclusion within the PWOC organization. The researcher identified different ideas about these topics, perpetuating conflict on reaching beyond comfort zones and inviting people to church. Participant E stated, *“I believe God is calling me to raise the disciples in my home [children] instead of disciplining 100 other women...”*. This statement highlighted a schism within the group. Increasing multiethnicity within the organization would require the participants to understand evangelism. The collaborative coach organized a training session led by a contributing military chaplain. The chaplain focused on the following three basic questions.

1. What is evangelism?
2. What is the difference between evangelism and discipleship?
3. Who is my neighbor and how do I evangelize to people who are not like me?

Intended Antecedent 4: Two out of five members acknowledged that the group lacked diversity, which created internal struggles. The participants needed assistance to create a safe space to discuss race-related matters from a biblical perspective. In the United States Army, almost 41% of members belong to minority groups, and this number is increasing daily. With

more diverse troops joining the ranks, the Army must be prepared to attract, train, and retain these groups to stay competitive. Bishop Garrison, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense, emphasized that diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential for the military and should be viewed as tools for solving problems. The FLW PWOC supports the United States Army Chaplain's Corp and stands for diversity, which is important for the entire organization. The researcher assumes that discrimination is not tolerated in the military structure as a whole, but PWOC leaders may not have noticed the lack of diversity within their ministry.

The Need

In viewing the lack of multiethnic representation within the organization, the researcher assumed the program was necessary and the need accurately forecasted. Three (3) associate chaplains approached the researcher for further information on how to diversify chapel services which are separated along denominational lines and ineptly become racial disparities. Currently, Fort Leonard Wood offers three Protestant Services at different locations and times. The Gospel Protestant service is held at 1000 at the Central Iowa Chapel, the Traditional Protestant Service at the Soldier Memorial Chapel at 1030, and Crossroads Community Contemporary Service at the Main Post Chapel at 1100. The researcher observed that each service is defined as a monoracial church comprising nearly 80 percent or higher of a single race (Lipka, 2014).

The Participants

The researcher expected six (6) participants to attend the focus group, five (5) collaborative team members, and one (1) collaborative coach. Five members attended the focus group, and only three committed to program implementation. Due to the leadership turnover, the collaborative coach and three members remained engaged in the program. Incoming personnel showed interest in implementing beyond the extent of this research. Additionally, incoming

chaplains showed interest in incorporating principles for diversifying the three Protestant services at Fort Leonard Wood Military Installation.

The Context

The researcher planned and conducted the focus group at the Main Post Chapel at 608 Minnesota Avenue, Bldg. 608, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri 65473. The Main Post Chapel is the location for the FLW PWOC weekly meetings. The room at the chapel offered space and good lighting and promoted good conversation. The adjoining room supported childcare for the participant's children. There were four school-aged children within that space with a registered caretaker.

Resources

The participants read chapters 7 and 8 of "Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America" by Michael O. Emerson. The researcher purchased six (6) digital copies of this book for \$9.99 a unit, with tax; this order totaled \$62.94. The book's total was the only cost accrued during program planning and implementation phases I and II. This total was within budget.

Assessment of Project Transactions

This section will compare the planned transactions as part of the program and the actual transactions during planning and implementation. This section will evaluate curriculum, media, collaboration with various organizations, and discipleship training. The researcher will provide data on which aspects were practical and ineffectively implemented. Additionally, the researcher will provide formative and summative evidence for each response.

Curriculum

The collaborative team participants read chapters 7 and 8 of *Divided by Faith* to gain an enhanced perspective of historical racial encounters that shaped Christian America. Michael Emerson and Christian Smith conducted nationwide telephonic surveys of 2,000 people and 200 face-to-face interviews that probed white Christian America. The authors addressed historical and ongoing racial discrimination and postulated that evangelicals preserve discriminatory practices through denominational separatism and segregated worship. Additionally, the authors hypothesize that the tenets of the evangelical movement emphasize individualism, free will, and personal relationships, making invisible the pervasive injustice perpetuating racial inequality.

As a formative assessment, the participants provided two (2) takeaways from the writing and were prepared to discuss the book's tenets in the focus group. The takeaways provided a rich discussion on how historical racism and traditional mindsets have permeated Christian America and therefore continues to shape people's thoughts about worship and multi-ethnic churches. Emerson and Smith (2001) stated, "Akin to the shopping mall, Americans have a bewildering variety of religious forms from which to choose. Suppliers, consumers, and some degree of freedom to choose are necessary for any marketplace. American religion provides all these" (Emerson & Smith, 2001, p. 138). Participant F resonated with this statement by posing that the church is the mall, and our denominations are the stores within the mall. She added, "We should all come to the mall [the church] and not get sidetracked by the individual stores [denominations] that keep us divided" (Participant F, 2023).

Reading chapters 7 and 8 of the text proved a practical measure that jumpstarted program implementation. The focus group and allowing the participants to bring their ideas about the text to the table highlighted differences in thoughts and opinions about Christian America. Although

the participants generally serve and worship in a single military community, their ideas about multiethnic churches were rooted in their experiences and encounters with diverse congregations and the pervasive social issues that plague America. Participant C mentioned that her philosophy about Christian America was previously rooted in politics. She stated that she used to be very confrontational about politics because “politics matter and people matter, and the people are the church” (Participant C, 2023). In retrospect, Participant C stated that by falling at Jesus’ feet, she could put away her political defense, which perpetuated separatism, and rely on the Word of God. She added, “The Gospel is controversial enough, and I am not going to be controversial about anything else because it will deter away from building relationships with sisters in Christ” (Participant C, 2023).

The collaborative team participants read Acts 2, which served as the foundational message of diverse people coming together and receiving the same Holy Spirit, thus uniting them in a culminating message to spread the Gospel of Christ. Reading and incorporating Acts 2 posed beneficial for the study and program implementation because it realigned the participant's thoughts about worshipping on one accord. Acts 2 primed the readers for uniting people from all walks of life and provided a path towards reconciliation. The researcher posed the following question, is the church of Acts applicable today? After reading the text, Participant E stated, “I just thought it was so cool how all believers devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, sharing meals, and prayer and having a deep sense of awe.” She added, “How different would our world look if that is what we were doing today” (Participant E, 2023).

Organization Collaborations

To increase the multiethnic presence of the organization, the researcher requested that team members collaborate with different marketing agencies to distribute flyers through mass

efforts and attract different ethnicities to the organization. The researcher hypothesized that PWOC could revive evangelism by teaching methods of communicating faith-sharing through flyers and media distribution. The team committed to posting flyers around the military installation and utilizing social media (Facebook and Instagram) to increase interest in the organization and explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture.

The collaborative team's efforts to post updates about the organization and provide continued programs to reach out to the community, like Coffee and Chaos (playgroup) and Ladies Night Out, proved an effective tool for evangelizing and inviting different groups to the organization. Although social media ascertained an immediate response, this effort was delimited to people previously associated with the site and organization. There is still a large, untapped population unaware of the FLW PWOC and would not naturally search for the organization via Facebook and Instagram unless introduced by someone already acquainted with the organization. The FLW PWOC will continue to explore various marketing strategies to increase interest and increase the multiethnic presence within the community.

Evangelism and Discipleship Training

During the focus group, the researcher uncovered a difference in opinion about evangelism and discipleship. Due to varied doctrines and denominational affiliations, differences arose about what constituted these principles. The researcher realized that the heart of increasing attendance within the organization relied on evangelism principles and going outside of their comfort zones to invite different women to the organization. To clear the confusion and get everyone on one accord, the FLW PWOC dedicated its spring semester to learning these principles and studying, *In the Dust of the Rabbi: Learning to Live as Jesus Lived* by Ray Vander Laan. This study provided a way to experience Jesus' life up close and personal. The

organization helped build a common foundation for evangelism and discipleship through videos, participant questions, and small-group discussions. *In the Dust of the Rabbi* is the sixth volume of the “That the World May Know Series” and provides an in-depth study of where Jesus walked and surfaced sacred scriptures' historical, geographical, and cultural context. Additionally, the study provided insight into how Jesus selected and continued to educate his disciples about the Kingdom of God.

Studying *In the Dust of the Rabbi* proved to be an effective measure of understanding the differences between evangelism and discipleship from Jesus' perspective. After completing the study, the collaborative team members received informal, unsolicited feedback from various participants within the organization about the study. A consensus stated that they were awe-struck by how closely Jesus walked with his disciples. In stark comparison, many Christians today cannot attest to having close ties with members of their immediate congregation and how mimicking these relationships could perpetuate a different response within the church.

Assessment of Outputs and Outcomes

This section will identify the results and the program's consequences for the stakeholders and people most directly affected by the product. The researcher will provide formative and summative evidence to support the assessment and overview the outputs and outcomes of program implementation. This section will discuss the program in terms of intended versus actual outcomes and how the results will impact diversity and inclusion by increasing the multiethnic presence within the organization. Additionally, this section will evaluate the expected results if the program continues and analyzes what happened to the target group compared to what would have happened without the program implementation.

Actual Outputs

- The researcher facilitated a focus group that asked questions concerning the participants understanding of historical segregation in religious spaces.
- The participants provided two (2) take aways from *Divided by Faith*, to further delve into the material and highlight the impact of historical racism on today's religious landscape.
- The researcher facilitated a focus group and asked the participants to highlight two (2) takeaways concerning the Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9 and how this changed their perspective about separate religious spaces.
- The Collaborative Coach collaborated with a chaplain to provide a Tuesday morning devotion concerning discipleship, evangelism, and loving others that are not like us.
- The researcher collaborated with Publicity to develop a flyer for social media and other locations to post invitation.
- The researcher met with the Senior Board Selection Team Member to discuss selection practices.
- The researcher presented selection statistics to Senior Board Selection Team Member.
- The created a safe space to discuss race-related experiences across the religious landscape.

Actual Outcomes

- The researcher successfully increased awareness of historical race related segregation within religious spaces.
- The researcher successfully increased awareness of how these tenets can and have hindered multiethnic worship and increased the prevalence of monoracial religious organizations. The researcher successfully developed and/or heightened convictions about monoracial worship in Christian America. The program's coach implemented training on evangelism and discipleship using the Bible Study, *Dust of the Rabbi*.
- The researcher did not collaborate with different marketing agencies but instead overly relied on social media to reach masses. Social media was limited to women who "liked" and "followed" the organization and failed to build effective relationships.
- The researcher attempted to understand historical selection practices

- The researcher failed to meet this measure. Although the researcher had a meeting with Senior Board Selection Member, the team only filled 5 of the 15 board positions. Currently, there is no multiethnic presence on the board.
- The researcher successfully created a safe space to discuss race-related experiences across the religious landscape. This experience is ongoing and cannot be determined whether previous board members will continue to create that safe space for others to tell their stories.

Summary of Results

A study titled, *Most Pastors See Racial Diversity in the Church as a Goal but Not Reality*, reported that 88 percent of U.S. Protestant pastors believe every church should strive to achieve racial diversity. Although a formidable goal, the research concluded that in 2022 churches continued to be divided along racial lines, with more than 76 percent of Protestant pastors reporting that their church predominates one racial and ethnic group (Postell, 2022). In 2023, Lifeway published a follow-up study titled, *Pastors encourage racial reconciliation, churchgoers want more diversity in the church*, in which 49 percent of American churchgoers believe their church needs to become more ethnically diverse (Postell, 2023). Within the past three months, U.S. pastors reported discussing racial reconciliation with leaders in their church, and 70 percent reported socializing with neighbors of other ethnicities (Postell, 2023).

Additionally, more than 2 in 5 have led times of corporate prayer for racial reconciliation, and 44 percent report preaching on racial topics (Postell, 2023). Additionally, McConnell states, “It is encouraging to see pastors increasingly engaged in many activities that foster racial reconciliation” (Postell, 2023). Currently, over 92 percent of churches in America are divided across racial lines. Although diversity and inclusion are pervasive topics, churches remain the least integrated institutions in America (Missio Alliance, 2023). The implemented program aimed to improve diversity and inclusion amongst organizational members, reflecting and promoting greater multiethnicity within its membership and board-selected leaders by 10 and 5

percent, respectively. The researcher believes that FLW PWOC can meet this intended objective with continued measures.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND APPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter answers pertinent questions related to program implementation and explore the program's value and potential benefits. This chapter focuses on results and the significant impacts of those results on leadership practice. Scholars continue to look at the religious landscape in the United States and how it continues to change rapidly. Reports show that both Protestantism and Catholicism are experiencing population losses. Currently, 43 percent of U.S. adults identify with Protestantism, down from 51 percent in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2019). Additionally, in a study conducted in 2018 and 2019, 65 percent of American adults described themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, which has decreased by 12 percent over the past decade (Pew Research Center, 2019). Meanwhile, research shows that the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who identify as atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular, now stands at 26 percent, which has increased from 17 percent in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2019). The rapid decline of adults who attend church and are religiously affiliated is rapidly declining and affecting overall church growth and planting initiatives and impacting the multiethnic presence in religious spaces.

Findings, Impacts, Conclusions

This section describes the findings discovered from the implementation of the praxis project and review the results (actual output and outcomes) as compared to the intended outputs and outcomes (see Tables 12-17 below). The researcher highlights the impact of the program, process, and product on the participants and the organization resulting from the implementing project. The researcher will answer the following questions: How did the project contribute to solving the praxis problem? What conclusion did the researcher reach, and what are the next

steps needed to reach the preferred future initially envisioned at the start of the project? Finally, the researcher will attempt to answer how the researcher can modify the vision based on what we now know about the program.

Table 12

Intended Output vs. Actual Output

Objective 1	Intended Output	Actual Output
<p>If we create a pathway to understanding historical racial segregation within religious organizations, then we can analyze how these factors are still relevant in congregations today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher will provide relative reading material that highlights historical segregation within religious organizations. • The researcher will utilize Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith's, "Divided by Faith" to provide an overview of historical segregation in religious spaces and the impact thereof. • The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborating team members as participants to discuss how historical segregation currently impacts Christian America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher facilitated a focus group that asked questions concerning the participants understanding of historical segregation in religious spaces. • The participants provided two (2) take aways from <i>Divided by Faith</i>, to further delve into the material and highlight the impact of historical racism on today's religious landscape.

Findings. The researcher conducted a focus group with five of the six collaborative team members, all selected based on their organizational roles. During the focus group, the participants discussed race and religion and how it impacts their view of collective worship in Christian America today. They agreed that religious denominations tend to divide churches along racial lines, perpetuating separate religious spaces. Although homogenous churches are typical in the U.S., many religious leaders lament the congregational separation. However, the participants were aware of historical segregation, but understanding this incident did not dissuade them from selecting a place of worship based on personal preferences and denominational choice. Selecting a place of worship by denomination perpetuates separate religious spaces. Although the FLW PWOC is a multidominational organization, currently, membership is more than 80 percent monoracial.

Impact. The impact of historical racism on our current view of religion was acknowledged by the participants, and they made a committed effort to change this pervasive concept within the FLW PWOC. Following a thorough examination of the historical events and a discussion of chapters 7 and 8, which depicted religion as a modern-day marketplace, the participants unanimously agreed to scrutinize the current organizational procedures.

Table 13*Intended Output vs. Actual Output*

Objective 2	Intended Output	Actual Output
<p>If we uncover Godly convictions to break racial barriers, then we can explore the biblical mandate that supports unity within the body of Christ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9, the researcher will uncover Godly convictions that urges collaborative team members to break the monoracial worship barrier. • The researcher will facilitate a focus group with the collaborative team members as participants that discusses this biblical conviction of all humans being equal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher facilitated a focus group and asked the participants to highlight two (2) takeaways concerning the Acts 2 and Revelation 7:9 and how this changed their perspective about separate religious spaces. • The Collaborative Coach collaborated with a chaplain to provide a Tuesday morning devotion concerning discipleship, evangelism, and loving others that are not like us.
<p>Findings. The researcher conducted a focus group with five of the six collaborative team members, explicitly selecting participants in roles that directly influenced policy and change and included individuals of different ethnicities. During the focus group, the researcher questioned the participants about the Bible's convictions on segregated worship, utilizing scripture to understand the Bible's racial accounts and how Jesus handled such occurrences. The participants agreed that segregated worship was wrong and did not align with Biblical teachings.</p>		
<p>Impact. It was imperative for all participants to demonstrate a unified understanding of evangelism and discipleship. Despite one individual's belief that evangelizing within their home would be more productive, it is crucial to note that these duties do not replace the importance of the Great Commission. While productivity within the home is commendable, it must be considered equally significant to evangelism. Due to these conflicting opinions, the collaborative coach sought the assistance of chaplains to provide a devotion to understand the differences between evangelism and discipleship.</p>		

Table 14*Intended Output vs. Actual Output*

Objective 3	Intended Output	Actual Output
If we explore ways of reviving evangelism in a declining religious culture, then we can see a greater multiethnic presence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher will collaborate with the team members to revive evangelism and discipleship amongst organizational members. • The team will receive training on the aforementioned topics as well as learning how to extend an invitation to a collective worship service. • The researcher will work with Publicity to collaborate with organizations like AAFES, DECA, and MWR to distribute flyers “invitations” to the religious organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher collaborated with Publicity to develop a flyer for social media and other locations to post invitation.

Findings. The participants agreed that evangelizing, discipleship, or simply inviting others to church was a challenge and practice many of them avoided. However, studies show that inviting people to church is a powerful way to welcome unbelievers to learn more about the Christian faith and fellowship. In fact, on average, 83 percent of churchgoers came to church because of an invitation by a friend or relative. While church invitations may seem like a small step, they can bring about significant progress in an individual's journey to receive and convey the Gospel. Hence, it is invaluable and can serve as a steppingstone to a personal conversation about Christ.

Research has demonstrated that the unchurched population would be open to attending religious events if they were invited. However, religious leaders have identified that church members often do not extend invitations due to a lack of consideration. Despite encountering the unchurched frequently in their daily lives, church members often do not recognize their potential as individuals in need of guidance. Fear of rejection is another common reason why church members do not invite others to church. Instead of facing the possibility of being turned down, they choose not to extend an invitation at all. Additionally, denominational differences can cause some members to withhold invitations due to different worship and preaching styles. Finally, church members may not know how to approach the subject or may believe that their church is already too crowded or too far away for others to attend.

Participants agreed that fear of rejection and the declining religious climate in the U.S. made them hesitant to invite others to church. Instead, they utilized social media to market to a larger population. A Lifeway study infers that social media should be a part of making disciples of all nations, as Christians seek to answer the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), considering that half of the world's population uses social media. Researchers firmly believe that social media allows the church to reach both external individuals needing the gospel and internal disciples seeking to follow Christ (MacDonald, 2022). However, despite the benefits social media can bring to religious conversations, many churches still struggle to gain followers and attract external audiences (MacDonald, 2022). Only internal audiences view and "like" the content, which significantly decreases the opportunity to minister to larger groups digitally and thus decrease the chances of increasing the multiethnic presence within the organization (MacDonald, 2022).

Impact. The FLW PWOC must recognize that social media is not enough and prioritize face-to-face evangelizing. It is concerning to see women limiting themselves to those they are already comfortable with, as this perpetuates the organization's lack of diversity. It is imperative that we expand our outreach efforts and embrace new and diverse perspectives.

Table 15*Intended Output vs. Actual Output*

Objective 4	Intended Outputs	Actual Outputs
If we develop and elect leadership that reflects different races and ethnicities, then we can attract greater multiethnic presence to the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher will explore leadership selection practices and protocols. • The researcher will highlight trends that may hinder multiethnic leadership selection. • The researcher will discuss these practices with Senior Leadership Selection Member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher met with the Senior Board Selection Team Member to discuss selection practices. • The researcher presented selection statistics to Senior Board Selection Team Member.
<p>Findings. The researcher thoroughly reviewed the board selection practices during the discussion with the board selection team leader. It is imperative to follow the PWOC general regulations, which require applicants to apply, obtain a reference, and be nominated by an attributing chaplain. The selection team must pray about the nominees and make a private selection. Maintaining confidentiality is crucial as the process's inner workings are not disclosed to the general members. However, it is concerning that the board needs a multiethnic presence, and this issue needs to be addressed urgently.</p>		
<p>Impact. The researcher firmly maintains that an organization's leadership must accurately mirror the general membership. Despite raising concerns about the selection process, no alterations were implemented, and the conventional process continued.</p>		

Table 16*Intended Output vs. Actual Output*

Objective 5	Intended Outputs	Actual Outputs
If we employ proper terminology and illustration, then we can create a safe space for multiethnic members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher will facilitate a focus group to discuss different experiences and provide a safe space for collaborative group members to discuss their experiences with race and religion. 	The created a safe space to discuss race-related experiences across the religious landscape.
<p>Findings. The focus group was an imperative and secure forum for participants to openly discuss race-related concerns and their religious experiences. The participants shared compelling examples and delved into how these principles influence their religious decisions and perspectives on worshipping in multiethnic settings.</p>		
<p>Impact. The individuals involved hold crucial positions that wield direct influence over policies and decisions. Following the focus group, the organization encountered a leadership shift that impeded program tenets and hindered effective execution. The president and collaborative coach successfully completed her term and did not reapply for the upcoming semester.</p>		

Conclusions for Intended v. Actual Outputs

After conducting a focus group, the researcher discovered that organized religion is still impacted by historical racism, creating challenges for successful program implementation. Despite acknowledging the occurrence of separate worship, participants required more effective strategies to overcome these internal obstacles. Furthermore, denominations are often divided along racial lines, with various factors such as preaching styles, music, sermon topics, social justice involvement, and community support contributing to an individual's choice of church. It is crucial to note that how an individual worships is just as important as where they worship. Regrettably, this perpetuates racial segregation and contributes to the lack of multiethnic presence in today's congregations.

Table 17

Intended Outcomes vs. Actual Outcome

Intended Outcomes	Measure of Assessment	Actual Outcome
The researcher hopes to increase awareness of historical racial division within religious organizations and how this occurrence perpetuates monoracial churches within America.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher used focus group as platform to discuss race and religion. • Participants displayed a unified understanding about historical segregation and how it impacts the current religious landscape. • Participants provided 2 takeaways from the assigned reading. • Participants provided personal experience of incidences with race, religion, and denomination. 	The researcher successfully increased awareness of historical race related segregation within religious spaces.
The researcher hopes to perpetuate an understanding of God's love towards humans, despite race or ethnicity. As Christ leads, the researcher intends for his followers to mimic His [Christ's] example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher used focus group to discuss biblical tenets of separated worship. • Participants displayed a unified understanding of how the Bible denounces racism, favoritism, etc. 	The researcher successfully increased awareness of how these tenets can and have hindered multiethnic worship and increased the prevalence of monoracial religious organizations. The researcher successfully developed and/or heightened convictions about monoracial worship in Christian America. The program's

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants provided 2 takeaways about Acts 2. 	coach implemented training on evangelism and discipleship using the Bible Study, <i>Dust of the Rabbi</i> .
Through the intended outputs, the researcher hopes to develop better evangelistic practices that target all races and ethnicities within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher observed summer fellowship opportunities and reported no changes in diversity and attendance at events. • No new members at time of observation. 	The researcher did not collaborate with different marketing agencies but instead overly relied on social media to reach masses. Social media was limited to women who “liked” and “followed” the organization and failed to build effective relationships.
The researcher hopes to increase diversity on the leadership board. The 2022-2023 board consists of 15 personnel: 12-White, 2-Hispanic/Latino descent, and 1-African American. The researcher hopes to increase the multiethnic presence on the board by 5 percent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher observed the board selection process. • The 2023-2024 decreased in multiethnic presence. 	<p>The researcher attempted to understand historical selection practices</p> <p>The researcher failed to meet this measure. Although the researcher had a meeting with Senior Board Selection Member, the team only filled 5 of the 15 board positions. Currently, there is no multiethnic presence on the board.</p>
In relation to the proposed output, the researcher hopes that the collaborative team will develop concurrent safe spaces for organizational members to discuss other race related experiences. By providing this space, the researcher hopes the leaders will cultivate an area for others to be transparent and open about their personal experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher the focus group to discuss tenets of race related experiences and how these experiences shaped each participant’s perspective. 	The researcher successfully created a safe space to discuss race-related experiences across the religious landscape. This experience is ongoing and cannot be determined whether previous board members will continue to create that safe space for others to tell their stories.

Conclusions for Intended v. Actual Outcomes

Observation was the researcher's primary assessment tool for the FLW PWOC program, which only offers limited fellowship opportunities in the summer. Despite the program's limitations, the summer session allowed for the successful implementation of evangelism and discipleship techniques. However, the focus group participants' inconclusive understanding of these practices threatened the program's effectiveness and proper implementation. In response, the collaborative coach, who also served as the organization's president, requested support from attributing chaplains to provide a devotion on evangelism and discipleship. Furthermore, the

organization studied Dust of the Rabbi to cover discipleship tenets. Differing ideas must be kept from derailing the program's progress. The focus group provided sufficient data for effective program implementation. From the forum, the collaborative team uncovered how race and religion currently impact the church and individual selection of denominations and places of worship. Segregated congregations are typical in the U.S. and are often preferred over combined, multiethnic worship. This incidence hinders increased multiethnic presence in religious organizations and derails attempts at inclusive religious organizations.

The FLW PWOC is an organization that heavily relies on volunteer support. The leadership is selected by a board selection team, with guidance from the Senior Advising Chaplain. Unfortunately, the program faced significant hurdles during implementation due to leadership changes. The collaborating coach supported two critical roles: the program's coach and the organization's president. As the organization's new leadership selection undergoes revision, follow-up procedures will be significantly impacted.

Implications for Organizations and Leaders

Religion in America has sparked controversy for decades, with many focusing on the factors that separate people rather than what ties individuals together. Scholars assert that while consumerism, religious pluralism, and individual preferences in worship are problems, religious leaders must imagine a new church that reflects diverse people groups (Van Opstal, 2017). Although faith-based communities are relevant and suitable for society, many find them suspicious, out of touch, and unrelatable because they rarely reflect cultural realities (Van Opstal, 2017). Successfully implementing a diversity and inclusion program within an organization requires leaders to recognize the necessity of diversity in any given situation. Despite the abundance of data indicating America's increasing diversification and the need for equitable

places of worship, some still oppose this concept. Planting a multiethnic church or implementing a program will present challenges. Cole Brown, a multiethnic church planter in Portland, Oregon, provided insight into his challenges when developing a multiethnic church (Brown, 2017). Brown highlighted that his chief concern was that many who desire to lead multiethnic churches continue to live mono-ethnic lives. Michael Emerson, a leading sociologist, defined a multiethnic church as an organization with a minimum of 20 percent of members who do not identify with the dominant racial group (Brown, 2017). Brown insists that leaders who desire to lead a multiethnic church apply this same rule to the pastor's personal life. If at least 20 percent of a pastor's relationships do not consist of people of another racial group, he cannot effectively lead a multiethnic church (Brown, 2017).

Before embarking on a program to increase an organization's multiethnic presence, individuals must thoroughly examine their motives for pursuing diversity and inclusion within their specific context. In order to avoid being swayed by cultural trends, which can ultimately lead one astray, the researcher asserts that future leaders must center their efforts around biblical teachings by posing the question, "What does the Bible say about multiethnic congregations?" and crafting their program accordingly. It is crucial to choose a collaborating team that will commit to staying in place for the entire duration of the program. While some situations may be unavoidable, strive to select a collaborating coach who will remain in position throughout the implementation process, from beginning to end. Ensuring at least one consistent person on the team will bring much-needed stability to the program.

This program shapes the collaborative team's educational experience in implementing diversity practices within religious organizations. The concept utilizes the "train the trainer" model, which prepares practitioners to pass methods and expertise on to others who may become

advocates and trainers themselves (Graupp, 2023). In viewing this process, researchers must select collaborative team members who serve critical roles within the organization and those who can affect change and impact decision-making. The benefits of this model are that it provides consistency, learning retention, timeliness, familiarity, and development (Graupp, 2023). The researcher facilitated a focus group that discussed race-related experiences in religious organizations. Additionally, the researcher cultivated a safe space to discuss these incidences and how the organization can better facilitate multiethnic worship. The researcher hoped that the leaders would facilitate similar small group discussions based on this focus group, which focused on diversity, inclusion, evangelizing outside comfort zones, and discipleship.

Applications for Organizations and Leaders

Following the program's implementation, the collaborating team dispersed abruptly due to leadership changes, relocations, and internal conflicts. Diversity and inclusion are hotly debated topics that require a leader with the courage to confront traditional mindsets in various organizations. The researcher must gather sufficient data on organizational trends in diverse leadership selection to achieve this. Furthermore, presenting demographics for the immediate area is essential in setting realistic program goals. The FLW PWOC is located on a military base where most of the population is White, followed by Hispanic and Black individuals, as per Data USA (2023). The program's vision is to increase general membership by 10 percent and leadership by 5 percent, respectively. However, given the pressing need for diversity in the immediate area, the researcher has lowered the goal.

Advice for Future Research Practitioners

Despite the desirability of increasing the multiethnic presence in religion, some religious leaders provide feeble reasons why we should refrain from embracing multiethnic culture.

According to Barna's research, American churchgoers still prefer to avoid discussing race, even two generations after the Civil Rights Movement. While some pastors see this as an opportunity to discuss this sensitive topic, others have deemed it unimportant to teach. This divisive stance has had a negative impact on race and religion, perpetuating separate worship in different areas. It is imperative that we address this issue and work towards building a more integrated and inclusive community.

Project Summation

Despite attempts to refute Dr. King's observation from his 1960 *Meet the Press* interview that Sunday mornings are the most segregated day in America, studies have shown that this phenomenon persists nearly 60 years later (Smietana, 2015). As America becomes diverse, scholars assert that the religious experience must shift to fit the newer desires of average churchgoers. Research suggests that multiethnic churches are growing in the U.S., which may seem like the answer to a growing, diverse population, but navigating these multiethnic spaces is challenging (Brumley, 2021). A 2020 study by Baylor University revealed a slow but steady rise in the percentage of congregations in the U.S. characterized by racial diversity—about one in four Americans attend a multiethnic congregation (Brumley, 2021). However, this is an increase from two decades ago, when only 21 percent of all megachurches identified as multiethnic. As one author writes, the challenges that persist are evident: "Just because people are worshiping in multiethnic spaces does not mean they are on the forefront of racial justice" (Brumley, 2021).

A Barna Study confirmed that "Authentic relationships in multiracial church settings are difficult to establish" (Brumley, 2021). The researchers add, "More than a quarter of black practicing Christians feels pressured to give up part of their racial or ethnic identity in a multiracial church, 28 percent finds it difficult to build relationships within diverse religious

spaces" (Brumley, 2021). As scholars uncover reasons for this phenomenon, it is interesting to highlight that most multiracial churches were previously predominately white churches that have made an intentional effort to become more diverse. Some churches are led by a predominately white leadership team, with no less than 75 percent white, while 12 percent are white (Brumley, 2021). With the church being previously all-white and maintaining all-white leadership, the existing norms, traditions, preferences, and structures of the church do not significantly change, except for the idea that people of color are encouraged to join. Research suggests that although this invitation is sincere and committed without any form of malice intent, the invite often comes with an expectation that people of color will assimilate by embracing songs, styles, messages, and communities that are very different from their own racial and ethnic tradition (Brumley, 2021).

The Barna Study Focus Group revealed that people of color often alter their dress, speech, and other behaviors to mask their ethnic identity and compartmentalize their behaviors within these settings. In doing so, nonwhites try to fit in and embrace the multiethnic idea but understand they cannot authentically belong (Brumley, 2021). The FLW PWOC organization comprises more than 80 percent of a single race, making it a monoracial organization. The organization markets itself as an ecumenical multi-denominational organization but does not mention race or diversity within its by-laws or regulations. Although research suggests that U.S. religious denominations have more or less of a multiethnic presence and have historically been divided along racial lines, the organization does not focus on race but chooses to create diverse spaces based on religious denominational preferences.

Although the FLW PWOC does not ascribe to any diversifying techniques within its handbook, the leaders rely on Christian principles to draw women from diverse backgrounds to

its Bible studies and groups, but is this enough? The Bible teaches that God made all humanity in his image, which should call for Christians to reject the idea of racism in any form. The Bible repeatedly warns against mistreating foreigners (Exodus 22:21, Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 23:7). Yet, in humanity's quest to live holy lives, many ancient Jews made it socially acceptable to look down on outsiders, even Jesus' disciples struggled with socially accepting differences and following his examples of love. Although Christians know how to treat fellow human beings, why do monoracial organizations flourish in today's Christian America? " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (KJV, 1971; 1 John 1:8-9). Many Christians refrain from engaging in racial conflict, which propels many to believe they do not have racist tendencies. However, the Bible stands firm that " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (KJV, 1971; Jeremiah, 17:9).

Sin lurks within all humans; it is inevitable. In confronting the presence of a single racial group within the FLW PWOC, the researcher met some who were willing to take a closer look at the organization and make necessary changes, those who desired to make changes but lacked actionable steps, those who desired to see a change within the general membership but not willing to change traditional leadership selection practices, and others who did not see anything wrong and had no desire to change practical protocols. To address this issue, the researcher developed a program to increase the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively. The program included

- changing marketing practices and utilizing collaborative organizations to advertise on a greater spectrum,
- hosting a focus group to gauge the group's interest level in addressing racial diversity within the organization and
- implementing evangelism and discipleship training.

The focus group revealed the need for evangelism training, which was already implemented during the Spring session. The group collectively studied *The Dust of the Rabbi*, which gave a historical overview of biblical discipleship. The study provided foundational training for the general membership and leadership. Increasing marketing practices to canvas more significant areas did not have a noticeable effect due to the organization's use of social media instead of flyers throughout the community.

While implementing the FLW PWOC program, a leadership transition occurred, causing the program to temporarily halt until the organization could fill essential board positions. Upon completion of the program, it was noted that only 5 out of the 15 board positions were filled, and regrettably, all selected individuals were of the same race, contributing to a lack of diversity in leadership. Furthermore, the marketing for summer events did not attract a diverse audience, resulting in a continued lack of multiethnic representation within the organization. While implementing the FLW PWOC program, a leadership transition occurred, causing the program to temporarily halt until the organization could fill essential board positions. Upon completion of the program, it was noted that only 5 out of the 15 board positions were filled; all selected individuals were of the same race, contributing to a lack of diversity in leadership. Furthermore, the marketing for summer events did not attract a diverse audience, resulting in a continued lack of multiethnic representation within the organization.

Hope in Jesus Christ

For centuries, religious leaders have debated racial principles from their pulpits. And yet, despite all the discussion, progress has been slow. The truth is that polarizing answers have only served to widen the chasm. It's time for a different approach that involves coming together and finding common ground. We must listen to each other's perspectives and work towards a more

unified society. Let's start by acknowledging our differences and finding ways to embrace them. Only then can we truly make progress. Is racism a sin? John 16:34-35 states, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples..." (KJV, 1971; John 16:34-35). A Christian's life is characterized by the love shown to humankind. God created man in His image, and His creation should be honored above cultural ideology. Humans kill, maim, and destroy, which are traits of the enemy and should not characterize the life of a Christian. We are His [God's] workmanship and should, therefore, walk according to the precepts we learned long ago: our first love.

Jesus is our hope in a dying world, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (KJV, 1971; John 16:33). As you look around and see the calamity that ensues and seems to wax worse every day, realize that Jesus died on the cross. He died a criminal's death to save humankind. He died once and for all; through one man's death, all will be saved. Racism is a symptom of a dying world, a sin that separates and divides God's kingdom. The Bible reminds us that soon "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (KJV; 1971; Revelation 21:4). Let us all stay aware of his coming.

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APPENDIX A

(7) From your perspective, do you believe that religion is a powerful agent of racial change? If so, how is religion a powerful agent of racial change?
(8) From your perspective, what is religion's role in today's racial conflicts?
(9) From your perspective, what can we learn from <i>Divided by Faith, chapters 7 and 8</i> by Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith?
(10) The participants will highlight at least one (1) take-away or fact, point, or idea remembered from the reading to contribute to the group discussion.
(11) The participants will highlight at least one (1) take-away or idea gleaned from reading Acts 2.
(12) From your perspective, is the Acts 2 church still applicable today? If so, how?

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT EMAIL

Dear Collaborative Team Member:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of my doctoral degree requirements. The purpose of this research will help develop a program that improves diversity and inclusion within the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel (FLW PWOC).

The FLW PWOC's motto is "We are workers together for Christ," which rests on the following four aims; (1) to lead women to Christ, (2) to teach women God's Word, (3) to develop women's spiritual gifts, and (4) to involve women in chapel ministries (PWOC Hub, 2023). In correlation with the established motto and purpose, the researcher will develop a program to improve diversity and inclusion amongst organizational members, reflecting and promoting greater multiethnicity within its membership and board-selected leaders by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

I am inviting five (5) collaborating team members and one (1) program coach to participate in a focus group. To participate in this focus group, individuals must be over 18 and serve within the 2023-2024 FLW PWOC organization.

If you agree to participate in this study, I ask that you participate in a focus group which will take place at the Fort Leonard Wood Main Post Chapel on Fort Leonard, MO 65473. The focus group will be audio and video recorded and take about 60 minutes to complete.

A consent document is attached; the consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form by typing your name and date onto the document and return it via email three (3) days before the scheduled focus group.

Sincerely,

Marquita N. Davie

John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Doctorate Student

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTER

Title of the Project: Improve Diversity and Inclusion within the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel

Principal Investigator: Marquita Davie, M.S., Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a focus group. To participate in this focus group, individuals must be over 18 and serve within the 2023-2024 FLW PWOC organization. Taking part in this focus group is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of this research will help develop a program that improves diversity and inclusion within the Fort Leonard Wood Protestant Women of the Chapel (FLW PWOC) by increasing the presence of multiethnic groups in organizational membership and leadership by 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

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:

1. Read assigned sections of *Divided by Faith* by Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith. The researcher asks you to read the Introduction and chapters 7 and 8.
2. The researcher will ask the participant to highlight at least one (1) takeaway from the reading concerning historical factors that may currently impact the Christian church.
3. Read and review the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2.
4. The researcher will ask the participants to highlight at least one (1) takeaway from biblical factors.
5. Take part in a focus group which will take place at the Fort Leonard Wood Main Post Chapel. The focus group will be audio and video recorded and will take approximately 60 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include increasing awareness about how race impacts religious organizations.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records from the focus group will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected digital device, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Data collected from you may be used in future research studies. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable will be removed beforehand.

Data will be stored on a password-protected digital device. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

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.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation and do to submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Marquita N. Davie. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Gary Bredfelt at _____.

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[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

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[s] 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/video-record/photograph] me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

