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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Evaluating Instruments and Strategies for Change:

A Pilot Study for Total Life Ministries

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

by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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In times of turbulence and crisis, people and families should look to the church to receive comfort, salvation, spiritual and emotional assistance, and support from the church. Declining rates of prayer and worship church service attendance levels is an issue of major concern. Continually formulating new strategies, conceptual frameworks, and theoretical and theological models are necessary to address this situation. A participatory action research intervention pilot study was conducted at Total Life Ministries church, which comprised a phenomenological study with hermeneutical consistency and a case study essence. The new strategy centered on certain prayer types and ways of praying that would be motivational to increase prayer and worship attendance levels. The primary objective for the research intervention plan was to introduce prayer from a kingdom perspective and imprecatory prayer, and to develop and evaluate the strategy and survey instrument tool, as well as to ascertain whether this would be motivational for increasing more faithful attendance levels. The methodology consisted of pre-test survey, teaching/preaching sermon seminars, prayer journals, post-test survey, and researcher field notes. The sample population was comprised of eight female ministers and four male ministers. All participants were African Americans between the ages of 30 and 65. Research findings demonstrated that more effective instruments and motivational strategies need to be developed to address this problem.

Key words: prayers, praying, kingdom perspective, ambassadorship, praying the Word of God, imprecations

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Chapter 1

Introduction

So many negative situations are taking place in the world. Children, teachers, and support staff are unsafe at school; child abuse and neglect are pervasive. The constant threat of terrorism and war is always lurking. There is much political unrest throughout the world and leaders do not appear to be respectable role models as they once were in times past. Scandal and unethical practices have brought about much damage and shame, and those who previously could be trusted are often unstable.

Catastrophic weather disasters (hurricanes, tornados, tsunamis, etc.) are occurring frequently with great loss of life, and many times whole towns, homes, and businesses are beyond recovery. For many, a lifetime of livelihood is taken away completely and suddenly. Drug and substance abuse related deaths are mounting, crime rates are high, and there is an emergence of frequent gun control debates. There have been outbreaks of new diseases, and word-of-mouth reports of diseases resurging that, for the most part, had been considered no longer a worry.

There is great uncertainty in the economy and many people have been out of work and unable to pay bills or meet financial obligations. Poverty for so many is rampant, and a large number of people and children are homeless and hungry. Many people do not have healthcare plans or options. What can be done to effectively deal with trying times and circumstances such as this? Times are calling for the church to become a catalyst for change in the world. Praying is one of the best methods for producing change. Paul tells Christians to “continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col 4:2 KJV). Jesus explained, “It is written, my house is

the house of prayer” (Luke 19:46). Additionally, the Bible might be properly called a Book of Prayer as “prayers and references to prayer appear in sixty-two of the sixty-six books of the Bible.”¹ A burden for the world should be naturally demonstrated in consistent, biblical praying.

All Christians have a role and responsibility as ambassadors for Jesus to pray effectively and produce results. Sometimes things need to be loosened or bound to help deal with drastic conditions. Matthew 16:19 says, “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Conditions such as mass shootings, racism, genocide, euthanasia, abortions, poverty, addiction, violence, bad weather conditions (hurricanes, tornados, tsunamis) that destroy homes and cities, and things forbidden in God’s word such as same sex relationships and marriages need to be bound. Situations such as Christian living, breaking strongholds of addiction, better economies, better paying jobs, better attitudes, increased levels of faith, a heart for becoming a brother’s keeper, greater levels of love and understanding, patience, forgiveness, endurance, and more commitment in relationships all need to be loosed and released in the earth. This responsibility relies on the ambassadors of Christ here on the earth to responsibly pray for change.

Many Christians are unaware of their responsibilities as ambassadors for Christ from a kingdom perspective. A greater awareness and understanding of the role, responsibilities, and citizenship behaviors can enable more effective practices for achieving greater results at individual and group levels. The Lord’s Prayer modeled by Jesus (Luke 11:2) teaches Christians they should pray that “His kingdom would come, and God’s will would be done on earth as it is

¹ Thomas Constable. *Talking to God: What the Bible Says about Prayer* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock), 15.

in heaven.” Ambassadors generally work in foreign areas; as such, Christians are working on earth on behalf of the kingdom of heaven.

The primary purpose and goal of this project study is to develop a survey questionnaire that will afford a better understanding of respondent perceptions and attitudes concerning prayer. By gaining greater levels of understanding on the perspectives and perceptions of prayer held by respondents, and prayer practices of respondents, developing and facilitating new strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels at Total Life Ministries can be implemented and evaluated. Finally, this project study will serve to pilot future research projects at Total Life Ministries.

Ministry Context

Total Life Ministries is a small to medium group of church members in the Pentecostal Apostolic Denomination located in Northeast OH. Membership at the church and in the community is predominantly Black. The population for this area is almost 30,000 people. The percentage of the Black population is significantly above the state average.² Educational levels are varied within the congregation with basic education, vocational-technical school completion, four-year level Bachelors, Master’s degrees, and a couple of Doctor of Ministry degree level recipients.

Total Life Ministries is actively involved in community outreach and operates a local childcare facility, community pantry, Veterans home, and summer school activities program. A vision of Total Life Ministries is to present Jesus Christ and the Christian lifestyle by producing life-changing transformations for the residents of the community, and one person at a time.

² “Columbus Ohio Geographic Information Online Google Search, 43219 Zip Code (Columbus, Ohio) Profile,” accessed May 23, 2019. <http://www.city-data.com/zips/43219.html>.

Perseverance in ministry has proven that the mission of the church is critical. While the mission for Total Life Ministries has not changed, levels of effectiveness have demonstrated a lack of consistency. Born out of this reality is the current doctoral project which seeks to understand and to provide guidance toward a biblical solution.

Members at Total Life Ministries church believe in the power of prayer. However, what is really known or understood by members as the reason and purpose of prayer? Do they understand there are three levels of praying. The first is the lip level where one prays out loud. A second level is the mind level where one prays inwardly on a constant basis. A third level is the heart level where one prays with zeal and passion.³ One can only speculate if the Total Life members achieve these levels of praying. Furthermore, how important, or what relevance is given to praying as a church community or group? Do members of the church really believe prayer changes things? In response, may they recognize the prayer of intercession is necessary to “face the humanly impossible task of lifting the Satanic veil that rests upon all unregenerate minds.”⁴

Circumstances Surrounding the Problem

If a person turns on the television or radio station at any given time, it would be obvious within a matter of seconds from what they hear, that powerful prayer is desperately needed on a local, state, national, and international level. So much injustice in the world today would lead anyone with a sound mind to know that the church, the entity on the earth that represents God, needs to pray. Attending church prayer services and praying can become effective methods for

³ Elmer Towns. *Praying the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough: Daily Praying the Lord's Prayer as a Pathway into His Presence* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 30.

⁴ Lewis Chafer. *True Evangelism: Winning Souls Through Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 61.

producing change to address traumatic experiences, devastating social injustices and living conditions, as well as an evangelical tool for drawing people to Christianity and better living.

Because the Church is the body of God and the members are representatives of God on earth, the local church (everywhere) can be agents of change through prayer. Attending prayer and church services, praying collectively, as well as personal individual prayer practices, are important for Christians. Jesus promised “that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt 18:19). “The Church (and local church) embodies a religious and social organizational structure and should respond to socio-economic and political problems in the community, as well as build up and transform people and the community.”⁵

Motivations for the Project Study

Motivations for this project study are relational to the mission and vision of Total Life Ministries. Total Life Ministries is committed to advocating for and driving change in the church and community. Total Life Ministries is passionate about vision and mission.

There is much work to be done in the vineyard. Total Life Ministries is committed to helping disadvantaged and needy populations such as the homeless, adolescents, the elderly, veterans, the sick, the poverty stricken, and those with substance abuse issues, etc. It is the “role of the church to alleviate suffering and empower others with knowledge and skills (physical healthy living and spiritually), and to practice caring for others.”⁶

⁵ Solomon O. Akanbi and Jaco Beyers “The Church as a Catalyst for Transformation in the Society,” *HTS Theological Studies* 73, no. 4 (2017): 1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4635>.

⁶ Jacques W. Beukes, “Exploring the Youth Ministries,” *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 2, no. 2 (2016): 114, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2016.v2n2.a06>.

Total Life Ministries follows basic principles of community outreach and has successfully formed partnerships and networks with community agencies, government agencies, healthcare agencies, and schools in order to best meet the needs of the people in the community. Total Life Ministries believes in accountability, ethicality, transparency, and socially responsible practices. Total Life Ministries is committed to change for individuals and community change.

Constant prayer is vital to sustenance, growth, and the health of people and the church. Therefore, it should not be taken lightly when members are not attending prayer and worship services. Prayer is essential for “defeating the devil, restoring the backslider, strengthening the saint, curing the sick, sending forth laborers, glorifying God’s name, accomplishing the impossible, imparting wisdom, giving good things, keeping one from sin, bestowing peace, and revealing the will of God.”⁷

Problem Presented

Paul declares, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). Perhaps Christians do not fully understand the role and responsibilities of ambassadorship. Rickard Andersson explained there is a moral issue embedded into ambassadorship and other role expectations that becomes increasingly important to discuss as branding and communication logics become increasingly influential.⁸

Ambassadors negotiate through completing role expectations and through interactions

⁷ Harold Wilmington, “An Overview of Prayer,” *Suffering and Prayer* 1 (2016): 2-3, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/suffering_prayer/.

⁸ Rickard Andersson, “Employees as Ambassadors: Embracing New Role Expectations and Coping with Identity-tensions,” *Corporate Communications International Journal* (2019): 702-716, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2019-0038>.

with others.⁹ Ambassadors work to resolve conflicts and reconcile situations in order to bring peace between two or more parties. Ambassadors generally work in foreign fields. This is true of Christian ambassadors. Christian ambassadors work here on earth but are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Christians need to know that as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, praying and prayers must be accompanied with faith. In Mark 11:22, Jesus exhorted the disciples, to “have faith in God.” This would lead to the conclusion that faith should accompany prayer for prayer to be effective; as such, vv. 23-24 in this same passage reads,

For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Christians become ambassadors when they begin following Jesus. Christ makes them heirs and joint heirs in His kingdom (Rom 8:17). They are, therefore, no longer servants but sons (Gal 4:7). This entitles Christians to royal privileges in the kingdom. Three of these privileges found in Matthew 16:19 are: keys of the kingdom of heaven; the ability to “bind on earth”; and, the ability to “loose on earth.” Knowledge of these facts should make Christians not only grateful but also accountable.

The majority of adult members of the congregation at Total Life Ministries do not regularly attend prayer services. Christians at Total Life Ministries need an accurate understanding of the ambassador role for God, and to know Christians are change agents on the earth. Several are unable to attend services because of work scheduling. Others have admitted to not having a consistent prayer life at home as they should and/or would like to be more prayerful

⁹ Ibid.

like the Bible commands. New ways and strategies to motivate and increase prayer service attendance levels should be identified.

This problem should be addressed because Christians are commanded to pray. The Bible tells Christians to “pray without ceasing” (1Thess 5:16). It also says believers should “always pray, and not faint” (Luke 18:1). Prayer is necessary, and survival can be hard without it. If Christians are not praying, then Christians are probably fainting. Every failure in life can probably be traced back to a lack of prayer.

A congregation cannot grow or thrive well without prayer. Indeed, without prayer the church will “continue losing our own young people, declining as a percentage of the population, and failing to be ambassadors who bring Good News to a pagan culture.”¹⁰ God’s children are told to acknowledge the Lord in all their ways so that God will direct their paths. If people are not praying, there is a reason for it. Maybe there is a lack of understanding of how to pray or of the importance of fervent, consistent communication with God; but it is imperative that Christians learn to pray consistently. There needs to be a determination to ascertain causes and reasons for declining prayer service attendance levels at Total Life Ministries church. The problem is that members of Total Life Ministries maintain an inconsistent practice in corporate prayer services.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry action research project is to develop a survey evaluation instrument to ascertain perceptions and perspectives concerning group and individual prayer practices among the members of Total Life Ministries. Attaining a better understanding of

¹⁰ Daniel Henderson. *Old Paths New Power: Awakening Your Church through Prayer and the Ministry of the Word* (Chicago: Moody, 2016), 27.

what the members of Total Life Ministries church believe and perceive about prayer will aid in developing methods to motivate excitement for praying in order to be effective in creating change and for wanting to attend prayer services on a regular basis. A cognitive framework model and strategies for increasing attendance levels at church prayer services would be helpful, with comprehension and strategy formulation. This project study hopes to generate processes for goal(s) attainment.

The New Testament commands the Church to pray. For example, Paul's trilogy of commands is centered in constant and ongoing prayer enveloped by rejoicing and giving thanks (1 Thess. 5:16-18). Additionally, Paul practiced persistent prayer for and among local churches (e.g., Rom. 1:10; Eph. 1:18; Phil. 1:3-5, 9-11; Col. 1:9-12; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:3). In junction with praying for churches, Paul asked the churches to join in prayer for each other and for him (Rom. 15:30-33). Paul's prayer instructions guide intentional and specific prayer practices that would include spiritual and physical needs.

Prayer undergirded Paul's ministry which extended to both individuals and churches, many of whom he had not yet met or knew. Clearly, Paul "knew that, without God's help, it would be an impossible task. So he prayed. He recognized the direct link between his preaching and his praying; the first must be accompanied by the second."¹¹ Ultimately, one must also submit and enjoy Jesus' instructions to pray daily (Matt. 6:9-13) and with persistency (Matt. 7: 7-12). It is abundantly evident that the Church is to be known as a people and place of prayer.

Each local church must propose and plan to have both formal and informal prayer practices. Biblically, "every church should make united prayer a vital part of its ministry. No church can be said to be fulfilling its ministry to any degree if it is not laying hold of the power

¹¹ Alistair Begg, *Pray Big: Learn to Pray Like an Apostle* (Charlotte: The Goodbook Company, 2019), 20.

of God through prayer.”¹² Historically, this has been true of Total Life Ministries. As a church plant, a burden for evangelism created a biblical philosophy of the priority of prayer as a foundation upon which to build. In 1998, from humble beginnings in a building the size of a three-car garage, the ministry flourished. Today, the ministry includes a larger and much more adequate facilities, with the ever-expanding ministries focused on a daycare, community pantry, veteran’s home, and summer school activities program, all supported by a thriving church family (internal documents). But apart from prayer the church is not positioned to “defeat the purpose of the satanic kingdom, which is arrayed against God, His people and His purpose.”¹³

Though Total Life Ministries was founded on prayer, and though it continues to thrive with a well-rounded outreach, the prayer services have noticeably declined. What was once true in 1998 is no longer evident today. While anecdotal reasons can be ascertained, there lacks a substantive explanation for what is currently a practice of low attendance at all prayer meetings. With a lack of understanding for an extended decline in weekly prayer gatherings, there appears to be no hope for improvement without this careful investigation providing an explanation and reason(s) for this current state. Therefore, the purpose of this Doctor of Ministry action research project was to ascertain the specific perceptions, perspectives, and attitudes concerning group and individual prayer practices among the members of Total Life Ministries. Attaining a better understanding of what the members of Total Life Ministries church believe and perceive about prayer aids in developing methods to potentially motivate excitement and change for praying in creating change for consistently attending prayer service.

Basic Assumptions

A basic assumption guiding this study project, in order to facilitate objectivity,

¹² Ivan French. *Principles and Practices of Prayer* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1997), 115.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 113.

participants of the study will be members of Total Life Ministries who are willing to participate in the study project. Non-members who attend services at Total Life Ministries did not participate. Anyone who does not wish to participate does not have to do so, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time they desire to do so. Marilyn Simon explains, “There is a need to justify why an assumption will probably be true in order for an assumption to become acceptable within the academia.”¹⁴ Therefore, as suggested by Simon, a second basic assumption is that participants will answer truthfully to the survey instrument due to received explanations about anonymity and confidentiality procedures.¹⁵ Surveys will be collected anonymously.

Definitions

Various terms are used to discuss prayer practices and prayer and worship services. These terms fall within the scope of this project. The following terms and their definitions provide the needed clarity.

Ambassador. “Ambassador is a diplomatic agent, an official envoy, of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment”.¹⁶

Citizen. “Citizen is an inhabitant of a city or town entitled to the rights and privileges of a freeman; a member of a state who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection

¹⁴ Marilyn K. Simon, “Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations,” in *Dissertation and Scholarly Research: Recipes for Success*, ed. Marilyn K. Simon and Jim Goes (Seattle: Dissertation Success, LLC, 2011), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, s. v. “Ambassador,” accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambassador>.

from it; an inhabitant of a city or town entitled to the rights and privileges of a freeman; a member of a state who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.”¹⁷

Clapping. Clapping one’s hand is an instrument for battle in the Bible because there is a specific order from God in Ezekiel 6:11. “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: strike your hands together” (Ps 47:1a, NIV).¹⁸

Imprecatory Psalms. Imprecatory Psalms are those passages in the book of Psalms that petition or appeal for the judgment of God, disaster, or curse upon the adversaries of God and His covenant people. Imprecations or curses in the Psalms are not limited to the most well-known or generally recognized imprecatory psalms which include 35, 58, 69, 83, 109, and 137. There are at least twenty-eight songs in the Psalter that include or comprise one or more verses of imprecations or curses.¹⁹ They remain one of the major problems in the Book of Psalms for many contemporary, as well as older traditional Bible scholars. Imprecatory Psalms express infuriation or cursing, summon malevolence, violence, or animosity toward a psalmist’s foe.

Marching/Stomping and Shouting. Joshua and the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho and shouted when they were commanded, in Joshua 6:1-21. The latter part of the verse in Ezekiel 6:11 furnishes a harmonizing cross-reference, which says “stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.”

Praise. Christians do not wait to feel great to praise the Lord. They praise the Lord because praise is a powerful warfare weapon. Scripture instructs God’s children:

¹⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, s. v. “Citizen,” accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/citizen>.

¹⁸ Ibid., “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy” (Ps 47:1b, NIV).

¹⁹ Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Imprecations: Christians’ Secret Weapon* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2015), Kindle.

Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written: this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord (Ps 149:5-9).

Prayer Decree(s). Job 22:28 says, “Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.” The Bible tells believers us to “decree a thing.” By taking God’s Word from the Bible, it is an effective means to design or construct decrees because the Word of God will not go back to God void. It fulfills its entire purpose (Isa 55:11). Using the Word of God is the soundest way to decree, because one can be ensured that he or she is in position or agreement with God’s heart and will. For some, understanding what a decree is, will profoundly change their perspective on life. Elizabeth A. Nixon states the following about decrees:

- “A decree begins with a statement of purpose, truth, or vision. But the depth of the statement is much more than just an announcement.
- The authority behind the statement is the same as the authority of a law being enacted, or an order being issued by a Court.
- Added to that is the aspect that the statement being made is one and the same as the very purposes of God.
- Lastly, the impact of the decrees is such that the plans and wiles of the enemy are cut off and destroyed”.²⁰

Nixon also expounds on the English meaning of the word decree as “an order or ruling issued with the power of the Court.” A meaning in alignment with the Scriptures develops the term to entail “the will or purpose of God interpreted through events considered to be His doing.”²¹ The definitions above help comprehend the power behind one’s words. When a person makes declarations in reference to His provisions concerning families and homes, one recognizes that he or she articulates words with them by saying it, or enunciating words in his or her own mind.

²⁰ Elizabeth A. Nixon, *Decrees Inspired by the Psalms* (Maricopa, AZ: XP Publishing, 2010), 15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

It would not be hard for the enemy to try and thwart one through doubt and cause a declaration or decree to become ineffective. In actuality a decree has the same supremacy as a Court order and can be a proclamation of God's intentions. Using the Bible as the foundation of one's decrees amplifies the power and effectiveness of the decrees and amplifies a person's conviction and belief in the Word of God. One could simply decree some phrases over his or her life such as, "God has blessed this home and we enjoy His provision." However, if an individual is struggling with anxiety or impoverishment of faith, he or she can question if it is to overpower a person's mind in an instance like this. However, when verses are used from the Scripture, one can be certain he or she is quoting the Bible, which is the truth, and this would enhance a person's faith. With amplified faith and conviction, a person's authority also expands. For an example, the above decree inspired by Psalm 112 can be enlarged to state the following:

I am blessed because I fear the Lord,
 I cherish and relish His commandments.
 Because of this my children are strong and full of integrity
 And my home brims with wealth!
 My heart is ready and ever trusting in the Lord,
 And my home brims with wealth!²²

Praying in the Spirit. Prayer dispenses God's stream into a person's life so that one can overthrow the enemy. It is a reciprocal exchange in the relationship with God. If one grows weary in the good fight of faith, prayer connects him or her to God's power, especially when one prays in the Spirit.²³ Spirit praying, or what the Bible calls praying in the Spirit, is essential in everyone's Christian armory. Jude 20 declares praying in the Spirit empowers the spiritual man in every Christian. Ephesians 6:8 directs the church to continually remain in a perspective of

²² Nixon, *Decrees Inspired by the Psalms*, 16.

²³ Cindy Trimm, *Commanding Your Morning: Unleash the Power of God in Your Life* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2008), 140.

praying in the Spirit and always being alert. When a person does not know how to pray, or what to say when they are praying (Rom 8:26) or does not know what is really happening in a given situation, praying in Spirit permits them to pray straightforwardly into the intercession chamber of the Holy Spirit. Trimm discusses how the Holy Spirit will search utterances from the spirit heart of the person and make intercession on their behalf.²⁴

Tongues of Angels. When the Bible talks about the tongues of angels, it means when someone communicates in a language or in a dialect that angels comprehend. This is essentially when the Word of God is decreed or declared. In Psalm 103: 20-21, when a born-again believer says what the Word of God says, or decrees the Word over life situations, angels react, performing and imposing it over their conditions (I Cor 13:1). God is watching over His Word to perform it (Jer 1:12, NASB) and has given guardian angels to watch over His people (Ps 91:11).

Tongues of Men. According to Trimm, when a person does not remember every exact word the Scripture states, if they can just articulate the principle of the Word, they encounter favorable consequences anyway.²⁵ A Christian must practice filling his or her mind with optimistic, confident biblical thoughts, and meditate on the words in the Bible day and night. When this is done regularly, according to Philippians 4:8, a person's speech will be habitually in alliance with the word of God according to I Corinthians 13:1.

Limitations

For the purposes of this project study, the goal is to develop a survey questionnaire that will provide a better understanding of respondent perceptions and attitudes concerning prayer in order to develop strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels at Total Life

²⁴ Ibid., 143.

²⁵ Trimm, *Commanding Your Morning*, 144.

Ministries. Although it is hoped that prayer will carry over into all individual homes, the project study will concentrate on prayer services at Total Life Ministries church. As the population sample will be the members and immediate populace of the Total Life Ministries church rather than a random sample population, this study will not be applicable or generalizable to a larger sampling population.

Although, children and youth should be taught to pray and should pray, this study will focus and report upon the adult church members at Total Life Ministries. Total Life Ministries hopes to address a study on children and youth at a future date and time. At this time, it would not be feasible.

Because there is a previous and ongoing relationship amongst the researcher as a pastoral staff member with this local church group, this could be a limitation. As a researcher carrying a continued relationship and role of authority with participants, participants could possibly be inhibited and unwilling to share experiences and views concerning prayer. Conversely, this could also inflate some comments and experiences from participants concerning prayer as well. It is usually characteristic of church members to project and behave respectfully toward pastoral staff members and seek to be viewed in the best possible framework concerning living and praying practices.

Cultural bias could be interpreted due to the study sample population demographics. M. Butler and others define cultural bias: “Cultural and linguistic competence as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations.”²⁶ Cultural competence could be used to

²⁶ Malcolm V. Williams, et al., “Evaluation of the National CLAS Standards,” *U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health*, 1, accessed May 23, 2019, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlid=6>.

mitigate cultural bias.²⁷ Longitudinal studies could potentially produce more enriched insights and patterns concerning prayer and prayer services attendance levels.

Delimitations

This study will not evaluate and discuss individual prayer practices and behaviors singly as a topic. Although a focus on individual practices and behaviors could be illuminating, this study is specifically concerned with prayer practices and behaviors within the realm of prayer and prayer services attendance levels at Total Life Ministries. This study will not present a lengthy discourse on all circumstances surrounding constructs and components of church history and worship. This study will not present great details on fellowship practices, praise service types and practices, homiletics, or revival services that may or could accompany prayer and prayer services processes.

These factors could cause the study to extend beyond accomplishable time constraints and bounds of completion. These factors could possibly be discussed and researched in other studies. As this study will be limited to the prayer service meetings over the course of a four- to six-week time period, it is hoped that additional installments of this study series will be visited at a future time that will build upon this project.

Thesis Statement

The founding pastors of the Total Life Ministries church plant determined from the outset that this would be a ministry led, supported, and carried out by prayer. From 1998, ministries expanded, focused on needs within the congregation as well as an outreach to the surrounding community. A significant aspect of the ministries focuses on an effective daycare ministry,

²⁷ Ibid., 2.

summer youth programs, and veterans. Through many sacrifices and efforts, the blessings of the Lord are evident including salvation experiences and restorations among church families.

However, at the same time, there has been a steady decline amongst the members to sustain these ministries through prayer. While commitments continue to provide financial support, and while Sunday worship attendance remains strong, the same cannot be said of prayer meetings.

While there is a need for increased attendance at prayer services, there is also a need for Total Life Ministries' members to understand how to pray biblically. It is one thing to attend prayer services, but it is another aspect for believers to know how to pray biblically both individually and corporately, that prayer might be effective. When Christians understand their mission and responsibilities as ambassadors for Christ and learn to pray effectively, their lives will change. When Christians embrace their mission and responsibilities as ambassadors for Christ and understand the purpose and power of prayer and pray, the world will change. If the necessary changes to the prayer ministry are implemented, then, the prayer service attendance at Total Life Ministries church will increase by 10 percent.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

The topic of interest for this current research project concerns the responsibility and the role of the church in producing change in society at local, national, and global levels in light of declining prayer service attendance levels. Therefore, this research proposes strategies to increase prayer service attendance levels. The cause for researching these topics of interest stems from concern for the current state of world affairs at local, national, and global levels. Prayer is such a central part of the church's mission and role. Prayer is a major tool of warfare for the church. Therefore, prayer and praying for change is at the heart of this study.

It is imperative for this study that participants understand the role and responsibilities of the church, and the members of the church individually and collectively partake in praying for change and increasing church discipleship. Therefore, the first part of this literature review will address the role and responsibility of the church in producing change in society and current literature on the topic. The next section of this literature review will consider material on both declining prayer service attendance as well as increasing prayer service attendance levels. Furthermore, this literature review will discuss and consider strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels and evaluate current literature on the topic. A review of instruments used for the strategies should also be given consideration.

Concluding this conceptual framework for this research study project are the parameters and contexts of action research and reviewing the literature. Cheryl Prentice explains, "Action research is characterized by local construction and is intended for a limited situation and or

specific group of people.”¹ Therefore, results must be applied within the specified context.² Action research is also conducted within the work environment of the researcher in order to conduct an intervention identified by the researcher.³ Based on these premises, this research study literature review will produce precedent literature, evaluate what has been studied on prayer and religious service attendance levels, and locate the opening for what this current research study will undertake. This literature review will also consider theological perspectives for the above topics as well as theoretical perspectives for the above topics.

Literature Review

“The Church embodies a religious and social organizational structure and should respond to socio-economic and political problems in the community, as well as build up and transform people and the community.”⁴ “The church should mobilize the person in the pew, not just the occasional missionary,” espoused Bob Roberts.⁵ Steve Sjogren determined the following concerning the responsibility of the church in society:

Serving is a catalyst for the kingdom of God to go forward into the world. Our credibility and authority grow as we walk in servanthood, and the more and greater our authority, the more the world will listen to our message. Based on the story of the Good Samaritan.... In other words, the way we (the Church) treat them (the unchurched) serves as a litmus test of our spiritual health. It sounds simple, but we can decide to open our hearts and begin to care. We can decide to allow our hearts to become sensitive again to the pain of others. God has shaped our hearts to notice the needs that grieve Him. Everything in the Christian life flows out of the first commandment: to love God with our

¹ Cheryl Prentice, “Research Questions for Literature Reviews.” Twin Cities Campus Writing Center Website (2010), 1, accessed June 17, 2019, https://tcwrite.smumn.edu/litrvw_research_questions_document.pdf.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Akanbi and Beyers, “The Church as a Catalyst for Transformation in the Society,” 1.

⁵ Bob Roberts, *Globalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage the New Flat World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 77.

heart, soul, strength, and mind. That vertical love, from God to us, lays the foundation for any other love. Horizontal love for our neighbor overflows out of the love of God.⁶

David Fitch stated, “For even if we do make our homes and churches open for communities and relationships, many strangers will reject these spaces for meeting other people.”⁷ Bob Roberts noted that business, government, health, and education are all discovering the power of mobilizing every person on the team. It is the responsibility of every single believer to share the gospel. This was proven on the day of Pentecost at the church in Antioch.⁸

Prayer, the Church, and the Current State of World Affairs

Regarding prayer, the Church, and the current state of world affairs, Christians must be mindful that Satan is orchestrating his greatest efforts to dissuade God’s people from prayer fervency. Indeed, “world conditions today reveal how strategically the Devil is deploying his forces in the conflict.”⁹ A measure of success by Satan has produced much lethargic praying.

According to Yonggi Cho and Wayde Goodall,

What will bring about the revival that can lead the world away from the brink of destruction and annihilation? The answer is a new call to prayer! Even Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries have permitted culture to change the truth that they once held and have begun to drift from their original mission and foundation that had a biblical worldview. The inerrancy of Scripture; the definition of marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman; the soon-coming return of Christ; the infilling of the Holy Spirit--all are questioned rather than promoted. Students frequently leave these institutions full of doubt and questioning the Scriptures rather than loving the truths that are given in God’s inspired Word.¹⁰

⁶ Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 86-114.

⁷ David Fitch, *The Great Giveaway* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2005), 64.

⁸ Roberts, *Globalization*, 80.

⁹ D. Edmond Hiebert. *Working with God Through Prayer* (Greenville, SC: JourneyForth, 1991), 113.

¹⁰ Cho Yonggi and Wadne Goodall, *Prayer: Key to Revival* (Savage, MN: BroadStreet Publishing Group LLC, 2019), 10-11.

Giuseppe Giordan and Linda Woodhead explained prayer is a central aspect of religion and even amongst those who have deserted organized religion, levels of prayer remain high. Giordan and Woodhead believed despite this, however, basic questions remain unaddressed. What exactly is prayer? How does it vary? Why do people pray and in what situations and settings? Does prayer imply a god, and if so, what sort? This work addressed these questions and opened room for new points for debates. Material aspects of prayer including objects, bodies, symbols, and spaces connected to, or surrounding, prayer were examined.¹¹

Prayer Service Attendance Levels

Prayer and religious service attendance levels have been a topic of interest for a long time. Tom W. Smith conducted a review of church attendance measures in 1998.¹² A study developed and conducted by Charles A. Elliott focused on changes in personal prayer practice at one church rather than on attendance and membership levels. The study yielded significant results and information surrounding events that can affect and have a bearing on prayer practice behaviors and research study parameters. These types of experiences and findings provide rich sources of information providing insights for church leaders and Christians.

The intention of the study was to locate possible reasons for changes in personal behavioral practices and to potentially increase prayer frequency levels. Two separate cross-sectional studies taking place one year apart separately were completed. Findings displayed significant elevations in prayer practice behavior.¹³

Exterior conditions surrounding unfortunate changes with leadership may have been the

¹¹ Giuseppe Giordan and Linda Woodhead, *A Sociology of Prayer* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 9.

¹² Tom W. Smith, "A Review of Church Attendance Measures," *American Sociological Review* (1998), 131.

¹³ Charles Alexander Elliott, "Push to Pray: A Conceptual Framework for Significant Change in Prayer Frequency in One Church," (MS thesis, Western Kentucky University, 2017), 2-3, <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2016>.

cause. The sudden, unanticipated change in leadership more than likely caused more praying. The primary goal of the study was for an individual to develop regular, consistent levels of praying and enter the presence of God in order to become transformed. A further take-away point for consideration from the study, was measuring attendance levels may not ensure spiritual growth or maturity.¹⁴

In denoting immense change in local church life, Bill Wilson found church core health as debatable. Obtaining a reasonable definition of a healthy church is too complicated because it is the determining factor of survival. Just exactly what constitutes a healthy church is elusive and debatable and too complicated because it is hard to fully describe within limits of reason.¹⁵

Many factors contribute to this complexity. Wilson identified four predictor characteristics of church health as: clarity of mission and vision, transformational conflict, authentic community, and transparent communication. These predictor characteristics should be given highest priority for results that display signs of stability, renewal, and hope as reported by Wilson.¹⁶

Organizations of all types are characterized by periods of increase and decline, which can be considered healthy due to life cycle constructs. Creativity and innovation stimulate varying levels of change and results. This is true in business, industry, and organizations of all kinds and types. Some thrive and remain market leaders, while others many times are put out of operation.

Brian A. DeVries discussed church revitalization. This discussion was relevant to this study because church revitalization and church growth, as well as increasing prayer and church service attendance levels, are at the center of this evaluation. DeVries asked, “How do principles of church revitalization correlate with the divine work of the Holy Spirit?”¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵ Bill Wilson, “What Does a Healthy Church Look Like?” *Review & Expositor* 113, no. 3 (2016), 333.

¹⁶ Ibid., 333.

¹⁷ Brian A. DeVries, “Divine Empowerment: The Holy Spirit and Church Revitalization,” *Die Skriflig* 49, no. 1 (2015), 1.

An argument from DeVries determined that the primary agent of church revitalization is the Spirit of God.¹⁸ As such, the Spirit empowers and enables church leaders who are used by him to revive, renew, and revitalize a church community. Biblical examples were used to define the empowerment from the Spirit of God.¹⁹

Underlying principles of empowerment for church leaders were examined, followed by considerations of methodology for church revitalization. Even though Christians must keep praying and working, Christians must also wait on God. Several signs of biblical empowerment in a local church community were suggested by DeVries and concluded the study.

A prescription from Arthur L. Foster for multi-ethnic, inner city churches with declining prayer and worship service attendance levels was based on Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”²⁰ Matthew 9:35-37 was also used, which describes how Jesus went through all the cities and villages, teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogues, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matthew 9:36 describes how Jesus was moved with compassion toward the people because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Matthew 9:37 relates Jesus saying to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” These scriptures proclaim the Spirit of God as the primary agent for church revitalization. This passage describes the church’s target ministry to reach levels of attendance at prayer and prayer services for churches. Additionally, the condition of the harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few were

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ DeVries, “Divine Empowerment,” 4-6.

²⁰ Arthur L. Foster, “Declining Inner-City Church Membership: Creating Spiritually Healthy Inner-City Churches” (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2019), 1.

present then, and are present now. Christ is still calling for the same mission today. This action research study project by Foster, as referenced above, is perhaps the closest study in relation to this current action research study project.

Strategies for Increasing Prayer Service Attendance Levels

Strategies for increasing religious and prayer service attendance levels have been studied from various perspectives. Two examples center on corporate and private prayer. Michael A. G. Haykin discussed corporate prayer as a church in 1994.²¹ James W. Anderson and Paige A. Nunnelley discussed private prayer associations. The main premise was private prayer helps with depression, anxiety, and other health conditions in an analytical review of clinical studies. Conclusions suggested that frequent private prayer was of significant benefit, and implications obtained were controlled clinical trials are necessary for critical assessment of associations of private prayer and health conditions.²²

David R. Paine discusses praying through the “dark night” prayer.²³ Praying through the dark night was defined as praying through times where there is an association between prayer, spiritual disappointment, and other relational spirituality factors. There could be relational struggles with others, relational struggles with God, and relational struggles with the self. Spiritual disappointment and other unpleasant spiritual experiences could be a result of these struggles and can also be related to undesirable outcomes including depression, insecure

²¹ Michael A. G. Haykin, “Praying Together: A Note on Philemon 22,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 66 (1994): 331.

²² James W. Anderson and Paige A. Nunnelley, “Private Prayer Associations with Depression, Anxiety, and Other Health Conditions: An Analytical Review of Clinical Studies,” *Postgraduate Medicine* 128, no. 7(2016): 635-638, doi:10.1080/00325481.2016.1209962.

²³ David R. Paine, “Praying through the ‘Dark Night’: Prayer, Relational Spirituality, and Spiritual Disappointment” (PhD diss., Boston University, 2017): 10-11, <https://open.bu.edu/handle/2144/23287>.

attachment, egocentricity, and a decreased sense of meaning in life.²⁴ David B. Levy revealed that three prayer types (adoration, thanksgiving, and reception) were positively correlated and effective with dispositional mindfulness and psychological well-being, but not with supplication, confession, and obligation prayer types or strategies.²⁵ Effective prayer strategies and types discussed by Yonggi and Goodall were personal prayer, family prayer, praying in church services, prayer in small groups, prayer at prayer mountain, all night prayer meetings, fasting and prayer, meditation and prayer, and prayer waiting on the Lord.²⁶

Kathy McMillan and Elizabeth J. Taylor discussed whether or not hospitalized patients desired prayer from a healthcare provider in the form of massage therapists. Survey questionnaires (using unit- and bivariate statistical analysis) administered after an intervention treatment found that 88 percent of a sample of 78 patients accepted the offer of prayer. The study also discovered that 85 percent found it helpful and 51 percent wanted daily prayer. Implications included patients may welcome prayer as long as “genuine kindness and respect” were shown by clinicians.²⁷

Steve Sjogren explained:

In a society where other forms of sharing the gospel often meet a great deal of resistance—one that feels it’s heard too much “God talk” and not seen enough “God Activity,” servant evangelism seems to be a fruitful way for Christians to share God’s love with their community. Addressing the fear that Christians have toward evangelism.... It seems that fear of the “e” word is universal. Many of us have experienced firsthand the truth of Rebecca Pippert’s observation when she says, “Christians and non-Christians have one thing in common: They both hate evangelism.”²⁸

²⁴ Ibid.,13-14.

²⁵ David B. Levy, “Prayer and Psychological Well-being: The Mediating Role of Mindfulness” (PhD diss., Pace University, 2017), 30. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/78b02424910>.

²⁶ Yonggi and Goddall, *Prayer*, 10-25.

²⁷ Kathy McMillan and Elizabeth J. Taylor, “Hospitalized Patients’ Responses to Offers of Prayer,” *Journal of Religion & Health* 57, no. 1 (2018): 279-281, doi: 10.1007/s10943-017-0454-5.

²⁸ Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, 23.

Instruments Used in Strategies

A study developed and conducted by Charles A. Elliott focused on changes in personal prayer practice at one church rather than on attendance and membership levels. The study yielded significant results and information surrounding events that can affect and have a bearing on prayer practice behaviors and research study parameters. These types of experiences and findings provide rich sources of information to benefit church leaders and Christians.

The intention of the study was to locate possible reasons for changes in personal behavioral practices, and potentially increase prayer frequency levels. Two separate cross-sectional studies were completed taking place one year apart. Findings displayed significant elevations in prayer practice behavior.²⁹

Exterior conditions surrounding unfortunate changes with leadership may have been the cause. The sudden, unanticipated change in leadership more than likely caused more praying. The primary goal of the study was for an individual to develop regular, consistent levels of praying and enter the presence of God in order to become transformed. A further take-away point for consideration from the study was, measuring attendance levels may not ensure spiritual growth or maturity.³⁰

Christina Embree discussed generational discipleship and intercessory prayer.³¹

Generational discipleship was defined as the passing faith from one generation to another in a community of faith through interaction and engagement. Intercessory prayer displayed positive effects on social relationships regardless of age or level of spiritual maturity. It was believed this could be a vehicular process method for connecting generations within local church context.

Tyler S. Greenway conducted a review of theories based on the relationship between intercessory prayer and prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is behavior that benefits others.

²⁹ Elliott, "Push to Pray," 2.

³⁰ Ibid., 22.

³¹ Christina Embree, "Intercessory Prayer Across Generations: A Case Study," *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 1 (2017): 128-29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/073989131701400111>.

This practice is common across religious traditions and denominations.³² Greenway found that more investigation is needed in order to understand the specific effects intercessory prayer has on various psychological constructs. Noted specifically by Greenway was further investigation is needed to discern how prayer may produce diverse effects, the effects of prayer on intuitive cognition, and how religious beliefs and motivations may influence the effects of prayer. Greenway made some linkages through theoretical mechanisms between behavior and use.

Tyler S. Greenway, Sarah A. Schnitker, and Abigail M. Shepherd examined the effects of intercessory prayer, moral intuitions, and theological orientation on generous behavior. The goal of the study was to evaluate if prayer increased charitable giving. Three hundred thirteen Christians participated in the study which was conducted over a two-week period.³³

One group engaged in intercessory prayer, while the other group engaged in secular reflection on the hardships faced by either Christians religious ingroup or Muslims religious outgroup in Myanmar/Burma persecuted by the Buddhist majority. Multiple regression analysis found the prayer was relational to less monetary generosity than a nonreligious control condition. Predictions of generosity and charitable giving were insignificant. Moral intuitions were positively related to harm/care and fairness/reciprocity foundations. Traditional God concept moderated the effects of prayer.

³² Tyler S. Greenway, "A Review of Theories Accounting for the Relationship Between Intercessory Prayer and Prosocial Behavior: Current Research and Future Directions," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 31, no. 13 (2018): 3, <https://www.apadivisions.org/>.

³³ Tyler S. Greenway, Sarah A. Schnitker, and Abigail M. Shepherd, "Can Prayer Increase Charitable Giving? Examining the Effects of Intercessory Prayer, Moral Intuitions, and Theological Orientation on Generous Behavior," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 28, no. 1 (2017): 3-18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2017.1406790>.

Conclusive Remarks

The first section of this literature review determined it is imperative for this study that participants understand the role and responsibilities of the church collectively in order to partake in praying for change in catastrophic world conditions and increasing church prayer and worship service attendance levels. Individual roles and responsibility should not be neglected. It was also determined that new strategies should be developed to address these concerns. Prayer is a central component of the role and responsibilities of the church.

Prayer, the church, and the current state of world affairs were examined next. Cho and Goodall found that prayer is necessary to bring about the revival that can lead the world away from the brink of total destruction and annihilation.³⁴ Material aspects of prayer were evaluated. Prayer service attendance levels and declining prayer and worship service attendance levels in multi-ethnic, inner-city churches were evaluated according to works in literature. Local church health, predictors of church health, underlying principles for church leaders, and church revitalization were discussed. Strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels and instruments used in these strategies concluded the discussion. These discussions helped to locate a gap for this study which hopes to evaluate new strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels. None of the studies discussed increasing prayer service attendance levels using a strategy with a kingdom perspective as ambassadors and citizens of the kingdom of God to help participants understand their role and responsibility in using collective and individual prayer as a tool and warfare weapon for change in society.

³⁴ Yonggi and Goodall, *Prayer*, 10-11.

Theological Foundation

The theological foundation for this project study begins with church mission and missions. Within the framework of church mission, the role and responsibility of the church should be considered. This mission, role, and responsibility of the church can be considered in terms of the Body of Christ at large and at the local church level. Therefore, after considering church mission, the next section will consider the role and responsibility of the church from a theological basis. This will be followed by theological commentaries exploratory analysis on church mission and praying. The final section provides a biblical analysis considering church mission, local church mission, church discipleship mission, local church discipleship mission, church prayer mission, and local church prayer mission.

Church Mission

The theological foundation for this project study begins with church mission, church missions, and church missiology. Practical theological church missiology starts with the Great Commission from Jesus, in which He commands his disciples to baptize and teach all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Enoch Wan lists the following definitions for mission, missions, and missiology:

Mission—the Great Commission: making disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19-20).
 Missions—ways and means of accomplishing “the mission” which has been divinely entrusted by the Triune God to the Church and Christians.
 Missiology—the systematic and academic study of missions in the fulfillment of God’s mission.³⁵

The definitions from Wan align with the understanding of the researcher and appear to be in order and well developed.

³⁵ Enoch Wan, “Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring a New Global Missiology,” *Global Missiology* 1, no. 1 (October 2003): 2, <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/441/1138>.

Eugene Nida developed a “3 Language Model of Communication” in 1960. The model dealt with the structure of communication and the concern or focus, which is exegetical and cross-cultural in nature with regards to religious phenomena, practices, beliefs, and resulting behavior. Nida also dealt with translation theories and how words could mean different things in different cultural contexts.³⁶ In conducting church mission and transmitting the gospel message to all nations, consideration of this is very important.

David J. Hesselgrave built upon Nida’s theory in discussing authentic and relevant church missions. Hesselgrave believed church mission pursuits should be carried out as close as possible to the way the Bible discussed aspects of mission, and in a meaningful way, in order to reach nations yet needing to be reached. Hesselgrave further explained, “It is the task (or mission) of the Church to share the Christ of whom the scriptures testify in John 5:39.”³⁷

Contextualization involves all activities associated with carrying out the Great Commission, such as: verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, theologizing, Bible translation, interpretation and application, evangelism, Christian instruction, church organization, church planting and growth, worship style, liturgics, and so forth.³⁸

Local Church Mission

Topics and studies dealing with local church missions are numerous. Some studies are seeking to understand better and develop leadership, while others develop disciples and are about fulfilling the Great Commission. There are also studies that develop measurement instruments for better development of organizational structure, growth, change, leadership, and discipleship. Additionally, there are studies on new methods for physical and emotional or spiritual types of

³⁶ Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper, 1960), 10-12.

³⁷ David J. Hesselgrave, “Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 12, no. 3(1995), 115, <https://www.ijfm.org/>.

³⁸ Ibid.

healing. Furthermore, some studies seek to heal social conditions and wrongs while others consider factors such as refugees, migrant populations, the impoverished, the elderly, abused populace, and psychometric variables.

Sherry J. Hattingh, Kevin Petrie and others began a study by trying to ascertain perceived differences, viewpoints, or distinctions in the terms of disciples, believers, and Christians.

Hattingh, et al. shared:

The distinction was characterized as the difference between making disciples, and growing disciples. A Christian disciple was defined, in this study, as a person who follows Christ in order to learn from him, live like him, and grow more like him, as well as becoming subjective unto him. The emphasis is on the development of Christ-like characteristics over time. The primary means by which this was seen as occurring, is through a close and personal relationship between the disciple and Christ. In this relationship, one is to be constantly learning more about the person, while at the same time living in subjection to that person. The person being disciplined is never completely disciplined, but [is] always in the process of being disciplined.³⁹

This study then turned to examining existing tools and frameworks for measuring discipleship and was commissioned by the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A pilot study was completed to test the discipleship survey instrument. Adjustments were made and the study was re-conducted. Constructs were identified and a conceptual framework model was proffered and evaluated.⁴⁰ Findings reported sufficiency, reliability, and validity.

Findings also reported adjustments as having a significant bearing on the overall philosophy of the model. The bearings determined, despite the fact that disciples lead people to Christ, all relationships between disciples were to be reciprocal, non-hierarchical, and mutually

³⁹ Sherry J. Hattingh, et al., "Developing a Discipleship Measurement Tool," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, 12, no. 2(2016), 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

edifying.⁴¹ Based on these conclusions, the writer asks the following questions: “Are there any pastoral-like leaders within the Seventh-day Adventists sect as a denomination?” Or “Is this a determination at the national, local divisional level, or individual church level?” And “Is this biblical?”

A study from the Jesuit community by William C. Woody started by considering spiritual grounding for a ministry of reconciliation. A founding father, General Adolfo Nicolas emphasized the centrality of a ministry of reconciliation to the Society of Jesus.⁴² Based on and looking to the work of reconciliation accomplished by Christ, a framework of “necessary elements” was to be reconsidered. Progressing from forgiveness and healing to empowerment and mission was part of the message. These elements are for the many situations where reconciliation and prayer are needed. It is explained, when read alongside the experience of the First Week, followed by the Call of the King and meditation on the Incarnation, a personal experience of forgiveness and redemption is received from God by sinners and wrongdoers.⁴³ The researcher understands this to be the first week when one has been converted to Christianity. This framework described how the experience of personal conversion and forgiveness in the first week leads into collaboration with Christ in the second week. This dynamic of forgiveness enabling or impelling the reconciled sinner to mission provided the spiritual impetus for the ministry of reconciliation.

It was explained this ministry of reconciliation was given by Christ, whose call brings encounter with the Eternal King. The elements were considered in current times as well as

⁴¹ Hattingh et al., “Developing a Discipleship,” 101.

⁴² William C. Woody, “So We are Ambassadors for Christ,” *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 49, no. 1 (2017), 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

capturing the dynamic of the spiritual exercises. This study is qualitative and sermon-like in nature and is on how forgiveness initiates the process—a moment that liberates Christians “so as not to remain helplessly fixed on past offenses. The gift of forgiving love cannot be shared without first experiencing mercy and forgiveness, for one cannot give what one has not received.”⁴⁴ It is believed this encounter then flows into healing, which leads to empowerment so that every person can establish filial bonds that can recreate God’s family around a table.⁴⁵

Ministers of reconciliation strive for the reestablishment of right relationships.⁴⁶ The concept of mercy is depicted as a concrete reality rather than an abstract ideal. The message explained the experience and process one goes through when recognizing one’s sinful state and is repentant, permitting the forgiveness of God to cleanse him. The study dealt with affective and cognitive dimensions.

McDonald discussed moral wrongs committed by the church within society. McDonald replied, “Ideas of individual autonomy stunt Biblical and traditional theological notions of systemic evil.”⁴⁷ Policy making, and decisions could be a potential way of dealing with systemic failures. McDonald also reported Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was important for all churches in Canada, even those not directly involved in the Indian Residential Schools (IRS).⁴⁸

The intrinsic dangers in the cultural relationship between the church and community were revealed. This was characterized as the seductive power of government partnership

⁴⁴ Woody, “So We Are Ambassadors for Christ,” 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁷ Mark McDonald, “What the TRC Reveals About the Churches,” *Consensus* 37, no. 1(2016): 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

and broad cultural collaboration with power, economy, political, and cultural. The benefits and detriments of colonization and the IRS legacy was viewed as a cornerstone.⁴⁹

The study reported, “The churches saw themselves as the religious aspect of Western society and, in most ways, the interests of the broader society were seen to be the interest of the church.” The church assumed the modulator role, acting as a buffer against the excesses of colonial power. But was also a partner in the complete undertaking. The teaching and practices of the church were seen to contribute to the ideology of colonization. And the church cooperated in the processes. McDonald believed the findings of the TRC should give missiological thought a paused rest.⁵⁰

This message by McDonald is relevant because it can be used as a warning message for churches to avoid wrongdoings in order to gain money. This is what Jesus meant when overthrowing the tables of moneychangers and seats of them that sold doves in Matthew 21:12. Jesus said in Matthew 21:13, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Churches are to be places of prayer.

McDonald also reported the following:

Strategies that anticipated a return to societal and cultural prominence as a means to Christian advancement was negatively viewed. If the church has a faulty understanding of systemic evil it also cannot strive towards systemic good. What would communal repentance look like? There are a few examples to follow but there are hints that something that points towards a change of identity; something that brings the churches home to Turtle Island (North America) without exploiting or oppressing the First Peoples of the Land. In part, it is to let the negative history and a hopeful future become dual aspects of the churches’ identity in Canada today.⁵¹

McDonald seems to be venting frustration with the state of affairs that had been occurring in the churches in Canada in past times. Churches had been found to have complicit dealings with the

⁴⁹ McDonald, “What the TRC Reveals,” 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

IRS. McDonald found that though complicity had been revealed, the church yet needed to consider things theologically or in terms of spiritual practice.⁵²

Jonathan Eric Smith found that many newly planted and existing churches focus on weekly worship gatherings and Bible Study classes and find it hard to develop a discipleship culture. Smith believes although gathering for worship and Bible study is needed and right, if this is the only activity the church is engaging in, discipleship and a holistic church culture is not taking place. A consumer-driven culture where there is unwillingness to participate in sacrificial discipleship process for the sake of the gospel is unfortunate. Smith evaluated and discussed four prominent strategies used by Jesus for developing disciples, including the gathered strategy, small group strategy, mentoring strategy, and sending strategy.⁵³

Gathered strategy was used by Jesus at large gatherings of people for teaching and worship. Small group strategy was for those intentionally involved in a particular purpose for the Kingdom of God. Mentoring strategy was used by Jesus with the twelve disciples and sometimes with subgroups of the twelve disciples. Mentoring prepares and trains individuals to assume and effectively take on much needed work in the Kingdom of God.⁵⁴ Sending strategy prepares individuals or groups of individuals to share the gospel, serve others, and help those who may not otherwise necessarily come out to places of worship and prayer.

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⁵² Mark McDonald, "What the TRC Reveals," 2.

⁵³ Jonathan Eric Smith, "Cultural Based Discipling According to the Strategies of Jesus" (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2018), 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

others, and help those who may not otherwise necessarily come out to places of worship and prayer.⁵⁵

Churches that strive to fulfill their mission should assess their discipleship culture and adjust strategies where necessary. The purpose of the project was to demonstrate that numerical growth and church health occur more readily when the four strategies used by Jesus are incorporated. Stagnation occurs when the four strategies are not used. Smith concluded that the four strategies transcend cultures, demographics, and generations and can be applied in every church and implementing the four discipleship strategies is part of the answer for twenty-first century churches.⁵⁶

Kingdom Perspective for the Role of the Church and Local Church

The “Lord’s Vengeance,” or the judgment or justice of God, is an essential component of kingdom expression. Where people have failed to preach and teach about it, is a primary result why society has not displayed the Church’s influence on the earth. The occasions where the Church should have exemplified victory in restraining iniquity, wickedness and darkness have been rampant and proliferating to a shocking degree. The fact that the vengeance of God has been misunderstood and not extensively taught or preached, many in the body of Christ have been victims.⁵⁷

The kingdom authority and anointing that God has given the church has empowered its recipients to order, constitute, execute, and institute God’s rule and sovereignty wherever they are dispatched. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine

⁵⁵ Smith, “Cultural Based Discipling According to the Strategies of Jesus,” 13-17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 78-80.

⁵⁷ Bill Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord: The Justice System of God* (Oak Park, IL: Bill Winston Ministries, 2019), viii.

enemies thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1). The Church cannot continue to cower and cringe from opposing wickedness and unjust laws of the world and government because of fear.⁵⁸ Winston Churchill said years ago, “The power of the wicked is always enhanced by the timidity and indecision of the righteous.”⁵⁹

In Daniel 6, Darius the King made a law that anyone who prayed to any God except him would be thrown into a lion’s den. Daniel continued to pray to his God in spite of the new law that had been established. This resulted in Daniel being thrown into a lion’s den. This would be termed as “capital punishment” now.⁶⁰ God spared Daniel’s life. Daniel said, “God sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. He did this because He knew that I was innocent and because I have not wronged you, Your Majesty” (Dan 6:22, GNT). God’s vengeance came against Daniel’s accusers and they were thrown in the lion’s den along with their wives and children. They were not spared and were destroyed by the lions. This transpired without Daniel attempting to stand up or fight for himself and without Him seeking revenge.

In Daniel 6:23, a significant principle is uncovered in regard to the Lord’s vengeance: “Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no matter of hurt was found upon him, *because he believed in his God.*” The principle is that the vengeance of God is not an inevitable occurrence or event like prayer; God must operate through a person who has faith in Him and his righteousness and who trusts in the capacity of God to execute justice and His

⁵⁸ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, viii.

⁵⁹ Henry Kachaje, “When Good People Commit Gross Crimes by Remaining Silent,” *Afriem.org* (blog) May 29, 2014, <http://www.afriem.org/2014/05/good-people-commit-gross-crimes-remaining-silent/>.

⁶⁰ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, viii.

judgments in the earth realm (Isa 26:7-9; 45:8). Because Daniel believed in the sovereignty of his God and that He had the strength to deliver him, that is exactly what God did.⁶¹

It must be understood that the vengeance of the Lord does not have anything to do with hatred, emotional bitterness, or revenge. However, it does encompass the need to punish violators, which emanates from a love of justice. The vengeance of the Lord is His legal verdict upon Satan and his regiments, along with every other force opposing the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth. The demonic forces that obstruct the privileges and rights of the royal citizens and ambassadors of the kingdom of heaven and oppose the gospel of the kingdom will be exposed to the vengeance of the Lord.⁶²

During the last 100 years, the world's system of justice has been a primary focus or an entity of demonic abuse without the intervention of the kingdom of God, which is God's system of government operating through His royal citizens. Without interventions from Christians, everything in civilization would ultimately annihilate. This is because one of the best methods to alter a culture is to pass ungodly laws. When a justice system passes ungodly laws and no entity opposes it or takes a stand for righteousness, they impact the mind and behavior of the masses (Prov 14:34). People will think immorality is acceptable (Isa 26:7-9; 45:8), shifting countries to descend into moral depravity. To reiterate, the vengeance of God is not about human revenge that emanates from hatred, animosity, or malice, which the Word of God says are the works of the flesh. Instead, it emanates from a love of God's system of justice.

God told Abraham, "And I will bless [do good for, benefit] those who bless you, And I will curse (that is, subject to my wrath and judgment) the one who curses (despises, dishonors,

⁶¹ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, xi.

⁶² *Ibid.*, xi.

has contempt for) you. And in you all the families (nations) of the earth will be blessed (Gen 12:3, AMP).” The Church is the greatest entity in the earth and are recipients of the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:13-14, 29; 4:28). Without a doubt, God loves the world and the people in it: “God is love (1 John 4:8).” However, Ezekiel 33:11 says, “Say unto them, ‘As I live,’ saith the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.’” God showed His love for all of humanity in Jesus Christ His Son, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

A primary reason some Christians believe in the vengeance of God today is that it will not be possible for the Church to fulfill its divine purpose in the earth without it or, to reinstate, without the manifestation of God’s system of justice in the earth. The work of the Church that Jesus foretold in John 14:12 concerning the “greater works” will not be possible. This is what Jesus meant when He taught about prayer in Luke 18:8, “I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth”? Furthermore, Jesus said, “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:22).

The Church is entering an unprecedented time and emerging from the depth of darkness to be seen as the victorious army of luminosity that she was predestined for, to determine the fates of countries and continents (Joel 2:2,11). Fortified with the “garments of vengeance,” this military will not be afraid or be intimidated by the forces of evil but will meet the enemy head on and crush the power and works of the devil in the earth realm.⁶³

Isaiah 59:17-19 (CEV) says, “Justice was the Lord’s armor: saving power was his helmet:

⁶³ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, xii.

anger and revenge were his clothes. Now the Lord will get furious and due to his enemies, both near and far, what they did to his people. He will attack like a flood in a mighty windstorm.

Nations in the west and in the east will then honor and praise His wonderful name.” This is why the church must understand and teach the Lord’s vengeance. The New Covenant promises are not inevitable and must have faith to function or to be discharged. The Church has to understand and believe in God’s justice system to realize its materialization in them in the earth.⁶⁴

Born again believers have authority to execute the justice and judgements of God entailed in their redemptive rights as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.⁶⁵ First Corinthians 6:2-3 says, “Don’t you know that God’s people will judge the world? And if you are going to judge the world, can’t you settle small problems? Don’t you know that we will judge angels? And if, that is so, we can surely judge everyday matters.” Psalm 82:2-6 (KJV) describes the role of judges of righteousness:

How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?
 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
 I have said, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Highest.”

The Passion Translation says it like this:

How long will you judges refuse to listen to the voice of true justice and continue to corrupt what is right by judging in favor of the wrong?
 Defend the defenseless, the fatherless and the forgotten, the disenfranchised and the destitute.
 Your duty is to deliver the poor and the powerless; liberate them from the grasp of the wicked.
 But you continue in your darkness and ignorance while the foundations of society are shaken to the core!

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., xiv.

Didn't I commission you as judges, saying, "You are all like gods, since you judge on my behalf. You are all like sons of the Highest, my representatives."⁶⁶

Commentaries on Kingdom Perspective and Prayer

God's plan through Jesus was that citizens of the kingdom of heaven would continue to operate as His legal representatives to mirror and execute the will of the Father here in the earthly realm. This is the kingdom assignment and the responsibility of the church. In Matthew 28:19, the term authority means "being in charge." At this point, the concept of the third heaven and the earth takes one back to the prayer that Jesus trained his followers to pray: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10 KJV). Therefore, this is consistent with the understanding that believers' preeminent concern should be that the will of the Lord be done in the earth like it is in heaven.⁶⁷

Ambassadors, or disciples, of Jesus through the process of discipleship are designed by God to handover the power of Jesus Christ "to ---and through" His brethren or believers (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; John 14:12). In this manner, wherever individuals live, if they desire to know how heaven functions, they only must look at the lives of true believers singularly or cooperatively. As citizens of heaven yielded to God, believers are to execute the authority of the Kingdom of Heaven in history.⁶⁸ This is why imprecatory praying is important to understand. The types of injustices occurring in the world today can only be reversed or stopped through prayer.

The concept of a colony is pivotal to comprehending the purpose of God on the earth. God created the earth with the intention of expanding His influence and planned that man would

⁶⁶ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, xiv-xv.

⁶⁷ Anthony T. Evans, *Kingdom Disciples: Heaven's Representatives on Earth* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 18-19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

be regents alongside Him in the earth. Jesus taught that our primary motivation should be to “seek His Kingdom first” (Matt 6:33). A concept which is diametrically opposed to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more important than clothes? (Matt 6:25 NIV). Munroe relates, “According to Jesus, the most important priority and preoccupation of all mankind should be seeking and studying of the heavenly kingdom government and administration of the Creator and His purposed plan and program to impact earth.”⁶⁹

Albert Barnes explained Luke 18:1, the parable about prayer. When Jesus stated, “to this end,” it meant to show this. Luke 18:1 read, “[T]hat men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” This means Christians must not neglect regular stated seasons of prayer. People must grab hold of all occasions of remarkable providences (as afflictions or signal blessings) to seek God in prayer. People must always maintain a spirit of prayer or remain in a proper frame to lift up their hearts to God for His blessing. They should not get tired of praying even when it seems prayers are not answered. They are to persevere, not becoming weary in making supplication to God.⁷⁰

Luke 18:2 spoke of a judge who did not fear God. This judge had no reverence for God; and consequently, the judge had no regard for the rights of man. Barnes explained that these things go together. Anyone who has no regard for God cannot be expected to have any regard for others either. Through this parable, Jesus teaches what ought to be the character of a judge. A judge should fear God and care about the rights of man.

Barnes directed that this situation be compared to Deuteronomy 1:16-17. Moses charged

⁶⁹ Myles Munroe, *Understanding Your Place in God’s Kingdom* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2011), 33.

⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2010), 125.

judges to listen to the grievances between one another and judge righteously between all people, even with strangers. Judges were not to have respect for persons in judgment. Judges were to receive the small and great. Judges were not to be afraid of anyone in making decisions because they were giving the judgments of God. A cause too hard for a judge was to be taken to Moses.⁷¹ An unjust cause too hard for people today, should be taken to God in prayer.

Luke 18:3 discussed the widow who went before the judge for help. Judges were bound to show peculiar attention to widows. This is supported in Isaiah 1:17 and Jeremiah 22:3. This was because widows were defenseless. Widows were commonly poor and were liable to oppression by those in power. The widow asked to be avenged against her adversary. The widow needed to be defended and needed justice. The judge did not appear to be willing to provide justice for the widow. Barnes believed the judge probably took advantage of her condition to oppress her.⁷²

For a considerable amount of time the widow kept coming before the judge. Justice was long delayed. Luke 18:4-5 gave the reason for the actions of the judge. The judge concluded, that though he did not fear God or regard man, he did not want to be bothered or wearied by the continual coming of the widow. The judge administered justice to the widow not out of a sense of regard to justice or to the duties and requirements of his job. The judge wanted to avoid continual appearances from the widow. To others, it may have appeared as though the judge was very just or upright. It may have looked as though the judge was adhering to the law and to justice, and to the duties of his office. This was hypocrisy and selfishness.⁷³ Barnes explained,

⁷¹ Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 126.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷³ Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 126.

“The word ‘weary’ in this sense, was relational to the meaning to denote the wounds and bruises caused by boxers who beat upon each other, and blacken their eyes, and disable them.”⁷⁴

In Luke 18:6-8, Jesus said to notice or give attention to this parable to obtain pragmatic instruction. God is not like this judge. The God that so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that people should not perish (John 3:16) loves mankind. Barnes shared that many circumstances of a parable are not to be interpreted closely. They are merely appendages to the narrative. Barnes explained the parable was designed to teach us that we should always pray and not get tired or stop. Implications of the teaching was a widow got the help she needed only by persevering. She obtained what she otherwise would not have gotten from an unjust man.⁷⁵

If an unjust, wicked man was induced to provide justice due to be wearied, how much more shall God, who is not unjust but is good, be willing to provide justice and give mercy to them who apply unto Him? Jesus gave assurance to his disciples that God would hear their petitions and come forth and vindicate them. God would appear for their deliverance. Christians are often oppressed and persecuted. Christians are few in number and feeble. It seems Christians are almost forsaken and cast down and their enemies triumph. Yet in due time God will hear their prayers and will come forth for their vindication. Christians are the elect of God, God’s saints, the people of God, true followers of God, chosen of God. Christians are chosen out of a world of sinners. Grace, mercy, and eternal life are conferred on Christians. God cares deeply for Christians.⁷⁶

A characteristic of Christians is constancy in prayer. It is one of the best marks of a Christian. Although God defers and greatly tries the patience of Christians, God will yet avenge

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 126-127.

⁷⁶ Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 127.

them. Vindication will be sudden and unexpected. When vindication arrives, will Christians still be faithful and constant in prayer? Christians are not to get discouraged.⁷⁷

A final aspect of the theological framework is to revisit God's designation for believers as ambassadors of Christ. An important passage which explains this designation is in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Several points are critical as it relates to this project. This begins with the sacred trust God has committed to every Christian. This sacred trust is explained in terms of a ministry of reconciliation (v. 18) and a word of reconciliation (v. 19). Indeed, this is a solemn responsibility and a sacred privilege very similar to Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 1:11 (KJV), indicating, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Likewise, in 1 Timothy 6:20, the exhortation is to "keep that which is committed to thy trust." In these and other passages Paul expresses the sacred trust bestowed upon Christians.

The sacred trust and solemn responsibility are a reconciliation procedure in which opposing parties are brought together as expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:17-18. The opposing parties are man who is reconciled to God. The message of reconciliation centers on Christ's complete work on the cross (v. 19). For the believing sinner, sins are forgiven and neither imputed nor reckoned to their account. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who never knew sin, took upon Himself the sins of mankind, paying the penalty for all those sins and sinners, (v. 21) bring about reconciliation wherein all things become new (cf. v. 17).

A culminating position is introduced with the word "now" in verse twenty boldly declaring Christians to be ambassadors for Christ (v. 20). Such a declaration demands an explanation as to what is an ambassador for Christ. One has stated that an "ambassador is at the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

same time a messenger and a representative.”⁷⁸ Similarly, an “ambassador is both a messenger for and a representative of the one who sent him, and believers are messengers and representatives of the court of heaven.”⁷⁹ As representatives of God and servants of Christ, the ministry of reconciliation is the priority in this passage. While the focus is toward unbelievers coming to saving faith, Paul’s command to “be reconciled” (v. 20) reveals an area often overlooked by believers which is even more critical concerning why believers are often passive about prayer. A prerequisite to a compelling ambassadorship is to first seek God’s forgiveness (I John 1:9) for the attitude and actions which have led to a downfall in prayer among many churches today.

Once restoration and familial reconciliation has occurred, believers serve as ambassadors for Christ according to this honored position. To serve Christ as His ambassadors is “one of the most exalted titles that the Christian can claim.”⁸⁰ Humbly, yet boldly Christians represent Christ both individually and corporately; both in the immediate areas and worldwide. As believers traverse this world, authoritative announcements are declared centered on the gospel upon which passionate requests are made for sinners to be eternally reconciled to God. The authoritative gospel message is presented as an urgent appeal. Paul’s passionate plea is expressed as that of begging realizing the invitation is ultimately from Christ Himself (v. 20). It must not be overlooked that Paul’s terminology is reminiscent of prayer as believers everywhere ask God to do the work Christians cannot do in bring the unsaved to eternal life and in bring Christians back to Him in restored fellowship.

The grounds for Paul’s appeal explain how a person is reconciled to God (v. 21). The

⁷⁸ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Logos, 2022), 2 Co 5:20.

⁷⁹ John MacArthur. *2 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 206.

⁸⁰ Constable, 2 Co 5:20.

basis is Jesus Christ who was sinless and yet took on Himself the penalty of sin. Upon His crucifixion, God treated Jesus as the substitute sacrifice for the world and placed His wrath on Christ who bore the guilt for all people's sins. In His crucifixion, Jesus became the sin-offering for the world. It is astonishing that so complete and final was the death of Christ Paul can profoundly say, God made Him to be sin on "our behalf" (v. 20).

On these same grounds can a theological framework be built as ambassadorship must include a display of dependence on the Lord through prayer. Galatians 3:13 asserts Christ became a curse so that a blessing might come to others. Christians are involved in this blessing by means of their own salvation, offering the message of salvation to others, and, among other distinctives, interceding for others in prayer. As God's mouthpieces, believers speak directly to sinners with an urgent appeal to be reconciled to God. Accompanying this is for believers to speak directly to God boldly seeking the effective work of conviction by the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11).

The word "pray" in 2 Corinthians 5:20 has a broad range of meaning including that it is a common word for the act of prayer (Acts 4:31; Rom. 1:10; 2 Cor. 8:4; 10:2). While Paul's meaning in verse twenty is to beseech, implore, and urgently request, it is important to not overlook a connection between ambassadors and prayer. Believers follow Paul's example by praying for fellow believers to be reconciled to God in a familial sense so they might in response exercise their role as ambassadors for Christ. Ambassadors for Christ is to be "mouthpieces of God in the most authoritative sense."⁸¹ Therefore, a strong appeal for the world to receive God's gracious invitation and be eternally reconciled to God should never be presented with a light-hearted sarcastic attitude. Similarly, prayer concerning these eternally critical matters of

⁸¹ Richard Pratt, *I & II Corinthians*. Edited by Max Anders. Vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman 2000), 359.

salvation and restoration must never convey a passive perspective.

This sacred trust is an honorable position designated as ambassadors for Christ, perhaps the most exalted title a Christian can claim. This position is held by all who are “in Christ” (vv. 17, 19) and therefore “no higher calling, no greater privilege, no more urgent task, than the ministry of reconciliation God has entrusted to all believers.”⁸² Critically, “Paul’s appeal was not a perfunctory pronouncement, but an impassioned plea addressed to the world on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3–4).”⁸³ All believers must honor this sacred trust by faithfully serving as ambassadors.

Theoretical Foundation

“An intervention is a critical event in the history of a system that leads to the evolution of new structures of interaction and new shared meanings.”⁸⁴ Undertaking change strategies and implementing interventions for participatory collective action amongst a group involves impacting evolving networks of person-time-place interactions changing relationships and displacing existing activities and perspectives in order to redistribute and transform channels of resources and energy. Of value is the emphasis on relationship development and goals involving conscious efforts to change conditions, groups, political atmospheres, social injustices, and individuals.⁸⁵ Both older and newer contemporary theories can provide support for intervention projects.

Combining old and new theories and participatory collective action theories can be used

⁸² MacArthur, 208.

⁸³ David Lowery, “2 Corinthians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J.F. Walvoord and R. Zuck, vol 2 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 568.

⁸⁴ Edison J. Trickett and Sarah Beehler, “Participatory Action Research and Impact: An Ecological Ripples Perspective,” *Educational Action Research* 25, no. 4 (2017): 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

to explore and better understand new strategies and processes of interaction in collective action research endeavors.⁸⁶ Some of the older theories that can be used to support this participatory collective action endeavor are rational theory, participatory action theory, cultural theory and organizational culture theory, organizational culture and change theory, social justice theories, sociocultural theory, social constructivist theory, social cognitive theory, and sociopolitical theory.

Some of the newer contemporary theories that can be used to support this project are urbanization theories, globalization theories, secular theories, social theory, and normalization process theory. Of course, not all theories can be covered in great detail because this would extend beyond the scope and limitations of this project. However, this project will touch on those most relevant with depth, and possibly give a brief overview of some of them. This section of this chapter will consider such theories, as well as new strategies that have been developed, in order to examine methods and ways to develop new frameworks and strategies for increasing prayer service attendance levels and increasing understandings and perceptions concerning the responsibilities and roles of the Church and local church for praying for change in society.

Older Theories: Rational Action Theory and Social Justice Theory

The core assumption of rational action theory is that all values, including those that appear to be natural and objective, rest in social experience of some sort. Rational action theory is based on the premise that collective rather than individual orientations is preferred. Traditional models dealing with great injustices have been riots and protests against social wrongs such as

⁸⁶ Tomas de Brún et al., "Learning From Doing: The Case for Combining Normalization Process Theory and Participatory Learning and Action Research Methodology for Primary Healthcare Implementation Research." *BMC Health Services Research* 16, no. 1 (2016): 346. doi: 10.1186/s12913-016-1587-z.

racism and police brutality. Claims were made that social movements were mindless or ill-conceived emotional responses to strain. Rational action deals with the core components of resource mobilization, political process, and or any other general theory at the group level.⁸⁷ This calls for moving from selfish interests and indifference to what will benefit or hurt others.

A questioning occurs that asks, “Can an individual do anything that would make a difference in the collective good?”⁸⁸ If others fail to act because they hope someone else will do something to change things, nothing will happen to resolve problems. Collective rational group theory calls for organized, coordinated strategy.⁸⁹ Rational collective action theory can produce results when social purposive coordinated strategy takes place to produce change. Participants are more likely to identify with movement groups or networks rather than trying to accomplish things individually.⁹⁰ Individuals also like to belong and engage. Thus, collectivity can potentially produce results.

No single individual can stop global warming through their own personal lifestyle choices. No single individual can create racial justice or world peace.⁹¹ For major devastating and catastrophic problems collective action is necessary and more effective. An example for consideration from Oliver is as follows:

The large group problem, clean air or clean water. It is impossible that the air or water supply will become cleaner through the independent actions of isolated individuals, and genuinely difficult and probably impossible to persuade enough individuals to change their habits to clean the air or water. But it is not at all impossible for concerned activists to get cleaner air and cleaner water through mobilizing an environmental movement and lobbying legislatures to pass laws that create water treatment plants, impose clean-up

⁸⁷ Pamela E. Oliver, “Rational Action,” in Dantella della Porta and Mario Diani, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁹¹ Oliver, “Rational Action,” 3.

standards on polluting industries backed up by fines for noncompliance, mandate efficiency standards for vehicles and electrical appliances, and impose taxes and offer tax credits to shape desired consumer actions (Mitchell 1979). And, as Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues have amply demonstrated (Ostrom 1998, 1999), it is not at all impossible for traditional communities to organize themselves to preserve environmental resources across generations.⁹²

Problems that have been viewed and critiqued with this theory involve the “free rider” or selfish interests of individuals who will not participate and act, in order to achieve common group interests. Despite this, real contributions have been made by examining the effects of influence of rational action theory by viewing the influence or sideways processes where people make choices affected by the behavior of the people around them, considering the norms of fairness and balance and the most beneficial effects and results are at the group level.⁹³

Insights have been obtained by examining individual motivations and the differences between different kinds of actions and the differences between groups. Using the insights gained can enable tools to be formed to act in various contexts and enable actors to make choices that can become strategic game changers. Social networks can be an example of such a tool and social networks can influence processes. Social networks can aid in dealing with an initial group of unconditional cooperators and interact with network density and group size.

For this project, these findings ring true, but a few unwilling participants will not deter or hinder the mission of the project because a way has been provided. This way was provided in the scriptures by Jesus when he explained in Matthew 18:19-20, “That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

⁹² Oliver, “Rational Action,” 3.

⁹³ Ibid., 10, 12.

John D. Delehanty showed that social justice activist groups strove to develop cultural commitments for sustained activism within congregations. When building cultural commitments to activism and change, faith-based community leaders consciously contested congregational cultures rooted in individualistic orientation to religious commitment.⁹⁴ Delehanty used ethnographic fieldwork and demonstrated that leaders' intentions were to problematize, displace a comfortable church culture and extend situations from individualistic religious commitments and orientations to social problems. Thereby, social justice activism was used to encourage group activism.

But this method sometimes hindered the cultural appeal of social justice activism in many religious communities. Delehanty argued that the struggle revealed a discursive conflict between competing visions of religious life.⁹⁵ This researcher believes that kingdom perspective prayer could aid in resolving some of the discursive conflict. This researcher believes that collective prayer is a more subtle but mightier approach, and a tremendous tool for warfare and changing things. Collective prayer can be used to bind or loose things and help change conditions in the local community and spread outward.

Cultural Theory

A. Scott Moreau discusses contextualization and culture but gives a greater depth of understanding on the stronghold of culture. According to Moreau, culture influences how a person sees and perceives the world and most of culture is hidden deep within and is outside the

⁹⁴ John D. Delehanty, "Prophets of Resistance: Social Justice Activists Contesting Comfortable Church Culture," *Sociology of Religion*, 77, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 37, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srv054>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

bounds of voluntary control of human existence.⁹⁶ Culture is transmitted from generation to generation and consists of world view and functional, structural, and cognitive constructs for perceiving, applying, and interpreting phenomena around us.⁹⁷ Moreau further explains that even when fragments come to awareness, changing is extremely difficult.⁹⁸ The researcher believes it is not too hard for God to change these things in people, though.

Sandra L. Barnes explained cultural theory reasons that social groups adhere to a cultural repertoire or atmosphere reflecting beliefs, ritual practices, stories, and symbols that support meaning and impetus for resource mobilization. Barnes found that not much quantitative research had been done to support this theory.⁹⁹ Most of the support for this theory had been derived from research relative to the relationship between longstanding Black Church cultural components. These components were specifically scripture, songs, prayers, sermons, and activism among Black Churches.¹⁰⁰

Barnes conducted a quantitative study using a large national sample of Black congregations from seven denominations and tested aspects of cultural theory. The study found a consistent direct relationship between prayer groups and gospel music and various forms of community action. However, there was less influence found between spirituals and the general usage of sacred scripture.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ A. Scott Moreau, "The Human Universals of Culture: Implications for Contextualization," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (1995): 121, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.ijfm.org/>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Sandra L. Barnes, "Black Church Culture and Community Action." *Social Forces* 84, no. 2 (2005): 967.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

The researcher believes the findings from Moreau and Barnes support cultural theory. It is agreed that a consistent direct relationship is strongly correlational between prayer groups, gospel music, and various forms of community action. Generational factors are greatly influential on the strongholds of cultural happenings, worship and prayer services, prayer practices, and on behaviors and beliefs of individuals and groups of individuals. This is foundational to this research project study because cultural practices and norms can or may have a strong bearing on the success or failure of change processes for ethnic or multi-ethnic church organizations. The findings are also important at the individual and group levels.

Lindsey M. Graham demonstrated sociocultural theory in a study on conducting ministry through musical performance. Graham based the study by establishing biblical, historical, and pedagogical precedence for the role of music in the local church as a means of ministry, worship, and deliverance. Graham suggested that those who take a public platform with the Church body of Christ also assume the role and responsibility to demonstrate teaching, even those who administer within the musical platform. Graham warned that this is a calling to take seriously and soberly.¹⁰² The role of music ministry also comes under the platform of healing. Music can be uplifting, and worship can help make one whole.

Organizational Culture and Change Theory

As an alternative to classical approaches, E. H. Schein proffered a dialogic transformational organizational development change theory. This theory demonstrates organizations seen as fluid, socially constructed realities that are continuously created through

¹⁰² Lindsey M. Graham, "Ministry Through Musical Performance: Establishing Biblical, Historical, and Pedagogical (Educational) Precedent for the Christian Performing Artist" (DMin thesis, Liberty University, 2018), 3-4.

conversations and images, and change takes place when these conversations and images change. By encouraging critical and creative thinking that disrupts taken-for-granted ways of doing things, leaders and consultants foster, support, and accelerate new transformational possibilities, conversations, and narratives. This new technique has been a different, think outside of the box, mindset. It involves appreciative inquiry, the art of convening, and open space technology.¹⁰³ Schein has been a longstanding part of the organizational culture and change theory mainly in the business sector. There have been many works that have researched this theory. For the dynamic constantly changing situations of today, alternate perspectives and methods can provide a means for addressing new ways to deal with circumstances. Insights can be gained and used in other arenas such as in church organizations.

J. Rupert Morgan evaluated organizational rapid culture and change theory in the airline industry and the healthcare industry. Morgan found that the church in mission lacked the impact it could or should have in terms of globalization, and the local church has too often ignored the cause and outcomes of global trends on its mission. Morgan pointed out how popular media describes and explains everything in terms of globalization. Morgan argued that local churches and the agencies with whom they partner should engage in mission with a planned response to global trends, rather than with a conditioned reaction.¹⁰⁴

Morgan believed the airline and healthcare industries have been globalized, but inadequate adaptation was consequential and led results where rapid change, inability to adapt to change, and dire consequences of failing to adapt were three characteristics of globalization. Not

¹⁰³ E.H. Schein, *Dialogic Organization Development: The Theory and Practice of Transformational Change* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015), i.

¹⁰⁴Rupert J. Morgan, "Global Trends and the North American Church in Mission: Discovering the Church's Role in the Twenty-First Century," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40, no. 4 (2016): 325-38, accessed May 24, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2396939316664693>.

replacing obsolete tracking equipment was one example pointed out for airlines. For the healthcare industry, Morgan discussed the improper handling and dissemination of information concerning the Ebola virus that almost became a worldwide pandemic.¹⁰⁵

According to Morgan, one of the primary ways in which the North American church has been affected by globalization is through the shift of the center of Christianity from North America into Africa and Latin America. But the center of material wealth and power remains in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia.¹⁰⁶

Samuel Thigpen used methods of local church discipleship to demonstrate a theoretical understanding of church ecclesiology. Thigpen believed the biblical process of becoming a disciple of Christ is significantly more precise than the methods used by churches; therefore, Thigpen presented an approach to discipling from biblical processes. Thigpen explained church discipling should be an active process that involves sending and going rather than enticing. Sending was described as the process of missionally placing individuals into unreached communities and groups. It was noted by Thigpen that the church must change in order to better reach people outside the walls of the church.¹⁰⁷ This is a significant part of organizational culture theory.

Other points from Thigpen where a discipling mission is to free people from bondage and slavery to sin, addiction, and brokenness to bring hope to the broken, hurting, and lost. According to Thigpen, a greater emphasis should be put on the process of making disciples and less on the physical building of the church. Thigpen believed the paradigm that church buildings,

¹⁰⁵ Morgan, "Global Trends and the North American Church in Mission," 327-32.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 337-38.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Thigpen, "Attractional to Missional: A Strategic Transition Plan for Anastasia Baptist Church" (DMIN diss., Liberty University School of Divinity, 2018), 1-2.

ministries, and activities can continue to draw people to the church is a broken way of thinking.¹⁰⁸ Reaching people through local church discipling is a very important role of the mission of the church. New thinking and theories are required to continually develop new strategies, methods, and techniques to reach the lost.

Eric Q. Truss completed a study on the decline of church attendance in Black America, especially amongst Black males. The study by Truss could be supported by organizational leadership and change theory, transformational leadership theory, social identity theory, and socio-cultural theory. Truss emphasized the role of the males to assume the authority given to them as the head, participate in church leadership, and family leadership. Truss explained it was the role of a father to teach Christian principles, godly living, and social behaviorism to his children. Truss explained that women now handle the leadership role in families and churches.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, among the Black race, many are killed in street-style living occurrences or are imprisoned for street-style living. Truss explained that women now handle the leadership role in families and churches. In the absence of Black males in both the home and church, a void has been created.¹¹⁰ This is also true and very unfortunate. Truss called on pastors to help and engage in more effective evangelism to reach Black males. Truss spoke about transformational leadership and the role and responsibility of the Church, to train, teach, and help. Truss also believed evangelism should be taught more in churches. Truss believed the following about prayer:

Prayer is a spiritual source needing strengthening in the church. The church is to use prayer for where evangelism has been neglected. Prayer is the power of the church. Prayer is a vital religious practice. The church must realize a need for prayer. The church

¹⁰⁸ Thigpen, “Attractional to Missional,” 8.

¹⁰⁹ Eric Q. Truss, “The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America: A Biblical Mandate for Black Males to Godly Leadership” (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2018), 1.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

has drifted into a spiritual sleep and cannot pray effectively. In all world religions, prayer is most important and even people who are not religious sometimes pray.¹¹¹

This work by Truss is very supportive of the participatory portion of this research project. This researcher believes kingdom perspective prayer and imprecatory prayer could potentially aid in bringing Black males back into the family and church fold. Prayer is a very effective and powerful tool of warfare for all Christians.

New Contemporary Theories and Strategies

Theories that address the role and mission of the church seek to increase attendance at prayer and worship services. New ways and thinking on issues in society dealing with gender and multi-cultural relations, urbanization, political issues, globalization, and things of this nature are relevant and important to address. This section will deal with theories for new strategies in these areas, starting with normalization theories. This section will also present new strategies that have been examined and implemented.

Peter Madsen Gubi assessed circumstances where churches used pastoral care and counseling in reflexive groups. Interviews were conducted with eight Church of England bishops to ascertain their views on issues needing attention within the churches. Additionally, thematic analysis was conducted on online surveys obtained from sixty-four church members. The primary theme from the analysis was hindrances.¹¹²

Findings from the study revealed reflexive groups were perceived as limited by the inability of clergy to commit to the time. Clergy felt it was scary to be vulnerable with others in

¹¹¹ Truss, "The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America," 82.

¹¹² Peter Madsen Gubi, "Assessing the Perceived Limitations of Reflexive Groups for Supporting Clergy in the Church of England," *Mental Health, Religion, & Culture* 19, no.7 (2017): 769, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2017.1279130>.

trying to problem solve. There were problems: the needs of church members were found to be sometimes too big and could sabotage the group, dual relationships could cause complexity and hinder sharing, the open agenda and style of facilitation did not suit some people, there was poor facilitation, and sometimes there were struggles with expectations. Prayer was sent by a Bishop or Archdeacon, and prayer attendance levels were also found to be a hindrance.¹¹³

Conclusions given shared while reflexive groups were not the panacea for providing clergy support, the research demonstrated many participants are able to negotiate the potential limitations and hindrances to gain benefit from participation in them. Careful planning to avoid dual boundaries was imperative, as well as providing good external facilitation. Financial costs had to be considered. Voluntary participation is crucial because it enhances commitment and reduces process sabotage. Those with relational struggles and/or psychological damage may need a different form of support such as personal counseling. Attendance was not to be expected but encouraged. The limitations were not to be seen as prohibitive for everyone, but something to keep in mind when in evaluating support provisions.¹¹⁴

For many North American churches, a primary method new strategy is partnerships, where churches and organizations take part in global missions and short-term missions by connecting with their global partners. Morgan reported over two million people travel abroad every year on short-term missions from North America.¹¹⁵ This means the focus of local churches have turned from local missions to short-term, international missions reflecting a new philosophy. Identifying the outcomes of globalization on the mission enterprise is a place for the

¹¹³ Ibid., 770-71.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 779.

¹¹⁵ J. Rupert Morgan, "Global Trends and the North American Church in Mission: Discovering the Church's Role in the Twenty-First Century," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40, no. 4 (2016): 327, doi: 10.1177/2396939316664693.

North American church to start in a quest to fulfill its role in a rapidly changing world.¹¹⁶

Morgan found that the North American church can discover and fulfill its new role in mission in the twenty-first century by notating the following six suggestions:

1. Recognize that the North American church is no longer at the center and that this is part of God's purpose.
2. Discover the innate ethnocentric patterns culturally and personally that inhibit cross-cultural ministry.
3. Accept a new role in global mission as facilitator and servant.
4. Evaluate the contributions and limitations of short-term missions and make improvements for greater missional outcomes.
5. Engage in cross-cultural partnerships that are sustainable and based upon equality and reciprocity.
6. Encourage and assist the churches of the Global South to develop theologies that address their lived experience.¹¹⁷

Erin K. Wilson has an alternative viewpoint of what the role of religion or the church should be doing in society. Wilson's argument is based on global justice theory and practice. Wilson found that a research background frequently reported that religious leaders and organizations should be involved in addressing global justice issues such as gender inequality, human rights abuses, and poverty and violence because they are highly influential in the communities and often set an example for others to follow.¹¹⁸ Wilson argued that pervasive assumptions about the nature and role that religion should or should not play in public life and it undermines existing approaches to the pursuit of global justice in theory and practice.¹¹⁹ From a religious or cosmological worldview, Wilson suggested that where acknowledging the claims to spiritual justices, there can also be spiritual injustices. Spiritual injustices were described as

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 328.

¹¹⁸ Erin K. Wilson, "The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice," *European Societies* 19, no. 5 (2017): 529.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, "The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice," 539.

violations of what a religious group perceives should be the established or desired cosmic order or natural reality.¹²⁰

Interviews were conducted in 2014 in Malawi and South Africa among community leaders. Primary questions asked in the interviews included the following “What role, if any, do or should religious leaders, institutions, and organizations in the community play in addressing these problems of crimes and injustices”? “Is it important that religious leaders are involved?”¹²¹ An answer from a female police officer stated, “Definitely it is important. I believe pastors need to be informed because they will intervene with prayer. I believe we cannot fight crime without the involvement of the power of God. In prayer, my God tells me that there is nothing that we cannot do. It is very important; it is the first things that need to be engaged in by pastors.”¹²²

Wilson believed specifically the dominance of secular assumptions constitutes a form of epistemological injustice which contributes to undermining efforts to address material injustices. Wilson discussed and dealt with the public sphere, the nation-state, global civil society, justice, displacement, development and purported that all of these are concepts and problems defined by the Euro-American secular worldview. Wilson argued against the Euro-American secular worldview on behalf of non-secular alternatives to social global injustices. Wilson believed certain forms of secularism exclude and marginalize people at policy levels, practice, and daily life. Wilson called for reform of global justice institutions, theories, and practices and for the development of alternate approaches.¹²³

Although Wilson began by examining a spiritual or religious point of view, he seemed to

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 530.

¹²² Ibid., 530.

¹²³ Wilson, “The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice,” 539.

be more focused and concerned with the secular world system and point of view. Wilson explained religion has been described as the antithesis of reason and rationality on public justice in literature, including global justice. But secularism has been and continues to be widely viewed as providing the guarantee for neutrality as a guiding framework for policy deliberations in the public sphere. Public reason has been the hallmark of many contemporary global justice movements, such as the World Social Forum, which promote secularism and public reason as critical to the pursuit of global justice.

However, Wilson expounded, secularism is not always as neutral as is claimed and what had been deemed as universally “reasonable” and “rational” according to the secular worldview is debatably partial and culturally specific.¹²⁴ Furthermore, certain forms of secularism, according to Wilson and others, can actively devalue, marginalize, and exclude worldviews that do not adhere to secular norms and standards.¹²⁵ Alternatives offered by Wilson were: William Connelly’s multidimensional pluralism, or relational dialogism as a direct challenge to assumptions of modernity that plagued the work of Habermas, which was the most promising mode for developing alternatives to secular worldviews because it was external to the Euro-American secular context. Ultimately, Wilson believed a fluid sense of what justice is, a continual process that is constantly refined and is not an endpoint, is what is needed.¹²⁶

Normalization Process Theory (NPT) is defined and described as a method of response to multiple failures to implement innovations in complex settings. NPT has four components which are: coherence (sense making), cognitive participation (engagement), collective action

¹²⁴ Ibid., 531.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 532.

¹²⁶ Wilson, “The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice,” 545-46.

(enactment), and reflexive monitoring (appraisal). NPT is not a rigid model and is designed to emphasize the realities of implementation during interventions in real time and space through interrelationships.¹²⁷ May and Smilde evaluated correlates of NPT to ascertain the impact of funding for NPT research projects.¹²⁸ NPT has offered useful explanations for the success of implementations projects due to success rates.¹²⁹

As far as normativity is concerned, May and Smilde notated that research concerning religion can be portrayed in a negative or positive light. Research is often funded to create an understanding of human purpose and the cosmos. Public-sector funders often fund research for social phenomena of specific interest to improve treatment outcomes. May and Smilde found that surprisingly there was a stronger positive relationship between funding and pro-religiousness rather than negative religiousness research. Private funding agencies have been more likely to fund research on studies in the United States rather than public agencies or governmental agencies.¹³⁰ Social reality is ever changing, and signs are starting to point toward global conversations.¹³¹

NPT was found to aid in bridging the “know-do” gap by enhancing knowledge and enacting change. It has been more effective with participatory learning and action (PLA). Both constructs have been found to have heuristic power. NPT has been effective for providing explanations for why many interventions have not worked post-implementation. Both NPT and

¹²⁷ de Brún et al., “Learning from Doing,” 3.

¹²⁸ Matthew May and David Smilde, “Does Funding Impact Our Research? Causality, Normativity, and Diversity in 40 Years of U.S. Sociology of Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57, no. 3 (2018): 432.

¹²⁹ de Brún et al., “Learning From Doing,” 3.

¹³⁰ May and Smilde, “Does Funding Impact Our Research?” 446-47.

¹³¹ de Brún et al., “Learning From Doing,” 10.

PLA could also serve as a means for responsiveness to community priorities. More than likely, adaptations would be necessary in other contexts and settings. Finally, it could become a shared platform with equal status and power of participation.¹³²

Older and newer theories have been examined that could potentially be used to address purposes and types of prayer and praying. In many ways, these theories could be used in several ways and at different points to address ascertaining better levels of comprehension for participants, as well as, for addressing new strategies to develop and implement. Despite this, the surface has just barely been scratched. There is so much more that could be uncovered and evaluated.

¹³² Ibid., 10.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Looking at the state of the world today, it is evident that prayer is needed now more than ever before. Today, there is racial tension, abortions, the prevalence of human, sex, and drug trafficking, drug overdoses, political corruption in the penal system, and many other issues robbing the lives of millions of people all around the world. Protestors' violence, senseless killings, and the burning of buildings will never be the answer to the problems in the United States or the world. Prayer is the only solution. The members of Total Life Ministries church must comprehend their function as ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor 5:20) and what their role and responsibility is regarding prayer is paramount.

Originally, the research was supposed to address the need to increase the 10-15 people that attend prayer service regularly on Thursday night at the Total Life Ministries church. However, because of Covid-19, the number has dropped drastically (4 or 5) because many members have decided to pray at home and not attend services like they had prior to the beginning of the virus scare. This is because of Covid-19 and the various restrictions to attending prayer service in person. If the level of people is infected in the city of Columbus, the research will not address prayer from the perspective of increasing the level of people attending the church site or building but increasing the levels at home or wherever they are when they pray away from the church site. If people are not diligently praying, there is a reason for it. Maybe there is confusion about how to pray or a lack of understanding about their role and responsibility as agents of change and ambassadors for the world's sake. But it is imperative that Christians learn to pray consistently. That was thought to be a problem by the researcher or one

area this study attempted to ascertain causes and reasons for not praying and praying more effectively when the members of the Total Life Ministries church pray and to know how to pray for the world at large.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this pilot action research study with a qualitative emphasis was to increase the prayer ministry at the Total Life Ministries church both in terms of the quantity of the people praying and the quality of their praying. The research process attempted to ascertain perceptions and perspectives concerning group and individual prayer practices of the members of the Total Life Ministries church.

Evaluation of what the members of Total Life Ministries church believe and perceive about prayer will assist in future development of methods to motivate people to be passionate about prayer to be effective in creating change in the world, life transformation, and for wanting to attend prayer services regularly at the church when the Covid-19 epidemic is over. A cognitive framework model and strategies for increasing prayer levels would be helpful, with comprehension and strategy formulation. This project study hoped to generate a process for goal attainment. If members of the Total Life Ministries church are taught to pray from a kingdom perspective, the prayer level will increase by 10 percent.

Since the Doctor of Ministry is a forward-thinking program of theological study that is preoccupied with ministry leadership, the intention is to enhance the performance of people who have a Master of Divinity degree and have been active as a leader in a ministerial setting or position for a minimum of three years. The research session is intended to incorporate the skills cultivated in the Doctor of Ministry curriculum and to design an applicable project for the

researcher's pertinent ministry setting.¹ At the center of Doctor of Ministry programs is the objective that projects help the church, enhance ministry performance, and be relevant to other practitioners in the field.² It is also contended that the competences learned in the Doctor of Ministry program efficaciously advances the proficiencies of ministerial leaders, in the sense that, by putting into practice what has been taught assists the leaders of the church and the church itself in the realization of the vision of the degree.³

The Doctor of Ministry degree is located within the realm of practical theology and has suffered from the perceptions of the misconceptions of Friedrich Schleiermacher's theological work in 1811 and how this ultimately led to a division between practical theology and the other disciplines. Wilhelm Dilthey's studies and work established a qualitative method for all social sciences before the dawn of phenomenology or any of its specific methods. However, when one examined authors of this approach in each of the human sciences, one discovered that there was no specific approach in which to perform qualitative research. Each author at the time specified a technique that was designed by their individual research pursuits and experiences.

Phenomenology is considered a philosophy instead of a human scientific methodology and varies from one author to the next.⁴

In 1995, a metaphor was created in *The Reflective Practitioner* that became a prevalent theme in literature regarding practitioner research.⁵ The author talked about landscape of high

¹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), xiv-xv.

² Ibid, xv.

³ Charles J. Conniry, "Reducing the Identity Crisis in Doctor of Ministry," *Theological Education* 40, no.1 (2004): 147.

⁴ Larry VandeCreek, *Research in Pastoral Care and Counseling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 75.

⁵ D. Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

solid land in territories and then to the low land areas that were swampy and compared the high lands to professionals who worked in universities and their organizations' researchers who placed themselves as authorities and specialists who created authentic theory about the nursing, managerial, and education professions. They legitimated themselves as specialists and the leading influencers of conceptual theory while people who worked in professions as practitioners of nursing, education, and the management fields were not. However, practitioners today like teachers, managers, and nurses participate in day-to-day practices are considered also to generate a kind of knowledge that is extremely valuable for everyday living. Such knowledge is advocated by both university professionals and everyday practitioners that their knowledge should not be disregarded as theory, nor should traditional practitioners regard themselves as the only genuine knowledge creators. The irony today is that the knowledge generated from the swamp lowlands or people who were formerly regarded as such is the type of knowledge that is the most helpful for everyday existence because the knowledge from the high ground professional is frequently distant from the practical day-to-day lifestyles of ordinary individuals and is not capable of affecting them in significant and applicable ways.⁶

Currently inside the branch of learning and throughout denominational peripheries, there is no specific or definite way to perform practical theology.⁷ However, it has been advocated that regardless of the religious and methodological diverseness, the customary idea or subject matter that supports Practical Theology composition as a discipline is its standpoint on, and its origination in, anthropological experience and its wish to contemplate theologically on that very

⁶ Jean McNiff, *Action Research: All You Need to Know* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication Ltd, 2017), 23.

⁷ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), xv.

experience. Practical Theology, therefore, pursues or strives to discover the complicated theological and practicable dynamics of unique conditions for the purpose of allowing development of a transformative and enlightening comprehension of what is really taking place inside these conditions. “Practical Theology is therefore critical, analytical and frequently prophetic and revelatory.” It moves toward certain circumstances with hermeneutics of cautious distrust, completely cognizant that, when the covering is unshrouded, what a person considers she is performing is entirely different than what she is actually accomplishing.⁸

The practical theological researcher will strive continuously to reside accurately inside the story line of God’s endless generosity concerning the world. Regardless of individual epistemological failures, the pursuit for truth and understanding is an achievable and worthy objective, but it is, nonetheless, always a generous gift and never just a meagre human anthropological accomplishment.⁹

This Doctor of Ministry project is an action research process. Action Research is an applied or practicable method of inquiry that equips anyone in any profession or occupation to examine and evaluate his work. They deliver their accounts of praxis to demonstrate: (1) the way they are attempting to enhance what they are performing; this entails first reflection about and studying how to achieve what they are accomplishing better; (2) how this allows them to give significance to their lives; (3) how they are attempting to inspire others to do the same. These explanations platform as their personal practicable theories of practice, from which other practitioners can learn from if so desired.¹⁰ Therefore, in this type of method, the Doctor of

⁸ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: SCM Press, 2016), xi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xii.

¹⁰ McNiff, *Action Research*, 9.

Ministry researcher will operate as an inhabitant contextual theologian who is establishing a ministry intervention within a peculiar context with the purpose of or intent to address critically a discrete problematic challenge in order for the ministry group to persist in their journey of developing their Christ-likeness for the world's sake. Therefore, a four-fold pattern for comprehending the theological make-up of the Doctor of Ministry degree emerges.

The researcher's or student's participation in the degree, specifically the thesis project process, emphasizes the researcher's operating as an occupant practicable theologian who practices (1) theology as a common-activity—faith communicating to other people, theology as a developmental activity—faith forming identity, (3) theology as an analytical activity—faith pursuing comprehension in practice, and (4) theology as a community activity—faith articulating itself in the marketplace.¹¹

According to Coghlan, action research is a developing investigation process in which behavioral scientific understanding is integrated with current organizational information and connected to tackle actual organizational problems. It is concurrently involved with generating transformation in establishments, in emergent self-help skills in organizational associates, and enhancing scientific knowledge. A thorough outline of the action research process would entail four aspects. (1) Context-action research happens inside a local setting and environment with the intention to promote the advancement of that establishment in its current setting; (2) Quality of relationships- since action research is with individuals, instead of on or for them, the value of the connection between members and researchers is preponderant. The association between the two necessitates an administered trust, care for others, equivalence of influence, mutual language, etc.; (3) Quality of the research action process itself- this is established in a two-fold

¹¹ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, xix.

concentration on both the investigation process and the implementation process as it develops and is achieved and is done in the present tense while the project is researched; and (4) Outcomes- the two-fold results of action research are a level of maintainable (social, anthropological, cost-effective, environmental) and the advancement of self-help and proficiencies out of the action and formation of new knowledge from the investigation.¹²

Action research starts from a practical challenge, an issue that exists that may or may not emanate from a leader who works within a work setting that may be outside the parameters of his or her control. Such a leader gets others who are involved in the challenge to address the challenge, which entails some exertion to share or exchange the information used or ideas to other interested persons.¹³ Doing research within one's own establishment or ministerial setting poses certain challenges that distinguish it from researching an establishment as an outsider. Internal query entails indigenous researchers and performers engaged in local work settings creating contextual education which develops from experience. Being on the inside allows admission to the drama within a relaxed work setting with all its inconsistencies and issues that would otherwise be restricted to researchers from the outside.¹⁴ Action research is a pragmatic type of analysis that empowers anyone in any job or work setting to examine and evaluate their work. They perform research of their practices to reveal: (1) how they are attempting to enhance what they are performing, which entails reflection about and studying how to improve it; (2) how to empower themselves to give significance to their existence; and (3) how they are trying to impact others to do so. Their explanations platform as their personal pragmatic theories of

¹² David Coghlan, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2019), 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

practice that others may want to learn from. Because of this approach, action research has become increasingly prevalent worldwide as a method for all individuals to take an active part in their particular and social settings with a perspective to enhance them.¹⁵

Intervention Design

The Doctor of Ministry researcher who wants to utilize pastoral leadership will desire to alleviate and catalyze the process so that participants can become what God has planned for them to be. Practical theology is therefore a mutual activity—the faith of a pastoral leader inter-relating with project participants in the nucleus of the church for the sake of the world.¹⁶ The researcher hopes that the project will be a transformative activity because it is formative in nature and one that the participants can ponder and cognitively participate in for transforming their Christian identity.¹⁷

Many Christians continue to talk like they did before receiving the salvation of God with words full of doubt and uncertainty. Some are unaware of the spiritual law and are speaking the words of the enemy which becomes a snare unto them. Proverbs 6:1-2 says, “Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth.” Ephesians 1:1 instructs converts of Christianity to imitate their heavenly Father like little children become imitators of their parents.¹⁸

This intervention was designed to teach individuals to imitate the pattern that Jesus used when He ministered on earth, particularly with the way He prayed and commanded His followers to do also. It has also been developed for the Christian to learn to act as God in whatever

¹⁵ McNiff, *Action Research*, 8-9.

¹⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, xxiii.

¹⁷ Ibid, xxiii.

¹⁸ Charles Capps, *God's Creative Power: The Gift Collection* (Broken Arrow, OK: Capps Publishing, 2004), 1-5.

situation that she may be facing and not continue in the babyhood of their salvation. Christians are to imitate their Father until they activate the dormant characteristics of God that already exist within them because they have received them by faith when they were born again (Eph 1:1-3). When one continually speaks as God does, it trains his heart for success. Words are seeds and they will produce after their kind. When a person continues to recite the Word of God, it births the faith of God within her. If the church wants to experience the victory that God has won for them, they must walk in the authority of His Word. This can only happen if His people continually speak his Word.¹⁹ In an attempt to impact change, a series of four sermons will be presented during the Sunday morning services for a period of one month to teach prayer from a kingdom perspective. This will be done because most of the members have continued to attend the Sunday service despite the Covid-19 epidemic. A basic handout was passed out each Sunday of the four-week intervention that reiterated the principle of praying from a kingdom perspective addressed in each sermon by way of some pertinent Scriptures that each sermon touched on during the Sunday in which it will be presented.

The first sermon addressed the role of the church as ambassadors for Christ and how it is the responsibility of the church to pray for current world problems and events because humanity was given the responsibility for the world (Ps 115:16). During Week 1, participants were asked to pray the prayer “Confession for Executing Justice” from Bill Winston’s collection of prayers (see Appendix D), which is an imprecatory prayer and any other prayers from the website or other places mentioned below. A handout with the following Scriptures was distributed also (Gen 1:26-30; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 8:1-9; 82:1-8; 115:16; Prov 21:1; Jer 29:7; Dan 2:20-23; 9:18-19; Rom 13:1-2; and 1 Tim 2:1-4). The Scriptures will also be placed on the church group text in case anyone

¹⁹ Capps, *God’s Creative Power*, 8-9.

misplaces their handout each week. The second sermon addressed the believers' identity and the participants will have a choice to pray the "I Am" prayer from Gregory Dickow's collection of prayers "Life Solutions" (see Appendix C) or the "Who/What I Am" prayer from Bill Winston's website (see Appendix A) and any other prayers that they would like to pray during Week 2. The following Scriptures will be given to participants to read for Week 2 and a sermon will address the believers' identity in Christ: Gen 1:26-30; Ps 8:1-9; 115:16; John 10:34; 14:12-17; 2 Cor 5:20; Phil 1:6; 1Thess 5:25; 1 Pet 2:9; and Rev 5:5:1.

The third sermon addressed spiritual warfare and participants were asked to pray the "Activation Prayer" in Part 2 of Cindy Trimm's²⁰ book and any other prayer that they would like to pray during Week 3. The following Scriptures will also be given in a handout: Ps 149; Luke 10:18-20; Eph 6:10-18; 2 Cor 10:3-6; and Rev 12:1-12. The fourth and final sermon addressed the participants' own life and how to overcome their problems from a kingdom perspective and for them to seek God for their personal assignment that will advance His Kingdom here on earth. The following Scriptures were given as a handout for each person participating in the action research qualitative study for the last week: Matt 6:31-33; 8:5-13; 9:20-21; Mark 11:20-25; Rom 10:6-11; 2 Cor 4:13; and 1 John 4:4. The final week participants were asked to pray from Gregory Dickow's collections of prayers, "Life Solutions," from his website, Charles Capps's prayer in his book, *God's Creative Power: Gift Collection*, or from Bill Winston's collection of prayers from his website.

Participants were instructed to pray kingdom prayers of their choice during the week from the prayers of Gregory Dickow's *Life Solutions*²¹ (for their personal maturation to grow

²⁰ Cindy Trimm, *Rules of Engagement: The Art of Strategic Prayer and Spiritual Warfare*, vol. 1 (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House A Stranz Company, 2005), 17-43.

²¹ Gregory Dickow, "Life Solutions," GregoryDickow.com, <http://gregorydickow.com/life-solutions/>.

their faith and whatever pertinent issues each of them may need to address in prayer) from Charles Capps's booklet, *God's Creative Power Will Work for You*, Cindy Trimm's "Activation Prayer" in Part II of her book,²² prayers from *Prayers that Bring Change*,²³ or prayers from the collection of prayers on Bill Winston's website.²⁴

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Total Life Ministries is a multi-cultural, growing ministry that has been in existence since 1998 and is in the heart of the city of Columbus, OH. It started as a church plant and relocated where the ministry expanded and began to operate a daycare facility that could have eighty-eight children. The facility was also the home of the church until 2011, until the church building was purchased where it currently is located. The membership currently has about fifty adults. Most members attend Sunday service if not working. The church also has faithful members who have not been attending any services since the Covid-19 epidemic but faithfully continue to tithe. Total Life Ministries is known as the "Compassionate Ministry that cares and is totally changing lives." The ministry operates a food pantry and a soup kitchen twice a month on Saturdays to help individuals and families who need food assistance. The church also operates a group home for disabled veterans, a ministry since 2004. It has also operated a group home for the mentally ill in the past and is in the process of opening it back up because of the need for more of them in the community.

Currently Total Life Ministries church has three associate pastors and one who is in the

²² Trimm, *Rules of Engagement*, vol. 1, Part 2.

²³ Kimberly Daniels, *Prayers That Bring Change* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House a Strang Company, 2009).

²⁴ Bill Winston, "Prayers and Confessions," *BillWinston.com*, <https://www.billwinston.org/prayers-and-confessions>.

process of moving back to the area. They also have about fourteen other ministers who help lead the congregation and minister consistently on prayer night after prayer.

Participants and Sample Size

The research was possible because thirteen members chose to take part in the prayer project. All participants were told that they could discontinue the research process at any time if they choose not to complete it. All participants were at least eighteen years of age and were also members of the Total Life Ministries congregation who attend Sunday services regularly. However, visitors were also extended an invitation to participate in the research and would have been allowed to participate if they had desired to.

Persons that did participate in the action research qualitative study were told that they had to be willing to participate and attend each Sunday service and prayer service night. They were also informed that answering the pre-survey/questionnaire served as their desire and consent to participate. Each participant was also informed that they had to be willing to be honest and open to discussing their prayer patterns or practices by questionnaire or survey and they would not have to do personal or face-to-face interviews because of fear of Covid-19 and restrictions of the city of Columbus. They would only be responsible for submitting their information to the researcher's school email address. In the event of an extreme reason that a participant could not attend and had a viable reason or emergency a tape or they were texted the Sunday service and the instructions for the week were given to the participant who could not attend church on a particular Sunday. However, each participant was highly encouraged to attend each Sunday session of the research process and weekly prayer service nights. Participants were free to pray from whatever website or book for each week of their choice after praying the specific prayer that was mandated and to pray as much as they were led or wanted to. Each participant was also

asked to keep a journal of the prayers that were specifically mandated and the other prayers each day that they wanted to pray and the time that they spent in prayer each day. They were also asked to journal what they may have experienced, felt, or what they may have learned because of their prayer experience for the research process.

Charles Capps's books were distributed to whomever would prefer to pray from his material, especially if they did not want to pray prayers from the website. Those who did not have the "Activation Prayer" also received a copy of the book (vol. 1) and/or a copy of the prayer to pray the week that the warfare prayer was mandated. They also had the option of praying from Bill Winston's website of prayers if they did not want to pray the "Activation Prayer." Those who did not have access to a computer were able to access prayers from their cell phones. However, if they did not want to access the prayers from the website, a copy of the prayers they wanted to pray were provided when handouts were passed out each week when the sermon was preached.

There were fourteen people who chose to partake in the research. Ten of the participants were female and four were men. Most of the participants were leaders in the church or ministers or teachers. Of the men, one was an associate pastor, one a teacher, one a minister-praise team leader, and the other male was the head deacon of the church. All the females were ministers except for two; of those two, one was a teacher at the church and the other a lay member. Their positions ranged from church administrator, head of the food pantry, head of the soup kitchen, and teacher.

Relationship of the Researcher to the Participants

The researcher is also an associate pastor of the congregation, the oldest to be exact. This means that the researcher has had a working association with most of the participants for several

years. However, the data collection process was performed objectively and fairly without her influence. Although the researcher does have authority over most of the participants as the oldest associate pastor and most of them do report to her in some supervisory way, the treatment that each participant received during the research process would be unbiased, and research would be conducted in a professional standpoint where no relationships would be compromised.

Setting

The sanctuary of the Total Life Ministries church was the setting for each sermon on the Sundays for the four-week study. Each participant was given a pre- and post-survey/questionnaire to answer each question honestly to the best of their ability. Most participants prayed at their homes daily or during the week when they chose to, but it was highly recommended to attend church on prayer night, which was on Thursday each week of the research.

Ethical Considerations

Doctor of Ministry students are ambassadors of Christ and ministers of the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom demands that a Christian should live a life of virtue and exemplify the love of Jesus Christ. Ethics is the commonsensical result of one having been buried with Christ and resurrected to walk with Him in the newness of life. The Christians' behavior and profession are interwoven into the self-same framework of their identity. As a researcher, one has an ethical responsibility to the members of the congregation and participants of the research study. The researcher's goal will be to evaluate and attempt to lead transformation in the social-spiritual lives of the congregants. Ethical matters will have to be addressed in the research study design of the project. Therefore, the following ethical factors will be understood

in this research project: (1) Think about the participant or interviewee first; (2) Protect the participants' rights, welfare, and concerns; (3) Convey research objectives; (4) Safeguard the privacy of participants or interviewees; (5) Do not exploit participants; and (6) Make reports obtainable to participants.²⁵

The researcher obtained consent from each participant by informing them that if they receive a pre-survey/questionnaire and choose to participate by answering the questions on the first survey and submitting it to the researcher's email, such action will also serve as their consent to be a part of the research. This is noted also because no live or face-to-face interviews were conducted. However, each participant was informed that if they had any questions or failed to understand anything about the research process, they could email the researcher at any time for clarification or if they had any problems with the research. Each participant was informed that individual responses and information would be safe guarded but would also be used as part of the research study and details of what the study consisted of. Additionally, the researcher ensured that the results of the surveys and other information collected were kept on the researcher's computer which has a passcode. All information was emailed to the researcher's email at Liberty University. Every participant was also informed that the study was on a voluntary basis and that it is not mandatory for anyone to participate in it. When all the data was collected the research was organized and prepared for analysis.

Recruitment and Duration of the Study

The researcher recruited members who attended services regularly and was especially interested in the leaders of the church taking part in the research that were over 18 years old.

²⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 35, quoted from James P. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview*. Developmental Research Sequence (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1979), 260-261.

Once the church board granted permission for the research, this researcher openly asked for people to participate on Sunday two weeks before the research started. Additionally, recruitment letters were also handed out to everyone who attended service on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. It was also put on the church text. The goal was to try to reach out to them at least seven times.

The research took place over a four-week period. Participants were asked to read the Scriptures from the handouts each week and meditate on them, then to pray as they were led during each week using specific kingdom prayers. They were also asked to keep a journal of their time spent during their weekly prayer time, the specific prayers that they chose to pray, to pray at least one mandated prayer each week, and record their experiences of their prayer-time for evaluation at the end of the second and the fourth-week period. Each participant was surveyed at the end of the four-week period by means of a post-survey on their prayer life throughout the study.

Design Approach

The first step in the research process is for participants to complete a short, pre-survey questionnaire (see Eight Question Pre-Test Survey Questionnaire). Questionnaires were passed out after a two-week announcement period informing everyone about the research. Everyone who was willing to take part in the research project was asked to complete a pre-survey/questionnaire, which would also serve as consent for participating in the research. They were distributed on each service night and the Sunday prior to beginning the research. The survey questionnaire was placed on or submitted to the church group text also. Participants were told to answer the survey questionnaire as soon as possible and submit it to the researcher's email address at Liberty University. Each participant was told that this needed to be completed

prior to beginning the research, which would begin the next week on Sunday during the morning service.

The second step was to collect the results from each participant. This was done by sending surveys to the researcher's email. After collecting each participant's data from the pre-survey, the researcher began the data analysis. This gave the researcher a better understanding of and an overall picture or perspective of what each participant answered about their prayer lives regarding the following questions:

- Each participant was asked to circle types of prayers they were familiar with.
- Did the participants believe that God answers prayers?
- Did each one feel whether their prayers were effective?
- Would he or she be open to trying a new type of prayer?
- Would he or she be open to trying a new way of praying if it may be more effective for them?
- Would they be open to trying a new way of prayer if it may be more effective for others and society?
- Would they like to make any comments or ask any questions and to submit them to the researcher through email?
- How often do you pray?
- Briefly describe their process of praying when they prayed.

Answers to such questions gave the researcher a generalized idea of what each participant believed about prayer and a means to prepare for the next step, which would be to become familiar with where each participant was regarding prayer and know how to plan for the sermons on prayer.

A summarization of the research timeline would entail the following points:

- Two weeks to announce the research before issuing a pre-survey.
- Passing out the pre-survey to all those who want to participate.
- A week to obtain the results of the pre-survey.
- The fifth week, the first sermon will be delivered, researcher's field notes, and attendance records will be gathered.
- The seventh week, the second sermon will be preached, researcher's field notes, attendance records, and participant's journal of their prayer time experience will be gathered.

- The eighth week, the third sermon will be preached, researcher's field notes, and attendance records will be gathered.
- The ninth week, the fourth sermon would be delivered, researcher's field notes, attendance, and participant's journal of the last two weeks will be gathered.
- The tenth week, the post-survey would be passed out to all participants.
- The eleventh week, the results of the post-survey will be collected.

The twelfth week the evaluation and analysis of the rest of the data would begin (all data after the pre-survey).

The data collection for this research process was through three primary ways that did not involve actual interviews: field notes from the researcher concerning church attendance and responses from participants on Sunday from the message, from survey/questionnaires, and data from participants prayer journals. The analysis of the data was through triangulation from these three methods to safeguard authenticity and credibility of the data collection and analysis of the research project. The strategy of how the research plan was implemented will be discussed next.

Reliability and Validity of the Project Design

All those participating in the research project will receive a survey prior to beginning the research. The survey will encompass the following questions:

- Circle the types of prayer that you are familiar with.
- Do you believe God answers prayer?
- Do you feel your prayer life is effective?
- Would you be willing to try a new way of praying if you believe it will be more effective for you individually?
- Would you be willing to try a new way of praying if you believe it would be more effective for helping others and society?
- Would you like to make any comments or ask any questions (please address them to the researcher by submitting them to the email given: lmhunter@liberty.edu) If so, please do so.
- How often do you pray now?
- Describe the process of how you pray when you pray. Be specific.

The responses to the questions above will alert this researcher of the participants' understanding of prayer and the level of comprehension about prayer. Because the study occurred over a

twelve-week process, the weekly summary delineated above was the goal for implementing the data gathering and analysis procedure. Each participant would have no more than two weeks after the final sermon to submit all information or data to the email provided to them.

Design Approach Implemented

When the research began, each participant obtained instructions defining the data gathering of the research process from the commencement to the end. After each participant was told the Sunday when the research would begin, they were told to keep a journal of the times that they prayed and anything significant that they learned or experienced during their prayer time, which would be turned in or submitted to the researcher's email the second and final week. Each week, one mandatory prayer was given and each participant was instructed to pray from whatever website or book of their choice whenever they chose to. Each participant was also told that there were no wrong answers but to answer truthfully all questions and report their information from their prayer journals on the second and fourth week (an announcement was also made in church to remind them). After the fourth week, the second two weeks of the month of their prayer journal information would be due and the following week a post survey would be passed out for them to answer. This would complete the data necessary for the research process. All information was to be forwarded to the researcher's email. They were also told if they had any questions or needed clarification on anything from the researcher to submit that also to the email address given.

The second phase was to begin the first sermon. The first sermon was delivered and addressed the role of the church as it pertains to prayer. One major function or responsibility of the church is to pray about the problems that plague the United States and the world. For example, Ps 82 addressed the fact that God is looking for the church to pray about the injustices

of the world. It is the church's mandate to defend the weak and the fatherless, uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed, to rescue the weak and those in need, and to deliver them from the hand of the wicked (vv. 3-4). God is upset with the church when she does not pray for the injustices of the world. If the church is not praying, it is like Christians are upholding the unjust in the world and showing a preference for the wicked (v. 2). Christians who are ignorant of who they really are and do not understand their purpose on earth will be no different than any other person who does not know God and will go on living in ignorance while all the world continues in darkness and all the foundations of the earth are in turbulence (v. 5; Rom 8:22). The Word of God has called the children of God, "gods," but the church people will die like regular men and women and fall like the worldly rulers when they do not understand who they are and why they are here on the earth (vv. 6-7). It is time for the church to rise in prayer and ask God to judge the injustices of the world because the whole world is His creation (v. 8).

David prayed imprecatory prayers for the injustices of his day and provides a glimpse of how the Church should pray against the demonic forces that drive the ungodly to commit wrongs against humanity. Cindy Trimm's "Activation Prayer" is a good example of a present-day imprecatory prayer that is taken mostly from Psalm 35 and other psalms. Bill Winston's prayer "Confession for Executing Justice" is also a good prayer for the church to pray against injustice (see appendix B). Many people feel that it is wrong to pray the imprecatory prayers which consist mainly of Ps 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 109, and 139. However, the Bible said every word of God is good (Ps 30:5) and thus, are the kind of prayers that the church must pray against the demonic forces that drive mankind to commit deviant atrocities. The church must pray against the Devil and demonic spirits; such prayers are not against people but the demon spirits that are using the people to advance the kingdom of darkness.

Man oversees or has dominion over the earth because God gave the earth to humanity (Gen 1:26-30; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 8; 82; 115:16; Prov 21; Jer 29:7; Rom 13:1-2; and 1 Timothy 2:1-4). However, God will only intervene when men pray. The sermon title was “Arise O Lord and let Your Enemies be Scattered” (Num 10:35; Ps 68). A handout was provided to the participants. It was also announced that the Scriptures for the first sermon would be submitted to the group text if anyone misplaced their handout. The mandated prayer was also announced for the week. The researcher took field notes of the responses of the people during the sermon and noted the attendance.

The second sermon addressed the believer’s authority. The Scriptures that were covered and passed out as a handout after the message were Gen 1:26-30; Ps 8:1-9; 115:16; John 10:34; 14:12-17; 2 Cor 5:20; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:25; 1 Peter 1:2:9; and Rev 5:5. The sermon covered the fact that God’s plan for man to be a co-regent with Him has never changed (Ps 33:11; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:9). God never intended to rule the earth apart from humanity. It was his plan from the beginning for man to rule the earth like He ruled the third heaven (Matt 6:10). When Adam committed high treason, man ceased to be the god of this world and Satan took control of the earth and humans. Satan (2 Cor 4:40) became known as the god of this world. As a co-regent, Psalm 8:5-6 explains that God created humanity a little lower than Him. God sent forth His Son (Gen 3:15; John 3:16) to undo all the damage that Adam and the Devil did when humanity fell from grace. God sent His Son not only to save mankind but to open the way for humanity to take their rightful positions as heirs and joint heirs with Christ (John 10:10; 14:12-13; 2 Cor 5:20; Luke 15:31; Gal 4:1) to finish the mandate given Adam and the work that Jesus began on earth. When Jesus walked the earth, He was not in control of it (Luke 4:5-8) until He rose from the grave. He regained control of everything that humanity had lost (Matt 28:18).

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave the Church back the authority for everything that Adam lost in the fall and expects the Church to continue the mandate that was given to Him. As ambassadors for Christ, the church is to show the world what heaven is like here on earth (Deut 11:21-22; Matt 28:19-20). The earth is an extension of the third heaven, like a colony is an extension from another country (Matt 12:31-33; 21:33-41). The church is here to permeate the life of the Father here on earth and finish the work that Adam began and lost and Jesus regained for humanity to finish (Matt 6:10; 12:31-33; John 14:12-13). It is time for the Church to know who she is and fulfill her God given assignment on the earth. Jesus did not go to the cross just to die for sins of humanity, but He came to elevate His Church to her rightful position (Rom 5:17; Eph 1:19-2:10; 8:19; Rev 4:10; 5:8-10), to reign on the earth and to finish the work that Jesus began. Jesus is now the head of the Church, but a head can only function with a body (1 Cor 12:27; Rom 12:5; Eph 4:15-16; Col 1:8). This is conducted through prayer. Heaven does not respond to anything until the earth releases, or the people of God do something first (Matt 18:18). Whatever the church allows, God allows. Whatever the church disallows heaven disallows. The title of this sermon was: "I Have Given You Authority Over All the Power of the Enemy (Luke 10:19)."

The mandated prayer for the week was given and a handout of the Scriptures to all participants and members who wanted one. The researcher took notes of the attendance and took field notes of the participants' responses. It was also announced that this was the second week and all who were participating in the research project should submit their prayer journal information for the first two weeks to the email given them.

The third sermon delivered was on the believer's identity. The following Scriptures were addressed: "God said that man was created in His own image and likeness" (Gen 1:27).

Humanity is the only creation created to be little gods on the earth. Genesis 3 is the first time Satan is mentioned in the Bible and describes him as “more subtle than any other beast of the field that the Lord had made” and how he used a snake to trick Eve, which became the first sin on earth. But Exodus 28, Isaiah 14, and Revelation 12 discuss the first sin that occurred in the universe before man was created. In Genesis 3, the first sin or the fall of man occurs when Adam failed to keep Satan out of the garden because he had the power to banish him from the earth and did not.

When Adam disobeyed God by committing high treason as the head of humanity, it plunged the entire human race into sin. Adam was no longer the god of this world; Lucifer now has the title (Luke 4:5-7; 2 Cor 4:4). In Genesis 3:15, the first announcement of the gospel and hope of regaining all that Adam had lost was foretold. But God did not send His Son just to rescue all of humanity. He sent his Son to restore humanity back to a place of sonship (Luke 15:22) and restore his original purpose for Him (Matt 21:33-44).

One of the greatest tricks of the enemy against the Church or strategies that Satan uses against the Christian is to attack and try to keep a child of God ignorant about her identity. The kingdom parable about the Prodigal Son gives one insight into how both brothers had identification problems. The oldest son depicts the religious Christian who thought he had to work for what had already been freely given to him through the finished work of Jesus (Luke 15:29-31; Acts 20:32; Rom 8:16-17; Gal 3:26, 29; 4:7; Eph 1:3, 13-14; Titus 3:7; 1 Pet 1:3-5; Jas 2:5, etc.). The youngest son thought he could leave his father, take his portion of the wealth, and do better on the world’s system with his wealth than abiding in the kingdom of God. He failed miserably and when he realized or came to himself, he was willing to go back home as a hired servant. The devil does not want the child of God to know that when one is born again, he or she

has already become a part of the royal family of God (1 Pet 2:9).

In Luke 15:14, the younger son joined himself to a citizen of “that” country. He hired himself out as a servant. He was royalty, from rich breeding trying to excel in the mammon system. Those who have been born again are citizens of heaven now (Matt 17:26, Phil 3:20; Eph 2:19, Col 1:13). When a person is born again, he or she is transferred into the kingdom of heaven and of His dear Son (Col 1:13; 1 Peter 2:11). The devil wants to make Christians feel that they are only of this world, but Jesus told Nicodemus that when a person is not born again (or born from above) they cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). When one is born again, he or she can enter the kingdom of God and no mistake can take that away from them. But when the prodigal son had been beaten down by the enemy (working in the mammon system which is designed to keep a person under his control), he no longer felt worthy of being called a son of his father anymore. That is what the devil does to people in the church and outside. If they accept the lies of his that tear them down and make them feel worthless, he can control them.

The Father of the prodigal son was always looking for his younger son to come back home. When he finally returned home, the father requested several things to be done for his returning son that give a glimpse into what the enemy had done to the younger son’s image or identity. He first said to kill the fatted calf, which speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus as the Passover Lamb. It signifies the feast where the father embraces a soul that repents, the atonement for sin, and how it was sacrificed and eaten to formalize covenants, mediate disputes, and reconcile opposing individuals in the Old Testament (Genesis 15:9; 18:7; 21:28-32; and 26:28-31). He asked that he be clothed with the best robe (forgiveness to cover the shame and it also speaks of his royalty). His position as a son was fixed and nothing could change that. He would always be a son because he was born into royalty (John 3:1-6; 1 Pet 1:3-4, 2:9). The ring signified his

restoration of His identity and that he still belonged to his family, a picture of value, a sign of authority, wealth, honor, and conveying of inheritance (Gen 41:42; Esth 8:2 Rev 4:4; 5:10,12).

Finally, the significance of the shoes speaks of destitution. Only slaves and servants were barefooted in biblical times. Once again, the Father was showing the prodigal son that he had been restored to his previous place as a son and that nothing could change that in the eyes of the Father. For the Church, all these things speak of identity. A Christian should know that God the Father approves of each of His children because of the blood of Jesus. Favor and grace have already been given to each child of God. To walk in that covering, each one needs to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a robe of righteousness, a free gift of grace that was provided in the finished work of Jesus when He went to the cross (Rom 13:14; Eph 2:8; 4:24; Col 3:9-10). Immature Christians need to become cognizant that they need to grow up and take their rightful place as the sons of God (Gal. 4:1-3, 5-7). The whole creation is waiting for the Church to come to the realization of who she is so that the world can see what life in heaven looks like here on earth (Deut 11:21; Ps 8:82; Matt 6:9-10; 16:19; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9; Rom 8:19-22). It is of critical importance for the Church to know that she is an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus (Rom 8:17), that all that the Father has belongs to her (Mark 10:30; Luke 15:29-31), that she has been raised up to sit in power and dominion with the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 6:4; Col 3:1), and that she is a royal priesthood or should be operating on the earth as a king/priest (Rom 5:17; 1 Tim 6:15; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10) because the members of his body are kings but Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Deut 10:17; Rev 19:16).

The title of the third sermon was “What is Man that Thou Art mindful of Him” (Ps 8). The mandated prayer for the week was given and a handout of the Scriptures to all participants and members who wanted one. The researcher took notes of the attendance and took field notes

of participant responses. It was also announced that this was the third week and all who were participating in the research project should have already submitted their prayer journal information for the first two weeks to the email given them.

The final sermon delivered the following week was on spiritual warfare. In Rev 12:1-12, this is really a reference to the nation of Israel (Gen 37:9) and a brief synopsis of what will happen in the Tribulation Period. But that is not the focus of the message today. Spiritual warfare will be the focus of the message today. However, Luke 10:18-19 does address the fact that the devil has been defeated and that he tricked a third of the angels to follow him. Revelation 12 does address that fact also. Ephesians 6:10-18 depicts the armor of a warrior complete and fully dressed for battle for the Christian to win. Paul said after one has done everything to stand to continue to stand with what is depicted as a waistline or loins girded with truth. This is a spiritual representation of warfare but everything it describes is that of a mental battle. The breastplate of righteousness speaks about the gift of righteousness that the church has received from God (Rom 5:17; 1 Cor 5:21). If a person is struggling with sin today, she does not have to. Jesus has already defeated the devil. The good news is that He has done it for you. 1 John 4:4 said that the Church was of God and has already overcome the forces of evil because “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” But the only part of the Bible that works for the Christian is the part that they understand and the part that they believe. Jesus said that the Church would know the truth if they abided in the Word that would make them free (John 8:31-32). Knowing the truth will only set you free if you act on it or do what it says. The Christian is supposed to be a doer of the word not just a hearer.

The words armor, helmet, stand, withstand, feet (standing on one’s feet), etc. in Eph 6:10-18 all speak of the Christian mindset that the Christian must adopt to fight the good fight of faith

(1Tim 6:12). The Church is not fighting to get the victory. Jesus has already defeated the devil. The Church must maintain the victory that Jesus has already won (Romans 8:37-39; Luke 10:19). The Church is fighting from a place of victory and not trying to get the victory. Paul said, “above all” take the shield of faith whereby the Church will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph 6:16). This means that the devil will bring terrible thoughts to the Christian’s mind but faith in God’s Word will always overcome the thoughts or fiery darts of wickedness. “Resist the devil and he will flee” if you are submitted to God (Jas 4:7).

When the Jesus was preparing for His departure from this life in the “Upper Room Discourse,” He gave the Church a secret weapon to use: His Name (John 16:23-24; Phil 2: 8-11). When the Church prays in Jesus’s name, He has given the Church the authority to use His name. All the authority of Jesus is in His name; when the Church uses His name, it is the same as Jesus being there Himself. Christians must use the authority that He has given them and live a victorious life. Jesus has triumphed over the enemy, spoiled the enemy’s power (Eph 4:8; Col 2:15), and given the Church authority over all the power of the enemy. He said, “Nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Matt 28:18-19). Ephesians 6:10-18 speaks of putting on the whole armor of so that the Christian may be able to stand against the wiles of the enemy (v. 11). But one must remember the Word of God. The Christian is not fighting the enemy in his or her strength. The Christian is told to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might (v.10).

God has already defeated the enemy, but the Church must now rule over these defeated forces and keep them under her feet (Eph 1:20-23). Remember that God has raised the Church up into the heavenlies with Christ (Eph 2:6). When the Christian prays and worships God (Ps 149:5-9) with high praises and speaks God’s Word, it becomes a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance upon the powers of darkness over this world. It binds up the enemy and

chains demonic forces. The judgments that are written in the Bible against the wicked forces of darkness are released (v. 8-9). This honor has been given to all His saints. The title of this sermon was “Fight the Good Fight of Faith.”

Handouts of the Scriptures were subsequently passed out to all participants. It was announced that they would also be submitted to the church group text. The mandated prayer for the week was announced. The researcher took attendance and field notes of the participants’ responses. Participants were also reminded that their prayer journal for the first two weeks should have already been submitted to the email address given them and that the final two weeks of their prayer journal should be submitted to the email address as soon as possible. They were told that a post survey/questionnaire would be passed out the following week after the final journal information, which would end the research process.

Data Collection

The third week of the project began the data gathering process. Each participant received a pre-survey prior to beginning their prayer journals and prior to hearing the first sermon, which commenced the first week of their prayer journal, practices, and praying the mandated prayer. Everyone was informed that it was acceptable if they decided not to continue the research process at any time. The project necessitated communication only through email because no face-to-face interviews were involved. Each participant was given a pre-survey/questionnaire. After receiving it, those participating were required to submit their answers to the pre-survey to the researcher’s email address. Each participant had one week to submit their survey if they agreed to become a part of the research process. The participants were also informed that there were no wrong answers because everyone had to answer each question truthfully. If the researcher or participant had any questions, they were instructed to use the email as the point of

contact for the participants and the researcher.

The researcher noted that thirteen people chose to participate in the research project. At the end of the second week twelve participants had submitted their work to the email address given to them for the pre-survey/questionnaire. It was also announced that everyone's prayer journal information was due. When Week 3 began, it was announced that the pre-survey/questionnaire was still due if anyone had not already submitted while the previous week and that the prayer journal information was still due if anyone had not previously submitted it. At the end of Week 4, all participants were informed that the last two weeks of their prayer journals should be submitted right away and that a post-survey questionnaire would be given the following week. Week 5, the post-survey/questionnaire was passed out and announced that it was due the following week if anyone participating in the research project had not submitted all other information that it was due. All research information was submitted by Week 7.

In analyzing the pre-survey/questionnaire, most participants pray on a regular basis and most each day. This survey/questionnaire is a good tool for the researcher to gauge what each participant understands about prayer in terms of what kinds of prayer they are familiar with and the fact that they were willing to learn about kingdom praying if they were not acquainted with it; this is also known as praying the word of God or kingdom prayers. It also showed whether each participant believed at the time they were participating in the research if they felt their prayers were effective and proved that those who were participating were also opened to trying a different method of prayer if they had not been introduced to it before.

The third task was to analyze their journal information and finally their post-survey at the end of the research when all the messages have been preached, the researcher's field notes of their responses when the sermons were delivered, and attendance notes of their responses to the

messages. When all the information is evaluated, it will give the participants a basis to assess some aspects of their prayer lives and practices and what they believe about their prayers. This will also give the researcher a basic benchmark of their prayer lives and strategies to later teach to improve understanding of praying the Word of God if necessary.

The use of this prayer plan gave participants and the researcher a better insight into their knowledge of prayer and their prayer practices. The sermons also made participants aware of their roles in prayer from a kingdom perspective, their authority as believers, their spiritual identity regarding prayer, warfare strategies, and how to pray using the Word of God. The evaluation and analysis began the process of gathering or looking at the emails and the information submitted to the researcher's email, organizing, and analyzing the data. The researcher realized that all information had been submitted by eleven of the thirteen people who agreed to participate. Two females failed to submit their prayer journal information and the post-survey/questionnaires. One of the two females decided not to respond; a total of twelve participants completed each phase of the research process.

The researcher continued the evaluation and analysis process with the other information of the eleven participants by organizing the data obtained from the email. To safeguard that the collection process and analysis of the research information were not adulterated from an ethical perspective, all data was uploaded to the researcher's email for confidentiality. The data analyzation process entailed four areas: attendance that was kept or documented by the researcher of the Sunday and Thursday services, the researcher's field notes, the data from the survey/questionnaires, and each participant's prayer journal information. Then the researcher was able to see what kinds of prayer each participants was accustomed to, to see if participants felt that their prayers were currently effective and to see if participants were willing to try praying

the Word of God as a specific way of praying, see if any apparent patterns emerged from the way participants were currently praying or if any changes became apparent after the weekly Bible teachings, and will get a feel or see if participants embraced the new (if it was new) way or praying the Word of God.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized the theory of triangulation to ensure validation of the results of the research information. There were no formal interviews due to Covid-19 restrictions but pre and post surveys, prayer journal information, and the researcher's field notes of the attendance of the Church services, and the responses of the participants were analyzed of the duration of the study, which was over a four-week process. On initial evaluation of the surveys and other information no patterns seemed to emerge, but the results did provide an adequate amount of data to discover the level of prayer understanding and details of each individual prayer practice.

The researcher took note of the pre- and post-survey taking notes of the types of prayers participants were familiar with as a part of the analysis stage. Participants became aware of what the researcher was looking for by the questions that were requested, and that the objective of the research study was to ascertain information to assess properly their prayer practices in their private time with the Lord.

The research intervention plan above anticipated addressing the projected problem and intended to achieve the objective of the thesis project. In addition, it established a premise for gathering and investigating the research information to safeguard that this study was genuine or authentic, credible, and ethical. Participants recognized and realized their rights and had reassurance that their data was protected. Constructed on the outcomes of this research, the participants were willing to yield their prayer life data and adequate information was given to

reveal the kinds of prayers they understood, if they felt that their prayer-life was effective, that they were willing to explore new avenues of praying, and that they consented to actively participate in the research project. The information was developed to prepare a more wholesome apprehension of how to pray from a kingdom perspective, to pray the Word of God. Four pivotal themes were addressed for prayer efficacy and to amplify or enhance their knowledge concerning prayer: the believer's identity, the authority of the believer, their role as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and knowledge of spiritual warfare. Therefore, the sermons played an important part in equipping the participants to become more effective in their prayer time.

Without a proper understanding of one's identity, a Christian will not have an effective prayer life. Faith in Jesus Christ is essential. Hebrews 11 gives an account of OT believers who lived by faith. The difference in them and born-again believers today is that the Church must have her faith in Jesus. This is not just righteousness from a positional standpoint but an experiential and authoritative righteousness that allows the believer to access God's grace so one can live in the righteousness of God. In Romans 3:22, this righteous is available to everyone; however, it can only become experiential by one having faith in Jesus (Rom 10:9-10). It says, "That if thy confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."²⁶

The Kingdom of God (Heaven on Earth) is a sphere one moves into or accesses after total surrender to the supremacy of Jesus. This is predicated on the deep-felt belief in one's heart that God resurrected Jesus from the dead and inclusive of all the Bible verses that explain what was

²⁶ Jim Richards, *Heaven on Earth: Unveiling the Mystery of God's Kingdom* (Travelers Rest, SC: True Potential, Inc, 2019) Kindle.

achieved through His resurrection. Humans live from their heart. All of one's beliefs, emotions, conduct, words, and expression are an emanation or appearance from the heart. Because the heart is the headquarters of one's belief system, it is also the center of a person's identity. All Christian life becomes spiritual. This is the exclusivity and strength of the New Covenant. Christians are not simply endeavoring to have faith in a worldview but in the person of Jesus, who was victorious over sin, death, hell, and the grave. Subsequently the heart governs the identity of individuals' faith in Jesus, coupled with yielding to His supremacy, indicates that eventually Christians will comprehend and encounter themselves as becoming one with Jesus Christ (John 14:20; 17:20-23; 1 Cor 6:17). His conquests have become the Church's. The beautiful fact is that by the same Spirit and might that have resurrected Christ from the grave, the Christian experiences the same power. This is what Paul terms "*grace*: a strength, power, and capacity that works from our heart and comes by unmerited favor."²⁷

This intervention was intended to help participants program their hearts to be successful. Joshua 1:8 says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of the mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Spoken words program one's heart for success if the Word of God is spoken. But when one does not say what God has said, he or she cannot get the results that God has for them. "*Words are containers. They carry faith, or fear, and they produce after their kind.*"²⁸ Therefore when a person does not have faith like they should the heart of man has to be trained to have faith in the holy Scriptures.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Capps, *God's Creative Power*, 8.

This principle is spoken of in Joshua 1:8 and also mentioned in Romans 10:17. Faith is produced in the heart by hearing the Word of God consistently repeated. It does not happen automatically because the natural or unregenerate heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). It will not immediately believe or accept the word of God. Therefore, the human heart believes, or faith occurs, through a process of the Christian repeatedly and consistently articulating what the Bible says about situations until the long-term memory is impacted. It is like driving a car. A person may not have driven a car for years but if he learned how to drive, when the opportunity arises for him to drive again, he can because it has been stored in the long-term memory. The word of God must be programmed into a Christian's heart (or long-term memory until it becomes second nature). For him or her to have faith in God, a Christian must make a concerted effort to have faith by renewing her mind daily (Rom 12:1-3).²⁹ The fastest way for one to instill or produce faith in her heart is for her to hear herself articulate the word out loud consistently or daily. This is how the believer learns to walk in the authority of God, understand her identity, function in her proper role as a child of God or ambassador of Jesus, and perform spiritual warfare. As Charles Capps said, this "is a scientific application of the wisdom of God to the psychological makeup of man."³⁰

Another way this kingdom principle is demonstrated is by what Jesus said about the seed in Mark 4:14-20. The sower is the Christian, and it is up to each one to speak the Word of God or sow it into his heart by saying it until they bring the harvest forth in their own lives. The word of God is a seed and must be planted in one's heart like the seed of a plant or vegetable (Mark 11:23-24). The heart of the Christian is the soil. It is up to each person to say the right things or say

²⁹ Ibid., 8-9.

³⁰ Capps, *God's Creative Power Will Work for You*, 9.

what agrees with the Word of God daily or consistently while believing that he or she already has it, and they will have whatever they are saying (Rom 12:1-2). But this law also works inversely. The things we do not want, we should not say because that will happen also (Num 14). This is the process a Christian goes through to plant the Word of God in their heart or renew their mind. This is the most important fundamental principle of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:13). As the participants continue to implement praying the word of God in this manner their faith in God will increase and their prayer lives will be more effective.³¹

In addressing the message on authority, which is another element that believers need to understand so that their prayer lives will be effective, Kynan T. Bridges talks about the story of the Trojan Horse in Greek mythology. The Greeks resorted to trickery and deceit against their enemies by constructing a wooden horse, in which elite highly skilled warriors hid within. The horse was humbly offered to the Trojan king as a present to signify their acknowledgement of loss. They left the horse outside the gates of the city as the Trojans watched the ships pretend to sail away forfeiting the battle. The Trojan army took the wooden horse within the gates of the city for a great celebration of victory over the Greeks. They were unaware of the elite warriors hidden within the wooden horse who waited to attack after getting into the city. They came out and opened the gates for the Greek army who was covertly stationed beyond the gates of the city. This depicts the state of the body of Christ and the Christian who does not know his identity and the authority that has been given him. The authority of the believer that Jesus has given to the Church is impermeable. However, multitudes of Christians have permitted “Trojan Horses” of doublemindedness, unbelief, panic, anxiety, and fear to steal the authority that Christ has

³¹ Ibid., 14-15.

provided for them. The devil is a defeated foe but if the body of Christ is ignorant of this fact, they will allow him to gain access into their lives to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).³²

The prayer “I am prayer” and the “Who/What I am” (see Appendix A and C) prayers were given to help participants understand the authority that is already theirs. Additionally, the sermon on authority informed them they are able to keep thoughts of fear, pain, unforgiveness panic and a host of other things and thought from oppressing them. The Church must understand that she is sitting together with Jesus in the heavenlies. Paul says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:4-6). This “refers to an act of benevolence whereby a king or other ruler extends his kingdom to friends, family, and dignitaries as an expression of equality or co-authority. This means that Jesus Christ has given the Church the same authority that He has (Luke 10:19).³³

The Church body is composed of delegated representatives who have access to all the resources of the heavenly country that we have been born into (Luke 15:31; John 3:3, 5; Col 1:13; and Rev 5:9-10). When the Church becomes cognizant of her identity and authority that she has been given a time of unparalleled outburst of miracles, signs and wonders will manifest on the earth that the world has never seen (Matt 28:18-19; John 14:12; and Rom 8:19).³⁴

³² Kynan Bridges, *Kingdom Authority: Taking Authority Dominion over the Powers of Darkness* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2015), Kindle, ch. 1, loc 205-217.

³³ Kynan Bridges, *Kingdom Authority*, Kindle, Ch 1, Loc 290.

³⁴ Richards, *Heaven on Earth*, Kindle.

As ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor 5:20), the Church represents Him, or presents Him again, and establishes the will of the Father in the earth.³⁵ The Church is a holy nation of kings and priests and members of the royal family in heaven (1 Pet 2:9). As kings and priest, it is the responsibility of the Church to legislate through prayer the critical issues of the world, their communities, families, and church. Participants became aware of their responsibilities and role concerning praying for the problems in the world (Ps 82; Rom 13:1-2; 1 Tim 2:2). Kings legislate by issuing decrees (Job 2:7; 22:28; Ps 148:6; Ps 23).³⁶ Participants could understand when they prayed what God had said about them and became aware of their position in Christ.

The mandated prayer for injustice was Bill Winston's Prayer "Confession for Executing Justice" (see Appendix B). Psalm 82 describes the role of the Church and her responsibility to pray against the forces of Satan regarding the injustices of the world and how God looks at the Church in her role and responsibility in this area. Participants learned about imprecatory prayers and their effective and usefulness in spiritual warfare to combat demonic spiritual forces.³⁷

The mandated prayer for spiritual warfare was "the Activation Prayer" in Cindy Trimm's *The Rules of Engagement*, vol. 1.³⁸ The Bill Winston prayer, "Confession for Executing Justice," and the "Activation Prayer" are both good examples of modern imprecatory prayers. It is and must be understood that Christians are to pray against the demonic spirits that are driving individuals to commit crimes, have feelings or precipitate and foster feelings of racial injustice, and other atrocities that seem to plague societies around the world today. God is a God of justice

³⁵ Rickard Anderson, "Employees as Ambassadors: Embracing New Role Expectations and Coping with Identity-tensions," *Corporate Communications International Journal* (2019), 1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2019-0038>.

³⁶ Nixon, *Decrees Inspired by the Psalms*, 16.

³⁷ Robert E. Fugate, *Biblical Imprecations*, Kindle.

³⁸ Trimm, *Rules of Engagement*, vol. 1, Part 2. The complete book with all volumes is accessible at: epdf.pub/the-rules-of-engagement4bccfd3fd5717414f44.

and a lover of how justice (Mic 6:8). It is because of this Christians must pray that He oversee the injustices done in the world and that people refrain from to trying to make right unjust situations. Therefore, Christians must pray that His vengeance (Deut 32:35; Ps 99:8; Nah 1:2; Rom 12:19; 2 Thess 1:8) prevails because He alone knows how to handle inequalities.³⁹

Participants were able to learn about imprecatory prayers and use them in their own personal struggles to combat issues that they may need to address. Participants were also able to use the information in the sermons and build their repertoire or spiritual concepts in their warfare strategies and arsenal when using either book on *The Rules of Engagement* by Cindy Trimm. For instance, in part 1 of the first volume of book, she gave sound instructions about various tools that may be needed to accompany their prayers, such as a Bible, recording device, and points (A-G): explication on the proper perspective, posture, position (throne room prayers), proper adornment, use of one's authority, and effective use of one's spiritual weapons.⁴⁰ Bill's Winston's book, *Vengeance of the Lord: The Justice System of God*, also gave the participants invaluable information concerning imprecatory praying.⁴¹

One last important aspect of this intervention design is that this kind of prayer mimics the way that Jesus prayed. Participants became informed and learned to pray like Jesus did. He did not focus on or verbalize the problem, but He prayed for the solution (John 11:41-42). He always spoke only things that agreed with the Word of God, always spoke the result that he wanted, and He defeated the devil by speaking the Word of God. "The word of God conceived in the heart, formed by the tongue, and spoken out of the mouth is creative power."⁴²

³⁹ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*.

⁴⁰ Trimm, *Rules of Engagement*, vol. 1, Part 2

⁴¹ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*.

⁴² Capps, *God's Creative Power Will Work for You*, 17-18.

The data analysis consisted of surveys, prayer journals of the participants, attendance of the participants, and the researcher's field notes. This was done because of what Sensing advocated. The fundamental element to interpretation is not in describing it by a set of prescribed rules or procedures or in the instruments, but in the way one views the incidents of day-to-day living. Any single method will be limited. Therefore, triangulation (a multifaceted data gathering methodology devised to calculate a single view) is perceived as better and gives a multiplex perception of the intervention supporting a coagulated interpretation. Cross-checking information offers broadmindedness and deepness analysis of data and adds to the credibility of the research project. It is a method of enhancing, increasing, and reinforcing theoretical connections.⁴³ The data was analyzed to see if themes, slippage, and silences emerged in the data. The data did reveal some silences and some patterns also surfaced. Slippages asks the question of the data, "What is not consistent?" "It is a matter of considering the weight of evidence and looking for the best fit between data and analysis."⁴⁴ This stage of examination caused cognizance so that participants understand that one must know their identity, authority, role in prayer, and be skilled in spiritual warfare to be effective in prayer (Jas 5:16).

Assessment of the research intervention is an essential element in the Doctor of Ministry theses project. In the overall pursuits and commitments of a busy pastorship, assessments of programs, research intervention projects, and other ministerial activities seldom get consideration. When a small ministry implements a new visionary idea, associate ministers begin other assignments sometime. Then when the principal campaign achieves its goal, the following stage of development begins. This succession persists all through the lifetime of healthy

⁴³ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72-78.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

churches. Yet, assessment and contemplation are often forced to the background. The research theses necessitate the scholar-pastor to decelerate and focus on sealing the circle. The objective of demanding concentrated consideration to the evaluation aspect of the problem is to initiate a plan of performance, a means of contemplating, that the graduate will be dependent upon throughout one's lifetime.⁴⁵

The implementation of the research intervention plan took five stages. The first phase was to announce for two weeks after the recruitment letter that a short pre-survey/questionnaire would be handed out on the Sunday following the two-week announcement. Phase two began when all interested parties who wanted to be a part of the research intervention project took the pre-survey/questionnaire home to answer the questions. Phase three began when all interested parties submitted their answers to the researcher's email address, which also served as each participant consenting to become a part of the research. Phase four began when participants attended the four Sunday services, followed the instructions to journal their prayer experience each day and submit their journal information on the second and fourth Sunday to the researcher's email address and answer the post-survey/questionnaire on the following week. This phase was completed when all work was submitted to the email. Phase five began when all data was submitted and ended after all the data was analyzed.

A concluding part of the analysis phase was an evaluation of the researcher's notes of the responses to the sermons and attendance of the services. The researcher's notes exhibited an explanatory and inferential viewpoint of the analysis method based on the response of the participants. The ending of this phase in the writing process gave the researcher and the participants of Total Life Ministries a better understanding of Kingdom praying and their

⁴⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 78.

responsibilities as ambassadors of Christ.

Based on findings from the data analysis, this thesis research project made recommendations for participants to read several of the books that dealt with aspects of the kingdom that were spoken of in the intervention which included the following: The trilogy of Dr. Jim Richards,⁴⁶ Cindy Trimm's *The Rules of Engagement*,⁴⁷ Bill Winston's books on *Vengeance of the Lord*,⁴⁸ *The Kingdom of God Within You*,⁴⁹ and *Faith in the Marketplace*,⁵⁰ Robert Fugate's book on imprecatory psalms,⁵¹ and books on kingdom citizenship and concepts by Myles Munroe.⁵² During future leadership and ministerial meetings, it was suggested that each leader and minister would teach lessons of 30-45 minutes during the staff and leadership meetings of what he or she has learned from reading the books to permeate the research intervention process because of the scope of limitedness of only a one-month process.

Summary

Chapter Three explained the method used for data collection and analysis of the information for this research intervention project. The intervention project design concisely discussed the ministry setting, the type and rationale of the study, the sample size, and the participants. It also explored the method of the design of the intervention, which evaluated the

⁴⁶ Richards, *Heaven on Earth*, Kindle. Jim Richards, *Keys of the Kingdom: The Authority to Establish Heaven on Earth* (Travelers Rest, SC: True Potential, Inc, 2019) Kindle.

⁴⁷ Trimm, *The Rules of Engagement*, 5 vol.

⁴⁸ Winston, *Vengeance of the Lord*, viii.

⁴⁹ Bill Winston, *The Kingdom of God in You: Discover the Greatness of God's Power Within* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2006).

⁵⁰ Bill Winston, *Faith & The Marketplace* (Oak Park, IL: Bill Winston Ministries, 2016).

⁵¹ Fugate, *Biblical Imprecations*, Kindle.

⁵² Myles Munroe, *The Principle & Power of Kingdom Citizenship: Keys to Experiencing Heaven on Earth* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2018); idem, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer: How to Call Heaven to Earth* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2018).

kinds of assessments that will furnish the essential data and or information for analysis. It also gave a description of how the researcher will analyze the data results of the survey/questionnaires, the participant's prayer journal data, the researcher's field notes, and attendance of the participants to show the correlation of the information may or may not interact in the participants' viewpoint during they prayer time at home in their private time with God and while in the church setting. Lastly, this section summarized the actual implementation of the research intervention design. To ensure the validity of the data analysis method, the triangulation model was used because a single method of analysis would have had limitations. In this study, survey questionnaires, attendance records, participants' prayer journals, and the researcher's field notes validate the data.

Chapter 4

Results

This section will examine results obtained from the strategy utilized to address the research problem of decreasing attendance levels at prayer and worship services at Total Life Ministries church. It seems many people no longer feel a need or desire to attend church services. Many do not appear to recognize a need for intimate relationship with God. Eric Q. Truss researched why African American men are neglecting the church. Truss found the decline in attendance levels for Black males as highest among all faith groups in epidemic proportion. Truss concluded prayer as the strength of evangelism. Truss found also that church leaders have lost focus on praying for evangelism during worship.¹ This current research intervention and study sought to understand whether a better understanding of the several types of prayer would create a better motivation and incentive for attending prayer and worship services more faithfully. Additionally, the study sought to gain a better understanding on whether church members could benefit from gaining a better understanding on the types of prayer to become more effective in their prayer life and become more effective in ministering to others. Group prayer is advantageous to individual members and families as well. Christians are commanded to pray in the Bible and consistent prayer practices at church and home can be beneficial at individual personal levels and at combined unified levels.

This research will provide significant insights on the perspectives of church attendees on the importance of praying, types of praying, group prayer, and faithful prayer service attendance. Unfortunately, with the sudden onslaught of Covid-19 in society, results will be greatly affected

¹ Truss, "The Decline of Church Attendance in Black America," 28, 48.

and are beyond the control of this research endeavor. This research seeks to gain a greater understanding of why prayer and worship church services levels have stalled or declined for some members. The study will glean insights to ascertain the effects and dispositions of this new strategy and study on prayer and to seek to what extent was it effective or not in increasing prayer and worship service attendance levels at Total Life Ministries church services. Gaining a better understanding and perceptions regarding how church attendees comprehend the several types of prayer and praying, praying practices of church attendees, and whether or not it will lead to greater levels of faithful church attendance will be evaluated. Since the Bible commands that men/women ought always to pray (Luke 18:1), pray without ceasing (I Thess 5:17), and to pray that “God’s will” will be done on earth as in heaven (Luke 11:2); and furthermore, states that believers should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb 10:25), this effort is worthwhile.

Faithful prayer and worship service attendance is paramount to a healthy Christian lifestyle for individual believers, a believer’s family, and society at large. Benefits of faithful church attendance pointed out by Rick Warren include: being formed for and identifying with God’s family, having a place to belong, experiencing life together, cultivating community, becoming Christ-like, growing and transforming, defeating temptation, serving God, accepting one’s assignment, using God given talents and gifts, having God’s power in weakness, gaining a privilege, and living with purpose.² Thigpen states, “Church leaders have become too busy to address the church body, becoming more concerned with their personal stability and security.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 121-23.

The Church needs to build on Christ as her foundation to increase attendance, and omitting the Great Commission causes the church to fail on its mission to grow the Church.³

This chapter will provide analysis and explanations for the participatory action research intervention conducted at Total Life Ministries. Reasoning and justification according to the standards of academia will be provided at every stage of analysis. The chapter section will provide analysis according to the following order: there will be study participant descriptive information, the pre-survey questionnaire results, teaching seminar/sermon topics and contents evaluation, participants journal entries evaluation, post-survey questionnaire results, researcher field notations discussion, limitations, and overall conclusions.

Participants Descriptive Demography

All participants of the intervention were members of Total Life Ministries, and all participants were over age 18. The participants consisted of 12 people ($n = 12$) including 4 males and 8 females. All participants were African American. All participants of the intervention were members and most ministers at Total Life Ministries; all participants were age 18 or older. Of the four males, two were ages 39-45, one was age 60, and one was age 65. Of the females, three were ages 30-35, two were ages 36-40, one was age 45, one was age 53, and one was age 59. Of the men, one is an associate pastor at Total Life Ministries. One of the men is a minister and praise service team leader. One man had previously been a deacon who was later called into ministry. The fourth man is a minister and a teacher in the public school system. Two of the four male participants are board members of Total Life Ministries. Chapter 3 reports fourteen participants for the intervention. This was the number initially; however, two women dropped

³ Thigpen, "Attractional to Missional," 4.

out due to Covid-19. All eight women who participated in the intervention are ministers at Total Life Ministries. One of the women is the pantry administrator, one is a previous daycare administrator, one is a psychiatric case worker, three are working in business departments in corporate/business industries, one is a homemaker and mother, and one is working in the nursing field. As noted in Chapter 3, one participant withdrew from the study during the data collection process. Thus all 12 study participants were ministers at Total Life Ministries church. Non-probability sampling techniques were used. This is appropriate because this is a pilot, phenomenological study with hermeneutical consistency and a case study in essence.

It should also be re-noted that all members of Total Life Ministries age 18 and over were invited to participate in the study. And even those who attend that are not officially members of Total Life Ministries but are considered visitors were also invited to participate. Many of the Total Life Ministries congregational members were excited about the study and wanted to attend and listen to the material presented but stated they did not want to take part in the paperwork part of the study or the study officially. Some stated that fully participating would make them anxious and therefore formally declined the opportunity. Additionally, at one point in the recruiting process, twenty-four entrants demonstrated interest in the study. However, once government restrictions called for church closings due to Covid-19, the end results numbers of the participants declined. Furthermore, future efforts will be made to have a study with participant church lay members.

The Eight Question Pre-Test Survey Questionnaire Results

Surveys can provide tremendous contributions to congregational life studies by providing relevant quantitative insights and perspectives.⁴ Survey questionnaire instrumentation was a part of this intervention process. The survey comprised eight main questions that would aid in comprehending the understandings and perceptions of the participants' understanding of the responsibilities of the role and mission of church members as the body of Christ, types of prayers and praying, having an effective prayer life, and fulfilling the mission of the church according to the Great Commission left by Jesus before ascension. The questions would also provide insights on the participants' praying habits and the willingness of participants to try new types and ways of praying. This information will be greatly beneficial to the leadership of Total Life Ministries.

The survey questions and evaluation were as follows:

Question # 1. Circle the types or forms of prayer that you are familiar with or have heard of:

- a. intercessory prayer
- b. the Lord's Prayer
- c. imprecatory prayers/psalms
- d. kingdom perspective prayer

Of the twelve respondents, all twelve were familiar with and heard about the Lord's Prayer and intercessory prayer. Only three respondents were familiar with or had heard about imprecatory prayers. And only one respondent was familiar with kingdom perspective prayers and praying. This is significant because types of prayers and praying habits can drastically affect one's lifestyle in the home as a family, in society, at work, in business activities, and in leisure or recreational activities. Knowing how and what to pray when confronted with various trials and

⁴C. Hermans and W.J. Schoeman. 2016. "Survey Research in Practical Theology and Congregational Studies." *Acta Theologica*, no. 122 (October): 45. <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v21i1.5s>.

tribulations can be greatly beneficial to Christians. Having an effective, fervent prayer life can be beneficial to one's mental and spiritual health. When a person or persons are confident that their prayers are heard and will be answered, it can make a major difference in the attitudes of an individual. Such attitudes will reflect in relationships individuals have with others, such as: in marital relationships, relationships with children and extended family members, with business relationships, co-worker relationships, friendships, with neighbors and the those in the community, and with fellow church family. Furthermore, the researcher believes having an effective prayer life and praying practices can relieve stress, anxiety, fears, phobias, and lead to mental wellness. The researcher believes it can also aid in good physical bodily health as well. The bar graph below will demonstrate a visual on prayer types of findings. Since not many of the respondents were very familiar with imprecatory prayers and kingdom perspective praying, further discussion and analysis will concentrate on these two types of prayers in a following section for more enlightenment and analysis.

Question 2: Do you believe God answers prayer?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. maybe

All twelve respondents answered yes to this question. Believing that God does hear and answer prayer is crucial to becoming a Christian and to living a Christian lifestyle. Any person cannot receive salvation without a believing heart in Christ and in believing that God will hear and answer prayer. Prayer is crucial to intimacy with God. Prayer is crucial to receiving from God. Additionally, prayer is crucial to helping others come to Christ.

Question 3: Do you feel your prayer life is effective?

- a. yes
- b. no

c. maybe

For this question, eleven respondents answered yes and there was one maybe. This is also a very crucial question because if a person is unsure of effectiveness, there could possibly be poor praying practices occurring. There could also possibly be some doubts in their belief, and or some other critical life events that are hindering a person. The researcher hoped that something said or taught in the teaching sermon seminars will address this situation.

Question 4: Would you be willing to try a new way of prayer if you believe it would be more effective for you individually?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. maybe

All twelve respondents answered yes to this question. As before mentioned, willingness is vital to change.

Question 5: Would you be willing to try a new way of prayer if you believe it would be more effective for helping others and society?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. maybe

All twelve respondents answered yes to this question. Yet again, willingness is vital to change. Praying for those battling demonic forces of addiction, or for those suffering abuses such as human trafficking, child abduction and abuse, rape, wrongful imprisonment standards, war, neglect, genocide, unfair laws, racism, discriminatory practices, and other major situations can be essential to helping to better society, individuals, and families who have to suffer because of such experiences and living conditions. It can also aid in helping to bring down cartels and other organizations bringing drugs into the country and those who work with these organizations that

are in high places in society that are co-conspirators and contributors in the process as a result of the love of money. Prayer can help with other wrongs in society that are against the laws and rules of God, such as homosexual practices, inordinate affections, principalities, and everyone or anything willing to exalt itself against the knowledge of God.

Question 6: Would you like to make any comments or ask any questions (please address them to the researcher by sending them to the email above (if so, please do so).

No one sent any comments or questions to the email; therefore, the researcher assumed that respondents were fully invested in the intervention study, in the upcoming teaching sermon seminars, and the rest of the intervention process.

Question 7: How often do you pray now?

Responses to this question are as follows: One respondent answered every day. Five respondents stated daily. One respondent stated praying all throughout the day. One respondent prays each morning between three a.m. and five a.m. to start the day. One respondent explained praying at least twice a day. Two responded as praying many times through the day. One respondent recorded praying three times a day. Based on these findings, centering on imprecatory prayer, kingdom perspective prayer, and praying needed the greater amounts of concentration for this intervention project.

Question 8: Describe the process of how you pray when you pray now. Be very specific.

This question was asked to obtain insight into the praying process and practices used by the respondents. Obtaining insight into how respondents prayed was helpful with teaching things that would enable respondents to feel more victorious and effective in their spiritual prayer lives. One respondent was very brief and stated, "I pray in the spirit." Respondent two described starting with worship and praise and going on to asking for forgiveness of any sins committed

knowingly and unknowingly. Next, the respondent prays for loved ones and church family. Following this the respondent prays with declarations for a productive and prosperous day. The prayer ends with thanksgiving and praise unto God. Respondent three reported praying in the mornings starting with praise and thanksgiving, praying for others, and praying for things needed. Another respondent described using prayers from Bill Winston and Gregory Dickow. Respondent four described starting with thanksgiving, praying for protection from the enemy, and praying for family, friends, and others. Respondent five reported praying with intercession or praying the Lord's Prayer. Respondent six reported praying using decrees and declarations to start the day, later praying and interceding on behalf of others, praying for spiritual and personal needs, and praying for family members. The other six respondents described starting with thanksgiving and praise, praying for others, praying for needs or situations they are facing, and closing with more thanksgiving and praise. Interviews would probably bring much greater depth to these questions because the researcher could ask questions to get more detailed discussion on prayer times, possible postures of prayer, prayer habits, and feelings and experiences occurring during prayer sessions.

Analysis of Pre-Test

The surveys were helpful in pinning down perceptions and levels of comprehension from respondents on the several types of prayer, the willingness levels of respondents to change, and areas where more information and training would be beneficial for respondents. The teaching sermon seminars in the following sections will provide more detailed information on imprecatory prayer and kingdom perspective praying. The information gained from the survey instrument was very useful for developing sermon teaching seminars content and points of emphasis. It is hopeful people are praying everywhere. It is rewarding for the researcher to know the

respondents are praying. The researcher hopes that all respondents, church members, and Christians everywhere will be confident in having an effective prayer life that will generate change in the home, local community, and at national, regional, and global levels.

This researcher believes group prayer can produce large levels of transformation in the community and society. Personal prayer involves distinct, individual levels of intimacy with God, and can relieve cares and concerns on the mind and hearts of individuals. Prayer should be mixed with faith and confidence that God will hear and answer prayers. Prayer does not have to be robotic or just going through the motions. Prayers do not have to be long and drawn out. However, prayer should be worshipful, sincere, diligent, fervent, and honest. The Scriptures notated the earnestness, fervency, and effectiveness of Elijah's prayers when he prayed, and rain was withheld for three and a half years. Elijah then prayed again later, and rain was restored. This was found in James 5:16. Jesus stated, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt 16:19).

In Matthew 18:18, Jesus reiterates the same principle of binding and loosing for handling any crimes (or conflicts) that may occur. Verses 19-20 reads, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This supports the concept of group praying practices. We must believe that God rewards those who diligently seek Him. Yet again, Jesus said, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt 21:22). Additionally, the scriptures in James 5:16, 19-20 also explain the benefits of praying and praying for one another: causal for healing and converting those in error and sin.

Based on the survey instrument, it was concluded that respondents were aware of and understood the basic Lord's Prayer and intercessory prayer models. However, findings demonstrated that respondents could benefit from more content and material on imprecatory prayer and kingdom perspective praying. This aided in gathering and presenting this content and material in the teaching sermon seminars that took place. Many would probably agree or question that linking prayer and prayer practices as a potential strategy for improving declining levels of prayer and worship services levels is a reach. However, because the doctorate degree requires contributing new knowledge to the field of study, researchers must use creative and critical thinking skills and become innovative. It is important to justify methods used and remain within the guidelines required by the academia. Therefore, it is prudent that the researcher discusses oversights within the survey instrument.

The first oversight is a question that could have asked participants to circle the number of times he or she prayed daily, listing one, two, three or more and offered a space for explanation. This would have brought greater clarity and possibly given more specific numbers for this question. A second oversight is an additional question that could have asked for potential strategies and suggestions for increasing attendance levels from the participants as well. This could possibly produce more modes for consideration and inquiry. Third, the survey could have asked why participants think that attendance levels were declining. Identifying causes could aid in trying to remedy the problem. The fourth oversight entails adding a question to include perspectives of the participants on the benefits of corporate or group prayer. This could provide insight on participant perceptions of the importance of group prayer. These things would aid in demonstrating the importance of faithful church services attendance. Sometimes addressing

issues such as declining attendance levels head-on can stimulate contemplation among members and possibly encourage a renewal to commit to being more faithful.

The church is the body of Christ on earth and, as such, a body cannot work effectively without the use and cohesiveness of all its members. When the natural body loses a member, it is weakened and can endure hardships that have to be overcome. The same is true of the natural church body of believers. Furthermore, gaining greater levels of comprehension on this could be motivational to faithful church attendance. Despite this, however, the researcher prayed about it and felt that a linkage was provided from the scriptures that would aid in justifying this research intervention endeavor, nevertheless. Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37-38). Therefore, prayer is an appropriate strategy. It is unfortunate, in a sense, that all participants were ministers without any lay members. A study with lay members could be beneficial to perhaps motivating lay members to consider their personal prayer practices and become more intentional in faithfully attending prayer and worship church services as well. This study can serve as a blueprint for future interventions though since this is a pilot study.

Types of Prayer Dissection

The four types of prayer listed in the survey instrument were the Lord’s Prayer, intercessory prayer, imprecatory prayers, and kingdom perspective praying. It is noteworthy to explain that the Lord’s Prayer that was taught to the disciples and modeled by Jesus as well, is comprised, or inclusive of all the three other types of prayer listed. First, Jesus covered everything necessary within the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. The prayer started with worship. The prayer then went on to petitioning God for what was needed. Things necessary are that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven and that we are provided with daily bread

physically and spiritually. Christians are to ask that God will forgive their trespasses or debts as they forgive others' trespasses or debts. They are to pray to not be led into temptation and to be delivered from evil. The prayer returns to worship by acknowledging God's divinity, omnipotence, and worthiness of worship ("for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever").

Intercessory prayer is to intercede. A definition for intercede provided by Webster is to plead or petition on the behalf of one or ones in difficulty or trouble.⁵ A second definition also from Webster is to mediate or attempt to reconcile differences between two people or two groups.⁶ When the Lord's Prayer ask God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that is interceding for people, causes, and wrongs. This is because people are on earth and it is God's will that not anyone should perish according to 2 Peter 3:9. Intercession can be made for so many individuals and groups in society such as those who are battling addiction, those who are human trafficked, children who are being abused, those in poverty, those suffering racial discrimination, and so forth.

I Timothy 2:8 also states it is God's will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. When the Lord's Prayer asks that the Lord will forgive people of their debts or trespasses as they have forgiven others' debts or trespasses, this is also intercessory. Paul instructs that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty because it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Tim 2:1-3).

⁵ Laurence Urdang and Stuart B. Flexner, eds., *The Random House College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1973), 693.

⁶ *Ibid*, 1320.

Supplications were not listed in the survey instrument, thereby producing a potential further oversight. Webster defines supplications as humbly and earnestly entreating or appealing in prayer by kneeling. Another definition for supplication is to petition. Synonyms were listed as implore, solicit, appeal, or beseech.⁷ Imprecatory prayers can also be located in the Lord's Prayer when asking God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, when it is understood that these curses or prayers are not aimed towards people but towards wrestling with demonic forces, principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places or the heavens as explained in Eph 6:12. Examples of some of these forces could include racism, genocide, euthanasia, hatred, jealousy, envy, strife, unforgiveness, murder, suicide, unnatural and inordinate affection, practices of homosexuality, witchcraft, unfair discrimination, and other things.

Kingdom perspective prayers or praying also are found within asking God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. A kingdom deals with decrees, orders, and petitions and, as such, entails making decrees and declarations. Christians unaware of these processes are living beneath their privileges. First Peter 2:9 informs that Christians are part of a chosen generation and a royal priesthood. This is vital to church authority and identity individually and collectively. This can additionally be crucial to faithful church attendance. Injustices and situations in the world are desperately calling for the Church globally to become a catalyst for much needed change through prayer and service. Despite having identified these factors, one may wonder why this study is so strongly concentrating on praying from a kingdom perspective. The researcher would like to provide further discussion on this topic.

A key component of praying from a kingdom perspective is praying the Word of God. Praying from a kingdom perspective provides a foundation for believers to receive from God

⁷ Urdang and Flexner, eds., *The Random House College Dictionary*, 1320.

from a positional standpoint that is conducive to intimate experiences and authoritative abilities when it is mixed with faith in God. This becomes evidenced by living in the righteousness of God. Chapter 3 explained praying and living one's life must be confessed with one's mouth and believed in one's heart, as stated in Romans 10:9-10. These things must be based on the fundamental belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The importance of the spoken word mixed with faith was fully explained in Chapter 3.

Teaching Sermon Seminars Results

Teaching sermon seminars was the next phase of this intervention. These seminars occurred on Sunday mornings at the Total Life Ministries church building location. These sermon seminars were embedded within the regular weekly Sunday morning praise and worship services. There were also two teaching sermons embedded within a Thursday night prayer and worship service as well. These sermons will also be included in the discussion and analysis. These procedures had been previously set up and approved by the Total Life Ministries' pastor and governing board members. All intervention participants were present for all of the teaching sermon seminars except one participant was out of town for one Sunday. The participant was able to listen by cell phone taping to this seminar upon return.

The major aim of the teaching sermon seminars was to provide emphasis on the role and responsibility of Christians to be agents of change on the earth. This command and responsibility started with the Great Commission left by Jesus Christ before ascension in Matthew 28:19-20 where it states, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Mark 16:15 recorded it as "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Luke 24: 47 stated,

“that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” The next section of this analysis will present the teaching sermon seminar topics, main points, scripture text and relevant scriptures, and the recommended prayer or prayers to read, study, and pray for the week.

Teaching Sermon Seminar Week 1: Topic: The Role of the Church as Ambassadors for Christ and How It Pertains to Prayer.

Sermon Main Points:

1. Defend the weak and the fatherless
2. Uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed
3. Rescue the needy from the hand of the wicked
4. Pray for the injustices of the world

Scriptures Given: Gen 1:26-30; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 1-9; 82:1-8; 115:16; Prov 21:1; Jer 29:7; Dan 2:20-23; 9:18-19; Rom 13:1; 1 Tim 2:1-4;

Mandated Prayer to Pray for the Week: “Confession for Executing Justice” by Bill Winston (See Appendix B)

Teaching Sermon Seminar Week 2: Topic: The Believer’s Authority.

Sermon Main Points:

1. Reiterating the Importance of Knowing Who You Are in Christ
2. Loving Oneself with the Love of God
3. The Who/What I Am Prayer
4. No Retirement in God’s service (Understand What Is Being Said)

Scriptures Given: Gen 3:15; Ps 8: 5-6; 33:11; Matt 6:10; 28:18-20; Luke 4: 5-8; John 3:16; 10:10; 14:12-13; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 4:40; Heb 1:14

Mandated Prayer to Pray for the Week: “The I Am” by Gregory Dickow, or “The Who/What I Am” prayer by Bill Winston (See Appendix X).

Teaching Sermon Seminar Week 3: Topic: The Believer’s Identity

Sermon Main Points:

1. Reiterating the Importance of the Ambassadorship Role
2. Loving Oneself with the love of God
3. Finding One’s Identity in God (What are You Called to Do?)
4. Continuously Strive to do Greater Works

Scriptures Given: Gen 15:4-5; Matt 17:26; Luke 15:11-32; John 3:5; Acts 20:32; Rom 8:16-17, 28-30, 37; Gal 3:26, 29; 4:7; Eph 1:3-7, 10-14; Phil 3:20; Col 1:13; Titus 3:7; Jas 2:5; I Pet 1:3-5; 2:9, 11; Rev 4:4; 5:10, 12

Mandated Prayer for the Week: “Activation Prayer” by Cindy Trimm

Teaching Sermon Seminar Week 4: Topic: Spiritual Warfare

Sermon Main Points:

1. We are not Wrestling Against Flesh and Blood
2. Imprecatory Prayers are Aimed Towards demonic forces and spirits, principalities, and powers
3. Spiritual Armor
4. Fight the Good Fight of Faith

Scriptures Given: Matt 28:18-19; Luke 10:19; John 16:23-24; Rom 8:37-39; Phil 2:8-11; Eph 1:20-23; 4:8; 2:6; 6:10-18; Col 2:15; 1 Tim 6:12

Recommended Prayer for the Week: “Activation Prayer” by Cindy Trimm and any other prayers from the prayer collection handouts.

Midweek Teaching Sermon Seminar 1: Topic: What is Man that Thou Art Mindful of Him

- Sermon Main Points:
1. Created in the Image and Likeness of God
 2. Given Dominion/Work to Do
 3. All Belong to God
 4. The Wages of Sin/The Gift of God

Scriptures Given: Gen 3:22; Job 7:17-18; 12:1; 25:4-6; Ps 1; 8:3-9; 19:7-14; Eccl 12:13; John 3:4; Rom 6:6; Gal 6:4; Col 3:9; Jas 1:8; 1 John 2:1; 3:1-3

Midweek Teaching Seminar 2: Topic: How to Overcome Problems from a Kingdom Perspective

- Sermon Main Points:
1. Own Your Authority and Identity in Christ
 2. Be Empowered by Decreeing and Declaring
 3. Find Your Personal Assignment and Be Faithful until Jesus Comes for You Individually or for the Church
 4. Let the Past Go, Let Go of the Past—Be Found in Him

Scriptures Given: Matt 12:36-37; Rom 12:21; Eph 1:1, 3-9, 17-23; 2:10; Col 4:2; 1 John 4:4; 5:14-15

Teaching Sermon Seminar 1 brought awareness to church members and intervention participants of their roles and responsibilities as ambassadors here on earth. The mission and charge were given by Jesus before he ascended to heaven. The second teaching sermon seminar was on the believers' authority. Believers should be aware of their mission, understand who they are in Christ and act upon it. The Church is the light of the world. Too long the Church has set by and let other entities prevail with authority such as Hollywood, Congress, government, drug cartels, secularism, atheism, science, medicine, and so forth. The third teaching sermon seminar was on the believers' identity. Every Christian should know who he or she is in Christ. Christians

have been adopted into the royal family. Jesus became the door of entry for all who choose to believe on him and carry out His will and mission. Christians need to step up and do the work.

Christians must be faithful in church attendance and in all arenas of daily life, doing the work. Jesus modeled all necessary aspects for completing the mission successfully and the fourth teaching sermon seminar was on spiritual warfare. The Bible equipped Christians with their warfare suit and armor in Eph 6 and Paul speaks of the weapons of spiritual warfare in 2 Cor 10:4, as well as charging Timothy to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12). Christians need to step up and do the work. Christians must be faithful in church attendance and in all arenas of daily life doing the work. Jesus modeled all necessary aspects for completing the mission successfully and Christians are to follow his example. Every Christian should strive to be like Jesus in all aspects of lifestyle and living. Loving God and loving others are the work of the Christian life. Everything Christians do should be done through faith, hope, and charity. The researcher hopes the teaching sermon seminars were enlightening and inspirational for all attendees and that it will stir up desire to go forth and be more faithful and effective.

Each teaching sermon seminar built upon one another in the hopes that when these teachings and principles are more fully comprehended, it will hopefully bring about much transformation of increasing faithful prayer and worship service attendance levels, changes within the home, community, workplace, the judicial system, and every arena and atmosphere of life here on earth. It is also hoped that transformation will occur that will bring a spirit of revival that will bring salvation to the unsaved, healing to those who need it, and peace and unification to the community and world. Christians should not become discouraged with the current state of things in the world and become neglectful in trying to complete the mission of the Church here

on earth. Christians must put their faith in action. Christians must believe the mission is possible. Christians should become proactive rather than reactive.

Prayer Journals Analysis

This section of this research process will provide evaluation of the respondents' prayer journals. The purpose of having the respondents keep prayer journals was to add greater method credibility, reliability, and validity as an added method contributing to the process of triangulation. The participants were asked to keep a prayer journal and report times of prayer, prayers made, and any thoughts, feelings, and reflections they experienced. The process of keeping a journal is usually done for reflection on past processes and procedures to encourage one to think back on past experiences and recall feelings, questions, and circumstances that affected one's decision making and outcomes. Journals can contain negative or positive experiences experienced by individuals. Reflexive accounts could also be beneficial with reflection due to the fact that most respondents were receiving instructions on role responsibilities, types of prayer and praying practices.

As stated above reflection deals with recalling past experiences. In a study identifying and exploring academic persistence factors for nontraditional, undergraduate, African-American male degree-completers from Bible colleges in the southeast, Phillips explained, "Reflection prompted memories to be more accurate and recall experiences otherwise long forgotten."⁸ Phillips further explained that journaling provided reflective experiences of human experiences of phenomenological value.⁹ Reflexive practices, conversely, enables dealing with things as they

⁸ Rodney A. Phillips, "A Phenomenological Study Exploring Factors That Contribute to Academic Persistence For Nontraditional Undergraduate African American Male Degree Completers From Bible Colleges in the Southeast" (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2016), 108.

⁹ Ibid.

are currently occurring. Since the teaching sermon seminars were developed to impart new levels of comprehension on the various types of praying, the roles and responsibilities of church members as ambassadors for Christ here on earth, the benefits of using imprecatory prayers, praying the word of God, and praying from a kingdom perspective, reflexivity would permit garnering responses from respondents in the here and now of the intervention process. Reflexive accounts of perceptions and feelings on praying the Word of God, imprecations, and praying using decrees and declarations were of utmost importance.

Upon obtaining the journal entries from the email given to the participants from the researcher, it was noticed that some of the participants kept their prayer journals on composition notebook pages and then took screen shots of their journals and submitted it to the email while a few participants kept typed-written computerized journals and submitted these to the email. More than most of the composition notebook copies were very hard to read and therefore were unable to be used in the evaluation process. Therefore, it was found that the evaluation would have to discuss four typed-written participant journals and one hand-written composition notebook copy participant journal. This will represent a little more than one-third of the total participant sample. The analysis will consider the first two weeks' prayer journal entries and then the second two weeks' prayer journal entries. The evaluation will discuss prayer times, followed by types of prayers, and then consider comments made from the respondents. The following section will be the prayer times the respondents prayed daily.

Prayer Times. Prayer will be given in minutes. When the time has not been given, it will be given as no/r –, meaning no report. Morning will be reported as morning, midday or lunch as midday, and night as night. If an entry stated praying in the morning and at night, it will be listed as m/n. If the entry was listed as midday and evening, it will be listed as mid/e. If the entry was

<i>Respondent 1</i>	40 mins	80 mins.	80 mins.	no/r	100 mins.	50 mins.	60 mins.
<i>Respondent 2</i>	60 mins.	125 mins.	110 mins.	60 mins.	90 mins.	70 mins.	115 mins.
<i>Respondent 3</i>	no/r	no/r	no/r	no/r	no/r	no/r	no/r
<i>Respondent 4</i>	Prayer three times a day at the same time (specific times were not notated)						
<i>Respondent 5</i>	Prayer daily throughout the day						

Based on the presentation above, these participants were praying. Even in the journals that were kept on composition notebook paper, the researcher could see that the participants were praying. The types of praying and wording were unreadable, though. There were no set times given for prayer. Whether a participant prayed three times a day, all throughout the day, at morning and at night, or any other times, the importance of consistent regular prayer practices cannot be overstated. The next section will consider types of prayer prayed by the participants.

Ascertaining the several types of prayer, the participants prayed will demonstrate what members felt a need to pray for currently at this time in their lives. Observing the types of prayer and praying will also demonstrate willingness to try praying in the new way of praying from a kingdom perspective. The prayers used to pray from come from the bible and renowned Christian preachers and leaders of today. Most are authors and leaders of congregations in the United States. Some of the authors have authored several books on the several types of prayer, healing, and such to help others in need. Some of the prayers prayed by participants were retrieved from websites, eReaders, YouTube or other sites. Some of the participants may have purchased books with the prayers. The researcher also gave out handouts for some of the prayers. Some of the respondents specifically listed the title of the prayer from whichever leader they chose to pray for some of the time. On the other hand, some of the time, the respondents just

listed the name of the author of the prayer they prayed. The researcher noted the author and name of the prayer when given and when it was not given, the researcher noted the author only. The combined total of times the collective respondents prayed each prayer is listed. There were also entries where authors were listed only because the prayer prayed had not been specified. After demonstrating what prayers were prayed, a listing of various prayer works will be given for each of the authors listed.

Where available, some of the prayers will be listed in Appendix B, for some of the prayers, websites or books and information will be provided in Appendix C. Following the assessment of the prayer types will be information on the various books in which the prayers from the authors have been derived. The Prayer Types Chart will demonstrate the types of prayer for the four weeks of the study. At the end of the chart there will be listings for prayers prayed individually by the respondents that were representative of personal needs from the respondents and not necessarily attributed to any author. Accompanying this will be any other comments made by the respondents that stood out. As with the above section evaluating the prayer times by the five respondents, the prayer Types Chart will represent the same five respondents. The first section of the chart will list authors and the total number of times the prayers were prayed from the combined recipients that the prayers were prayed from those authors where the prayer was not specified. Following those listings in the chart will be a listing of the authors and the specified prayers and the total number from the combined recipients of the authors have been derived.

The Prayer Types Chart will demonstrate the types of prayer for the four weeks of the study. At the end of the chart, there will be listings for prayers prayed individually by the respondents that were representative of personal needs from the respondents and not necessarily

attributed to any author. Accompanying this will be any other comments made by the respondents that stood out. As with the above section evaluating the prayer times by the five respondents, the Prayer Types Chart will represent the same five respondents. The first section of the chart will list authors and the total number of times the prayers were prayed from the combined recipients that the prayers were prayed from those authors where the prayer was not specified. Following those listings in the chart will be a listing of the authors and the specified prayers and the total number from the combined recipients of the times these prayers were prayed. Following this will be other prayers listed that the recipients prayed and comments made by the recipients, which add additional insight. All four weeks of prayer were listed together from the five respondents prayer journal listings in the above section on prayer times. The authors of the prayers prayed will be demonstrated in the chart by the authors' initials in the following way:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| A.C. = Andy Capp | B.W. = Bill Winston | C.C. = Charles Capps |
| C.T. = Cindy Trimm | D.G. = Gregory Dickow | J.E. = John Eckhardt |
| K.D. = Kimberly Daniels | Dr. O = Dr. Olukoya | R.B. = Richard Broadbent |

Prayer Types for Weeks 1/31/2021 – 2/28/2021

<p>A. C. – 26</p>	<p>B.W. Executing Justice – 9 B.W. Faith Confession - 3 B.W. Healing for damaged emotions – 1 B.W. Prayer of Forgiveness – 2 B.W. Renunciation – 2 B.W. Vengeance prayer – 1 B.W. Who I Am in Christ - 2 B.W. Wisdom and Guidance – 2</p>
<p>C.C. – 14 C.C. Creative Power for Finances - 2 C.C. God’s Creative Power for Healing – 7 C.C. God’s Creative Power Will Work for You - 3</p>	<p>C.T. - 6 C.T. Entrepreneur Prayer -1</p>

Dr. O Prayer Watches - 3	G.D. – 31 G.D. Confession for Men - 1 G.D. Divine Protection – 3 G.D. Healing Prayer and Personal Confession - 2 G.D. Life Solutions – 9 G.D. Prayer of Dedication, Consecration, and Submission - 4 G.D. God’s Provision and Confidence - 2 G.D. Victory over Fear – 2
J.E. Prayers that Activate Blessing - 2 J.E. Prayers that Release Heaven on Earth- 5	K.D. Prayers that bring change – 18
R.B. Prayers – 11	

Other Prayers Prayed by the Respondents and Personal Comments Made

Executing Justice for Columbus – 3 Executing Justice for the U.S. - 1 Prayer against HR45 Equality Act - 1	Prayer for family, friends, church, and the nation for salvation – 4 Prayer for salvation for unsaved loved ones - 3 Prayer for the children – 5 Prayer for the Pastor - 1
Financial confession - 1 Prayer for enlargement and increase - 2 Prayer for financial blessings and increase - 1 Prayer for God’s provision - 3 Prayers for blessing and favor - 2	Prayer to break generational curses - 2 Prayers that rout demons – 5 Prayers that will break curses and bondage - 2 Prayer on spiritual slackness - 1 Releasing the power of God – 1
Cleansing prayer - 1 Comanded my morning - 12 Declarations – 3 Kingdom prayers and decrees - 1 Regular prayer – 18	Territory prayer - 1 The Lord’s Prayer- 1 Prayer walking in victory - 1 Warfare prayers - 1
Prayer for church growth, unity, restoration, and prosperity – 3 Prayer for revelation – 1	Prayer for my marriage and a closer relationship with Christ - 1 Protection prayer for my children - 1
Completed readings from the Psalms – 1 Confessions from both books - 1	Prayed in the Spirit – 13 Prayed at lunch at work – 2
Listened to C.T. On YouTube – 1 Listened to C.T. - 5 Listened to worship music – 4	Prayed with my husband – 4 Prayed with a prayer partner - 6 My prayer partner prayed for me – 1

The chart above shows prayers attributed to Andy Capp. These prayers should be attributed to Charles Capps but were reported as Andy Capp. The researcher cannot speak to the presence of mind of the respondents because this occurred among more than one person. However, this can be viewed as a slippage, meaning that the respondents may have not had enough time to become fully familiar with the new prayer content. Some of the authors provided different prayers and the respondents did not specify which prayer they prayed from each specific author. Follow-up interviews would have remedied this but pushed things beyond the time limit scope of the project. Going forward, understanding of this will enable the researcher to provide countermeasures to deal with these types of situations. This is also why you see in the chart the authors' name and a number only. It could mean the mandated prayer for the week was prayed and centered on or it could mean that they prayed from several of the different prayers by that author. If the respondent specified the prayer, credit was given within the numbers of the prayer. This leads to discussion of another possible slippage.

Of the five prayer journals given in this discussion, only three were type written. The other two were kept on composition notebook paper and screen shot with cell phones and submitted to the researcher's university email. A finding from this process revealed that much of the content was unreadable. Therefore, the researcher realized that follow-up interviews were very much necessary. This leads to questions of did the respondents have computer access or computer skills. Currently, the researcher is unsure. Yet again, conducting personal interviews would push this project outside the time limits for this research endeavor. It also leads to questions of the disparities within society which could be much too time consuming to fully explore here. What is known is that, going forward, more will have to be done to avoid these

kinds of pitfalls from occurring again. There were also silences in the prayer journals regarding any experiences felt. No prevalent themes emerged possibly because the data was skewed.

Although one person reported his experience and feelings, there was not great depth of discussion. The two types of charts listed above demonstrate that the respondents did pray from a kingdom perspective as well as praying for any needs of things felt necessary. Some prayers were also intercessory in nature. Listening to prayer and worship music can also be a form of praying. Additionally, it was a blessing to have accompanying prayer partners. Praying to release the power of God, to release heaven on earth, and praying against things unacceptable with God or unrighteous legislation is what Christians should be doing and is a part of the mission of the Church on earth. One or two individuals mentioned praying in their regular manner, which was all acceptable. One respondent wrote in his journal that by praying these prayers aloud, he felt a closer connection with God and felt stronger in his faith. Additionally, he reported seeing God move on his behalf in several situations that arose.

A slippage present was not having prayers specified. The researcher realized that explaining more fully beforehand would have aided respondents in understanding to write down fully the specific prayer. Would this have fully cured this problem? Maybe and maybe not. Sometimes when dealing with people it is the same as in regular undergraduate school, it still may or may not have been done or it may have cut down on the extent of the situation. Brief follow-up interviews would have helped or spot checks where people were asked to bring in their material and have a researcher helper maybe check it maybe after the first or second week would have helped. These things are being learned in hindsight. Mandating a prayer was a good thing but it may have affected what was prayed. Not mandating a prayer would have demonstrated

what participants felt a need to pray for within their spirit out of the prayers received after having received the teachings. The next section will cover the post-test survey questionnaires results.

The Seven Question Post-Test Survey Questionnaire Results

Question 1: Had you heard of Binding/Loosing prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar sessions?

a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Question 2: Had you heard of Imprecatory prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar session?

a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Question 3: Had you heard of Kingdom perspective prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar sessions?

a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Question 4: Do you feel that learning about these prayer strategies will help you in your Christian walk?

a. yes b. no c. maybe

Question 5: Do you feel that learning about these prayer strategies will change problems in society such as mass shootings, racism, disaster/catastrophic weather, child abuse etc. if used?

a. yes b. no c. maybe

Question 6: Would you like to make any comments or ask any questions?

Question 7: Do you feel that this type of praying helped you or inspired you to pray more?

Explain.

Question 1: Had you heard of Binding/Loosing prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar sessions?

- a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Seven respondents were familiar with this kind of prayer/praying but really did not understand it prior to the research seminar sessions. Five respondents were familiar with Binding/Loosing prayer/praying and understood it prior to the seminar sessions. Finally, two respondents were not familiar with this kind of prayer before the seminar sessions.

Question 2: Had you heard of Imprecatory prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar session?

- a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Eight of the respondents had never heard of Imprecatory Prayer/Psalms before the seminar research sessions. Two respondents were familiar with this type of prayer and understood it. Then two respondents had heard of Imprecatory prayer but did not understand it.

Question 3: Had you heard of Kingdom perspective prayer before the Preaching/Teaching seminar sessions? a. yes and understood it b. yes, but did not understand it c. no

Four respondents were familiar with Kingdom perspective prayers and understood them. Three participants were somewhat familiar with the name or term Kingdom perspective prayers and praying but reported that they did not understand it. Five respondents were not familiar at all with Kingdom perspective prayers.

Question 4: Do you feel that learning about these prayer strategies will help you be more effective in your Christian walk?

- a. yes b. no c. maybe

All respondents reported that they felt that learning about the prayer strategies that were addressed during the research seminar sessions would help them be more effective in their Christian walk.

Question 5: Do you feel that learning about these prayer strategies will change problems in society such as mass shootings, racism, disaster/catastrophic weather, child abuse etc. if used?

a. yes b. no c. maybe

As with the previous question all respondents reported that they felt that if the prayer strategies were used that were addressed during the research Preaching/Teaching seminar sessions that societal problems would change.

Question 6: Would you like to make any comments or ask any questions?

One respondent answered no. All the other respondents just left this question blank. When taking into consideration the point that some respondents chosen to be in a research sample fail to stipulate any data at all in some portion of the research in essence, all surveys must manage the fact that some participants replying to a survey do not submit codable answers to every question. The researcher has two ways to deal with this: omit the respondents answers or try to give an estimation of what they feel that the respondents would have answered if they had provided the information.

Question 7: Do you feel that this type of praying helped you or inspired you to pray more?

Explain.

Five respondents answered this question with a yes only. One respondent answered, “yes because praying is one of the most powerful tools Christians can use to tear down Satan’s kingdom”. He further commented by saying, “when Christians pray and speak God’s Word, they

come against spiritual wickedness.” Another responded “yes, especially when one sees the results.” One respondent answered “yes, absolutely.” Another reported “yes, now I know when to use the different kinds of prayer for different situations. It helped me to be more purposed and equipped me on how to pray and what to pray for.” Another respondent answered by saying “yes, cause when you get results you absolutely want to pray more.” Another respondent said “yes, definitely, especially the confessions and decrees.” One respondent left this question blank altogether.

In evaluating these things, the researcher believes that this intervention endeavor was satisfying and somewhat successful. Another matter for consideration is that new concepts, practices, habits, and teaching take time and must be constantly taught and dealt with over and over in order to take root among people in any field, setting or industry. Social learning theories and other learning theories would support this reasoning. This is a second reason the researcher felt the endeavor was successful. The researcher believes real change takes time. The next section will observe researcher field notes for the intervention.

Attendance

These are the numbers for Prayer Nights prior during and after the research:

Six Months Prior to Research	During Research	Six Months After
11 Adults	14 Adults & 7 Kids	12 Adults & 2 Kids
13 Adults	13 Adults & 6 Kids	10 Adults & 3 Kids
10 Adults & 6 Kids	13 Adults & 5 Kids	10 Adults & 4 Kids
12 Adults & 2 Kids	15 Adults & 5 Kids	11 Adults & 3 Kids

Although the researcher thought that that the Teaching/Preaching seminar sessions would result in an uptick in the attendance on prayer nights. The information shared during the research did not raise attendance on prayer nights, but it was felt that the members that took part in the research profited from greater knowledge and a more meaningful quality experience when they pray now and that they possibly want to pray more, just not in the church building.

Researcher Field Notes

General church attendance during the weeks of this intervention was kept by the researcher. Despite Covid-19, the turnout was good and there seemed to be an air of excitement from the parishioners realizing the action research intervention was occurring. The teaching sermon seminars seemed to be received well by most of the congregation. Statements made at the end of the services during fellowship confirmed this. This participatory action research intervention has followed guidelines from Tim Sensing. According to Sensing, the most effective interventions will be imagined shaped, and implemented in and by community.¹⁰ This research will place the action research cycle within the imagined shape given by Sensing as follows:

Contextual Experience
Assessing Prayer Types and
Practices/Strategy Evaluation At TLM

¹⁰ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 75.

Decisions About Future Actions

Interviews
Lay member Sample
Focus Groups
New Strategies

Identifying a Problem

Declining Prayer and Worship Service
Attendance Levels

Collecting and Analyzing Data

Survey Questionnaires
Prayer Journals
Researcher Field Notes

Taking Action

Review Literature/Theorize
Pretest Survey
Teaching/Sermon Seminars
Prayer and Prayer Journals
Post-test Survey
Researcher Field Notes

Limitations and Further Opportunities

Covid-19 was a definite limitation for the intervention. Fear was pervasive. Mask mandates, government mandated church closings, and the call for vaccines definitely affected things. A second limitation was not ensuring journals were better prepared for analysis. There was also trouble accessing the journal entries from the researcher's school email, which was eventually resolved. Another limitation was having a considerable decline in the number of participants due to Covid-19 as well as having no lay member participants. Future endeavors could consider during interviews which would bring much more in-depth information on prayer times and other characteristics of prayer practices such as prayer postures, things experienced during prayer time, feelings, and perceptions on effectiveness of praying from a kingdom perspective versus prior praying practices.

Focus group discussions could also be another form to receive rich information on the subject with good facilitation. Additional opportunities could use this model for other strategies

to encourage more faithful church service attendance such as special group prayer times at church led by some of the other ministers, sponsoring a bring-a-friend rally, and having a group prayer walk at the park inviting community members to attend. Interviewing and obtaining suggestions from community members could be a very good strategy. Starting a social media group is another avenue many of the churches are pursuing today as well.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed all aspects of the participatory action research intervention data analysis and results which was developed to address the problem of declining attendance levels at prayer and worship services at Total Life Ministries church. Much learning was gained throughout the course of the total process that will aid in future learning campaigns. This research intervention study was a pilot study and therefore will be useful for future studies.

Chapter 3 explained the method used for data collection and analysis of the information this research intervention project. The intervention project design concisely discussed the ministry setting, the type and rationale of the study, the sample size, and the participants. It also explored the method of the design of the intervention, which evaluated the kinds of assessments that will furnish the essential data and or information for analysis. It also gave a description of how the researcher will analyze the data results of the survey/questionnaires, the participant's prayer journal data, the researcher's field notes, attendance of the participants to show the correlation of the information may or may not interact in the participants' viewpoint during their prayer time at home in their private time with God and while in the church setting. Lastly, this section summarized the actual implementation of the research intervention design. To ensure the validity of the data analysis method, the triangulation model was used because a single method of analysis would have had limitations. In this study, survey questionnaires, attendance records,

prayer journals of the participants and the researcher's field notes validate the data.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter will discuss next steps based on the findings from this participatory action research intervention. The chapter will be provided in two perspectives. The first section will address things directly related to and based on the findings from this current pilot study. The second section will provide potential new avenues of inquiry, frameworks, methods, and strategies. Next steps will also be considered for increasing prayer and worship services levels from the kingdom's perspective praying and prayer, as well as considering increasing prayer and worship services levels from other strategies.

The first basic finding from this study concluded that the survey questionnaire instrumentation was faulty. As such, a first step would be to correct and redevelop the survey instrument. Since all the participants of this pilot study turned out to be ministers at Total Life Ministries church, a future study could be replicated for church lay members with corrections to the survey and other negative findings. The needed corrections were detailed in Chapter 4 during the data analysis. There were also problems with evaluating the prayer journals with a great percentage of the material being unreadable and therefore being unable to be included in the analysis. With respect to the unreadable content from the prayer journals, perhaps a good method for dealing with this is to pay a researcher helper to type the material and then submit it to the university email, if such a process would be acceptable to the university or provide access to computers at the church for the participants to type their written prayer journals. The next study would possibly explore prayer postures as well.

A potential next step could entail conducting interviews with the twelve participants in this study to glean missed points and aspects from the present study. A step such as this could

bring greater clarity of the concepts, principles, and teachings received, and thereby add more reinforcement for the participants. Alternatively, to this, a few focus group sessions could reinforce and clarify things also.

New Avenues for Pursuit

A core foundational structure would be beneficial for sustained use throughout the processes of continuous evangelism, making and growing disciples, rooting church family members, and ensuring that the church will thrive. The researcher believes a three-fold approach such as creating a dialogue for Kingdom perspective praying and imprecations could be the starting point. A second step could be creating a curriculum for Kingdom perspective prayer and imprecations. The third foundational step would then be passing on to a scholarship for Kingdom perspective praying and imprecations. Curriculum→Dialogue→Scholarship. Salient features of developing a curriculum are dependent upon qualitative techniques, limiting quantitative techniques to the collection of survey questionnaire data or data within studies on the topic and the numbers of different sources of information gathered for narrative accounts. Additionally, distinctiveness would be adapting a descriptive model from the literature as a framework. This would also consist of presenting the descriptive model for determining what aspects to collect and present on kingdom perspective praying as a method, sources of information past and present, compiling this information by a literature search, and presenting the information as a series of narratives organized according to the descriptive model.¹ There could possibly be interviews on any charismatic events experienced by others who have used this mode of praying.

¹ R. Murray Thomas, "Establishing Foundations for Planting," in *Blending Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods in Theses and Dissertations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2016), 140-41.

The scholarship aspect would be to encourage participants to enroll and complete a higher education program of studies on topics of interest and obtain a degree.

Research to Support This Type of Approach

In a study developing a curriculum for a ministry for widows, Nanez pointed out the thorough reasoning for the development and backed it up with a solid framework and foundation. Nanez also stated leadership is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the mission of the church with respect to the church members.² As such, a curriculum supporting praying from a kingdom perspective, church mission, and evangelism could draw support from the mission and authority given to the Church by Jesus when he taught and modeled the Lord's Prayer, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt 16:19). Developing the curriculum could start with reasoning for praying from a kingdom perspective. A primary reason is taking more authority for creating change in personal life, family life, and community life. A second aspect could center on identifying one's specific area of locus. Methods and ways to see projects come to fruition could follow and then next steps could be considered.

Within the realm of next steps would be to encourage ministers and lay members to seek scholarship in their respective fields of mission. In order to be effective in the community, people need to be in a place to ensure they are legally able to effectively work and complete their missions for the kingdom of God. Scholarship is a large aspect of this process. The church ministry board could consider forms of aid and incentives to be provided for members to ensure

² Gail Nanez, "Developing a Curriculum Ministry for Widows in the Local Church" (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2016), 4.

successful completion of scholarship studies. This would enable things to benefit Total Life Ministries in a circular pattern flow. The better able we are to effectively evangelize and do mission work in the community, such efforts will flow back to greater levels of ability to reach people and families in need in society.

Samuel Thigpen spoke of building a greater gospel dialogue and how Jesus sent others out into the community to make disciples:

The Gospel advances when people sow regularly and generously, not erratically and not sparingly. Jesus never ceased in His ministry to have meaningful conversations with His disciples and followers about growing in faith. Everyday tasks became opportunities in which Jesus could share a greater spiritual truth and meaning with His followers. Regardless of whether Jesus was eating a meal, fishing on a boat, or even drawing water from a well, there always seemed to be an opportunity to plant the seeds of the Gospel. Jesus established a greater Gospel conversation beyond those who were part of His small group of disciples and leaders. This Gospel dialogue thrived and moved to meet the culture where it was, rather than demand the culture move to Jesus.³

Thigpen also pointed out how Jesus built a dialogue with his disciples and modeled going out into the community and other places in Matthew 9:36-38.⁴ Building a greater dialogue for praying for a Kingdom perspective and imprecations has started with this participatory action research intervention and can be continued by holding focus groups sessions. A recommendation, upon approval of the church pastor and governing board, could include focus group sessions using two or three of the twelve minister participants that partook in this intervention study during various midweek services nights. This could help ascertain the level of comprehension these ministers gained from the study. The pastor, researcher, and church governing board would attend and be available for any necessary input. Questions and answer sessions could be offered as part of this process.

³ Thigpen, "Attractional to Missional," 74.

⁴ Ibid.

Thigpen made the point that creating a greater dialogue is not a one-time happening. This approach needs to be embedded within regular outside settings within the community. Thigpen explained this by stating “external ministry context needs to establish a more profound and engaging presence in the surrounding community.”⁵ This must first reach a level where it is greatly understood and embedded among those who fully believe and put on these concepts and beliefs. It should be added within the church mission statement if agreed upon by the church board and membership. Other salient points from Thigpen were as follows:

To become missional in its discipleship process and way of thinking, it must consider looking at ways to create within its immediate ministry missional communities that invite people into the dialogue of the Gospel. The conversation must include people of all walks of life, age, socioeconomic status, and religious background. This type of missional thinking affords ABC an opportunity to have Gospel discussions with communities and individuals who would otherwise never set foot in or be drawn to the church.⁶

Accompanying developing a dialogue, a crucial aspect for consideration, also from Thigpen was to consider targeting age groups and demographics.⁷ The following items are just a few examples of some suggestions:

- Partnering with the daycare and developing activities for children during the weekly night services.
- Fliers could be passed out as maybe a minister and lay member could plan fun biblical activities that would draw the interest of children. Sometimes children help draw the parents into church attendance.
- Biblical coloring activities, discussing and telling stories about biblical characters and heroes are also some examples.
- Rewarding learning a few bible verses with healthy candy to take home.
- Unimportant things such as obtaining a popcorn machine to pass out take-home bags of popcorn at the end of service could help (This can be motivational for most all age groups).

⁵ Thigpen, “Attractional to Missional,” 74.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

The researcher personally remembers a Sunday school teacher and Bible study night teacher at the church she attended in childhood that did these types of activities with the children and they would be excited. This church had a small to medium size group of children that helped to draw additional children that was very good for the community area. Suggestions could be gathered along the same line for middle-aged adults, such as providing certificates of recognition for faithful attendance and learning activities as well. This can be motivational for increasing faithful church service attendance.

This research intervention has produced significant insights on the benefits of praying from a kingdom perspective and imprecations by using these types of prayer as a method for changing an individual's life by taking authority over one's life and identity in Christ. By accepting the mission and call of Jesus for the Church to be the light of the world, salt of the earth, and to love one another, as well as to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Christians can become more effective change agents in society as these principles and teachings are modeled in the everyday lifestyle of Christians. Though the intervention had slippages and silences, the intervention brought awareness to the strategy utilized for change.

The intervention laid the foundation to build upon, by focusing on rooting and grounding these principles through potentially developing a curriculum for this type of praying, saturating a dialogue for this type of praying, and for encouraging others to pursue higher education degrees and scholarship studies in order to be more effective change agents in the church, community, and society. The current intervention also created an atmosphere for starting change. Since stakeholder involvement was crucial to this research intervention and will be necessary for future interventions a clear rational plan was developed that sought to understand the problem and

identified questions as suggested by Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog for practical purposes.⁸ Going forward, a concept mapping strategy could be useful for receiving input, improving the usefulness of the information, balancing and determining who needs to be consulted for decision making, and when consultation is necessary, and can aid in improving feasibility of studies. This will also aid in getting “buy in” for study participation and strategy formulation and carry out.⁹

Other Potential Strategies for Future Consideration

Strategy 1: In order to immerse the congregation and participants more fully into the new way of praying and prayer concepts and to also develop the ministers, holding focus groups sessions on a midweek service night could be beneficial. The ministers who participated in this pilot action research study intervention could be asked and encouraged to lead the focus group study sessions. Of course, this would be upon approval from the pastor and the church governing board. The pastor, governing board and researcher would attend the proceedings. The various prayers covered during this intervention study could be partitioned out to the ministers.

Questions, answers, and comments would be formulated and asked to guide the focus group sessions. There would also be space for lay members and attendees to ask questions and participate in providing answers, and comments. These sessions could be reported and recorded for research purposes. The researcher could actively gather and work with the data and information produced. As this would be something different going on amongst the congregation this could possibly stimulate members to faithfully attend. This would be an outward extension of the foundation that this study has laid.

⁸ Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog. “Applied Research: A Practical Design,” in *The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Science Research Methods*, 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009), 5-6.

⁹ Bickman and Rog, eds. “Applied Research,” 35.

Because this researcher believes that praying from a kingdom perspective could be crucial to life-changing transformation within one's spiritual life, physical life, within the home and community, and change in society, fully ascertaining how church members have comprehended this new perspective is critical. Therefore, the consideration of possibly conducting focus group sessions as a means of gaining more insight on the perceptions and feelings of the church members on the topic and various prayers can be seen as being of utmost importance. Focus groups held to guidance guidelines could provide rich sources of enlightenment of how the church members perceive praying from a kingdom perspective, reasons for using this method and perspective whilst praying, benefits of this method over previously used praying methods, misunderstandings and misgivings about using the new method, and whether there are perceived benefits of using the method. Much the same as when discussing a Sunday school lesson or a Bible study lesson where everyone is encouraged to add to the discussion, focus groups could be a platform for others to speak out, ask questions, describe experiences, and things of this nature on the topic of praying from a kingdom perspective. A major aim of the focus group sessions would be to seek any emergent themes that would surface. Recording the sessions would enable the researcher to thoroughly examine the sessions' contents.

Some major points for consideration would be research design, data collection and analysis, reporting results, and an effective means to determine and report how many focus group sessions will actually occur. This is important because guidelines call for aligning with data saturation principles. Sample size and the number of focus groups sessions are to be determined and reported. Benedicte Carlsen and Claire Glenton explained the emphasis should be on the interaction between the participants rather than between the researcher or moderator. The

primary purpose is to explore the perceptions, subjective attitudes and experiences of the participants in the group. Focus groups are recommended as a pre- or post-study tool to aid in interpreting what is perceived and experienced.¹⁰

A start for this study purpose would be to examine contrasting perceptions between praying before this study and praying from a new kingdom perspective of praying the Word of God. The researcher would like to find out if members feel it is truly more beneficial and life-changing, and if so, why do they think so, and if not, why. Were there specific prayers that stood out more than others? Based on the troubling times we are living in today, are Christians really ready to own intercessor-ship and become proactive for change? Advice from Tobias O. Nyumba, Kerrie Wilson, Christina J. Derrick, Nibedita Mukherjee, and others for conducting focus group studies were as follows: Define the objective of the study by stating the purpose of the study, developing a list of key questions, and guard ethical issues. Continue by familiarizing oneself with the script, group dynamics, seating preferences, and equipment operation. And record the duration of the study and ground rules for the study sessions.¹¹

Facilitation during the meeting would entail self-introduction, consent and confidentiality, reflections, observations of nonverbal clues, and discussion of recording and observation, probes, and pauses. Tracking questions for completion and following up on themes of discussion would be next and completing the facilitation process would end with concluding

¹⁰ Benedicte Carlsen and Claire Glenton, "What about N? A Methodological Study of Sample-size Reporting in Focus Groups Studies," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11, no. 26 (2011): 2, <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/11/26>.

¹¹ Tobias O. Nyumba et al., "The Use of Focus Group Methodology: Insights from Two Decades of Application in Conservation," *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* 9, no. 1 (2018): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860>.

things and acknowledging the participants.¹² Data analysis would be the next stage of the process and recommendations for this would be the following:

- Listing/ranking
- Coding: key ideas/themes
- Content analysis
- Discourse analysis
- Conversation analysis

Results and reporting would then follow. Included here would be the target audience, academics, policy makers and practitioners, and study participants. This is the suggested steps of the focus group discussion technique given by Nyumba and the other authors for the focus group study process.¹³ Perhaps an endeavor could seek to pair doing focus groups with reflection journals. Since the process of reflection has been found to develop and stimulate critical thinking skills and to help others use meta-cognition skills¹⁴ this can aid in absorbing new ways of thinking and praying. Journals enable reflecting on a range of topics and viewpoints from different viewpoints and perspectives.¹⁵ Identifying and considering these levels of variance can stimulate enlightenment, new pathways and avenues to consider, and even new strategies and goals for future pursuits. Northern Illinois University identify six types of reflections as: observations, questions, speculations, self-awareness, integration of theory and ideas, and critique.¹⁶ Sometimes people need suggestions for how to explain thoughts,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 22.

¹⁴ Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, “Reflective Journals and Learning Logs,” 1, https://www.niu.edu/facdev/_pdf/guide/assessment/reflective_journals%20and_learning_logs.pdf.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

feelings, and observations. This is why some questions could be used, for example to help them start the process.

Now that this pilot study has laid a foundation for praying from a new kingdom perspective, questions for the journals could seek to see how much was absorbed from the teaching training seminars, and how the participants and church members feel about praying from a different perspective. Questions could be asked such as what changes have you noticed since you have started praying from a kingdom perspective? Do you really think praying from a kingdom perspective will be more beneficial than the regular way you were praying before and why? What do you think will be gained from changing to the new way of praying? How much of a difference do you think it will make praying the new way? Why?

A combination approach could be used for some such as a question that would ask, how do you feel when praying in the Spirit? Does anything come to your mind? Describe what you do. Do you hold up your hands, get on your knees, pray sitting in a chair, or any other ways you might pray? These types of probing descriptions will lead to more fuller answers than just praying in the Spirit. Questions such as this can lead to observations, self-awareness, speculations, or more questions. The actual reflection cycle, according to Northern Illinois University is cyclic and is: reflect (think), analyze, explain and gain insight, new action, record (what), going back to reflect (think).¹⁷

Guidelines for developing the prayer journals and journals on other subject matter for future studies could be developed and adjusted to follow these guidelines:

Write, record

¹⁷ Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, "Reflective Journals and Learning Logs," 2.

Describe the situation (the course, the context)

How do you pray when you pray?

Who was involved with the situation?

What did they have to do with the situation?

When you pray with someone, do you feel different? If so, describe how?

Reflect, think about

What are your reactions?

What are your feelings?

Example: Someone might say, "I am going to pray to be given the gift of interpreting tongues so that when I pray in the Spirit I can understand what I am praying for and what it actually is that I need rather than just what I think I need. This gift could also help others as well." What are the good and the bad aspects of the situation? What have you learned?

Analyze, explain, gain insight

What was really going on?

What sense can you make of the situation?

Can you integrate theory into the experience/situation?

Can you demonstrate an improved awareness and self-development because of the situation?

Conclusions

What can be concluded in a general and specific sense from this situation/experience and the analyses you have undertaken?

Personal action plan

What are you going to do differently in this type of situation next time?

What steps are you going to take based on what you have learned?”¹⁸

The guidelines for focus groups and reflection journals can be used for other subject matter and learning events as well.

Strategy 2: An alternative strategy to focus groups and prayer journals could be to intentionally ask members to form group prayer partnerships and keep journals. Groups of three to five could be put together. These groups could be encouraged to coordinate prayer times and check on one another in order to strengthen each other, encourage one another, and pray for one each group members' needs and issues in society that are on their heart. Keeping journals of their prayers, times, and things experienced could be enlightening for study. Asking each group to reach out to a non-attending church family member or community member could aid in inviting people to attend church services. Letting them know he or she are receiving special prayer from the group could hopefully open the door for bringing others to Christ and church. The researcher could meet with these groups once a month to gather data and set a time to discuss the materials collected. These materials may be used later for study purposes.

Strategies for Increasing Church Services Attendance Levels

A work by James Robert Waters considered the unchurched and dechurched and factors that positively and negatively influence these groups of people and factors surrounding church growth found that organizations, including churches, who have been experiencing decreasing effects may be doing so because their lack of change or organizational innovation has led to a gap between what they accomplish and what the community around them wants or needs.¹⁹

¹⁸ Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, “Reflective Journals and Learning Logs,” 3.

¹⁹ Jason Robert Walters, “A Multiple Case Study Identifying Factors Influencing Church Attendance and Engagement with Unchurched and Dechurched Families” (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2020), 3,18.

Waters believed that communicating the gospel in a way relevant to the community is necessary and doing the right things the right way.²⁰ Success was dependent upon community engagements, recognizing that cultures are fluid, and removing focus from a singular cultural group to multicultural groups. Waters also found that most non-attendees were willing to attend a church if they were invited by someone whom they considered a friend or a family member, and that actively inviting friends, coworkers, and community members was not being regularly done.²¹ Therefore it could be fruitful for members to take opportunities to personally and actively invite people to come to your church.

With regards to age groups and generational factors, Waters found family and relationships was the most valued characteristic among the community members and fostering this perception on a larger scale, social media has become mainstream for young people, millennials, Gen X and many others. Additional findings included that it was easy to connect in superficial ways but finding depth in relationships and developing healthy relationships may be a high priority and a high need for many people. Therefore, this may be a need that is going unmet and could contribute to growing expressions of emotional distress such as anxieties, depression, and the like.²²

Ron Whitehead pointed out the importance of engaging the current generation with local church evangelism goals because of the fact that this generation wants to be participants and not just spectators in their local church. Spectators are more like visitors than valued members.²³

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Walters, "A Multiple Case Study Identifying Factors Influencing Church Attendance and Engagement with Unchurched and Dechurched Families," 40.

²² Ibid., 129.

²³ Ron Whitehead, "Resourcing Our Youth For Evangelism," Andrews University Publications 84, accessed January 22, 2019, 65. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cye-pubs/84/>.

Young people in the church need to be invited and supported in becoming active in committees, church boards, and leadership in general. Whitehead found it is less common for them to participate in share-your-faith activities, hold church offices, or serve on committees. Moreover, it was stated not all youth and young adults are engaged in God's mission. However, being welcomed, supported, and encouraged opens the door for decision-making. This will also aid in determining whether there is disengagement amongst individuals.²⁴ The researcher would venture to say that many adults are not engaged in God's mission. Church zombies need to be identified and encouraged to become active in God's mission in subtle ways so as not to make them anxious or in today's language "freak them out." These are the one who have a record of coming in late, sometime attending Sunday school and Sunday church services, or may only attend Sunday morning services, failing to faithfully attend midweek services, and usually do not take part in share-your-faith activities.

Strategy 1: As with the strategy in number two, these groups could also be sent out into the community to pray with people and invite people to church. Fliers could be printed up with the mission of the church, church address, times church services are held, numbers to call if anyone needs help or prayer, and the groups would offer prayer to homes visited. The community could also mail in prayer requests for those who become sick and unable to come out. Any special needs such as transportation could be offered, help with wheelchairs, or any accommodation necessary for those with disabilities would also be offered as well.

Strategy 2: The church may consider setting up a social media site, doing a podcast, and obtaining a spot on the radio to send out messages and present Christ in the community. A committee, or more than one committee could be formed to begin work on this aspect of mission

²⁴ Ibid.

and evangelism. After plans are drawn up, a presentation could be held with the church governing board for discussion and consideration, and next steps. Because Covid is still around in some form, and monkey pox has also come on the scene, many people just may not come out to services. However, having an alternative platform available for people to be able to hear, see, and listen to the message of Christ is imperative.

Strategy 3: Forming partnerships with other agencies would be another good mode for trying to reach souls in the community. Partnering with childcare agencies, schools and sports agencies, senior citizens agencies, recovery centers, hospitals, juvenile detention agencies, theaters, parks, and any groups willing to cooperate and coordinate could be avenues to reach people. Total Life Ministries already run a pantry, a veterans home, and will re-open the daycare facility.

Strengthening these ministry forms and then proceeding forward could be effective in reaching more people. The ministry has considered opening a homeless shelter as well.

Overall other considerations will entail ensuring more validity within the studies.

Bickman and Rog stated that even though all types of validity are important, questions dealing with the effectiveness of an intervention or impact should have more internal and statistical conclusion validity than external validity. Matters that are causal should receive more concern than external validity. Additionally, for descriptive questions and content matter external and construct validity could receive greater emphasis. Construct validity is almost always relevant was found by Bickman and Rog.²⁵

Conclusion

²⁵ Bickman and Rog, "Applied Research," 48.

This chapter has discussed and detailed next steps, potential strategies, and further research opportunities for this pilot study and participatory action research intervention.

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Appendix A

Who/What I Am in Christ

- I am reigning in life by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17).
- I am not looking at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen (2 Cor 4:18).
- I am walking by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).
- I am casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:5).
- I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:21).
- I am rooted and grounded in love because Christ dwells within me (Eph 3:17).
- I am the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph 2:10).
- I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).
- I am prosperous and in good health because my soul prospers (3 John 2).
- I am being transformed by the renewing of my mind to prove the perfect will of God (Rom 12:2).
- I am healed by the stripes of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:24).
- I am more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:37).
- I am the salt of the earth, and the light of the world (Matt 5:13a, 14a).
- I am complete in Christ (Col 2:10).
- I am strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph 6:10).
- I am taking the shield of faith and quenching all the fiery darts of the enemy (Eph 6:16).
- I am praying my desires and receiving them (Mark 11:24).
- I am like a tree planted by the rivers of water and everything that I do prospers (Ps 1:3).
- I am a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor 6:19).
- I am given exceeding great and precious promises, and by them I partake of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet 1:4).

- I am led by the spirit of God; therefore, I am a son of God (Rom 8:14).
- I am not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom 8:1).
- I am receiving all my needs met according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).
- I am casting all my cares upon Him, because I know He cares for me (I Pet 5:7).
- I am blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3).
- I am blessed when I come in, and blessed when I go out (Deut 28:6).
- I am an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ (Rom 8:17).
- I am increasing and abounding in love (1 Thess 3:12).
- I am being made perfect in every good work to do God's will (Heb 13:21).
- I am showing forth the praise of God (Ps 51:15).

Appendix B

Confession for Executing Justice

O Lord our God, the Highest God, maker of heaven and earth; our Creator, our Provider, and our Protector; You are the just Judge of all the earth, sitting on Your throne of justice and judgment in the High Court of Heaven.

You, Lord, execute righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

You are the Lord of the Sabaoth, Ruler of all, the God of angelic armies that fight against our enemies, and Avenger of our adversaries. Besides You there is no Savior – salvation is only of the Lord.

Because of Your great love towards all mankind, and Your love for justice and judgment, You forsaketh not the saints, but come to our aid on earth to uphold the justice upon which Your throne in heaven and Your kingdom on earth rests.

Bring Your righteous judgment upon our adversary. Stretch forth Thy hand and execute vengeance and recompense against all he (Satan) is doing and for what he has put us through – every suffering, humiliation, shame, embarrassment, loss, entrapment, sickness, and attack. He is the perpetrator behind all injustices and evil that have come against us through people. So, we ask that You execute upon them the judgments written, delivering us out of every affliction (Ps 149).

Restore to us everything he has stolen from us and our ancestors; everything delayed, bring it forth, now in this season. I command the release of inventions, opportunities, discoveries, businesses, industries, creative ideas, relationships, contracts, awards, inheritance and increase that have been fraudulently held up, misdirected, sabotaged, blocked, stolen, and destroyed. Execute Your vengeance against the enemy speedily and bring to us the full recompense that is

due to us as redeemed heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, that we may advance Your Kingdom among men and Nations.

In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Amen.

Appendix C

Rom 10:6-10

The righteousness based on faith speaks . . . the Word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart. . . That is the Word of faith, which we are preaching. For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

2 Cor 5:17

I am a new creation—a new person altogether in Christ Jesus. Old things have passed away; all things have become fresh and new!

John 15:9

I am already cleansed because of the Word Jesus has spoken to me.

Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:21

I have been made the righteousness of God. I am completely justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Therefore, I have peace with God today, and I can stand in His presence without guilt, shame, or a sense of inferiority.

Col 1:22-23

Jesus has reconciled me by His death, and presents me to the Father, unblameable, unaccusable, and without reproach, since I continue in faith, firmly established and steadfast, not moved away from the truth of God's Word that I have heard.

Col 1:12-13

The Father has qualified me to share in this inheritance, and has drawn me to Himself, out of the control and dominion of darkness, and has transferred me into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

1 Cor 1:30

Since I have been raised with Christ to a new life, I aim at and seek the rich eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. I set my mind, and keep it set, on what is above, not on the things that are on the earth. For, as far as this world is concerned, I have died, and my new real life is hidden with Christ in God.

Col 3:5, 8

Therefore, I have considered the members of my body dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed. I put away and rid myself of anger, rage, bad feelings toward others, curses, slander, and abusive speech from my mouth.

Col 3:12

I always let my speech be gracious, pleasant, and winsome, seasoned with salt, so that I may never be at a loss to know how I ought to answer anyone who puts a question to me. I clothe myself, as God's chosen one, purified, holy, and well loved by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feelings, a lowly opinion of myself, gentle ways, and patience, which is tireless and long suffering, and has the power to endure whatever comes with good temper.

Phil 4:5

I let all men know and perceive and recognize my unselfishness, my considerateness, and my forbearing spirit.

Eph 5:15-16

I look carefully at how I walk. I live purposefully, worthily, and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as a wise, sensible, intelligent person, making the very most of the time, buying up each opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, I am not vague, thoughtless, and foolish, but I understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is.

Phil 4:13

I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me. I am ready for anything, and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me. I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.

Isa 54:14

I will establish myself in righteousness, and I will be far from even the thought of oppression or destruction, for I shall not fear, and far from terror, for it shall not come near me.

Prov 1:33

I listen to God's Word; therefore, I live securely, and I'm at ease from the dread of evil.

Phil 1:9

I thank You, Lord, that my love abounds still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that I approve the things that are excellent, and that I am sincere and without offense until the day of Christ.

Gal 3:26

I am a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Appendix D

The following excerpt is taken from *God's Creative Power for Healing* by Charles Capps

God's Medicine

I am FREE from unforgiveness and strife. I forgive others and Christ has forgiven me, for the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost (Matt 6:12; Rom 5:5).

Jesus bore my sins in His Body on the tree; therefore, I am dead to sin and alive unto God and by His stripes I am healed and made whole (Rom 6:11; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24).

Jesus bore my sickness and carried my pain. Therefore, I give no place to sickness or pain. For God sent His Word and healed me (Ps 107:20).

Father, because of Your Word I am an overcomer. I overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony (1 John 4:4; Rev 12:11).

You have given me abundant life. I receive that life through Your Word, and it flows to every organ of my body bringing healing and health (John 6:63; 10:10).

Heavenly Father, I attend to Your Word. I incline my ears to Your sayings. I will not let them depart from my eyes. I keep them during my heart, for they are life and healing to all my flesh (Prov 4:20-22).

As God was with Moses, so is He with me. My eyes are not dim; neither are my natural forces abated. Blessed are my eyes for they see and my ears, for they hear (Deut 34:7).

No evil will befall me; neither shall any plague come near my dwelling. For You have given your angels charge over me. They keep me in all my ways. In my pathway is life, healing, and health (Ps 91:10, 11; Prov 12:28).

Jesus took my infirmities and bore my sicknesses. There I refuse to allow sickness to dominate my body. The Life of God flows within me bringing healing to every fiber of my being (Matt 8:17; John 6:63).

I am redeemed from the curse. Galatians 3:13 is flowing in my blood stream. It flows to every cell of my body, restoring life and health (Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6).

The life of First Peter 2:24 is a reality in my flesh, restoring every cell of my body. I present my body to God for it is the temple of the LIVING GOD. God dwells in me, and HIS LIFE permeates my SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY so that I am filled with the fullness of God daily (John 14:20; Rom 12:1, 2).

My body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST. I make a demand on my body to release the right chemicals. My body is in perfect chemical balance. My pancreas secretes the proper amount of insulin for life and health (1 Cor 6:19).

Heavenly Father, through Your Word You have imparted Your life to me. That life restores my body with every breath I breathe and every word I SPEAK (Mark 11:23; John 6:63).

That which God has not planted is dissolved and rooted out of my body in Jesus's Name. First Peter 2:24 is engrafted into every fiber of my being and I am alive with the life of God (Mark 11:23; John 6:63).

Growths, Tumors, and Arthritis

Jesus bore the curse for me; therefore, I forbid growths and tumors to inhabit my body. The life of God within me dissolves growths and tumors, and my strength and health are restored (Matt 16:19; Mark 11:23; John 14:13).

Growths and tumors have no right to my body. They are a thing of the past for I am delivered from the authority of darkness (Col 1:13, 14).

Every organ and tissue of my body functions in the perfection that God created it to function. I forbid any malfunction in my body in Jesus's Name (Gen 1:28, 31).

Father, Your Word has become a part of me. It is flowing in my bloodstream. It flows to every cell of my body, restoring and transforming my body. Your Word has become flesh; for You sent Your Word and healed me (Ps 107:20; Prov 13:3; Jas 1:21).

Your Word is manifested in my body, causing growths to disappear. Arthritis is a thing of the past. I make a demand on my bones and joints to function properly In Jesus's Name (Matt 17:20; Mark 11:23).

Heavenly Father, I give voice to Your Word, the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes me free from the law of sin and death. And Your Life is energizing every cell of my body (Rom 8:12).

Arthritis, you must GO! Sickness MUST FLEE! Tumors cannot exist in me, for the Spirit of God is upon me and the Word of God is within me. Sickness, fear, and oppression have no power over me for God's Word is my confession (Mark 11:23).

Heart and Blood

Thank You Father that I have a strong heart. My heart beats with the rhythm of life. My blood flows to every cell of my body restoring life and health abundantly (Prov 12:14; 14:30).

My blood pressure is 120 over 80. The life of God flows in my blood and cleanses my arteries of

all matter that does not pertain to life (Mark 11:23).

My heartbeat is normal. My heart beats with the rhythm of life, carrying the Life of God throughout my body, restoring LIFE AND HEALTH ABUNDANTLY (John 17:23; Eph 2:22).

I have a strong heart. Every heartbeat flood my body with life and cleanses me of disease and pain (Exod 23:25; Mark 11:23).

I command my blood cells to destroy every disease germ and virus that tries to inhabit my body. I command every cell of my body to be normal. In Jesus's name (Romans 5:17; Luke 17:6).

Every cell that does not promote life and health in my body is cut off from its life source. My immune system will not allow tumorous growths to live in my body. In Jesus's name (Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6).

I am redeemed from the curse of the law and my heart beats with the rhythm of life. The spirit and life of God's Word flows in me cleansing my blood of every disease and impurity (Prov 4:20-23).

Arteries and Cells

In Jesus's name, my arteries will not shrink or become clogged. Arteries, you are clean, elastic, and function as God created you to function (Isa 55:11; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6; Jas 3:2-5).

The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death; therefore, I will not allow sin, sickness, or death to lord over me (Rom 6:13-14; 8:2).

The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in me, permeating His life through my veins, sending healing throughout my body (Rom 8:11).

In Jesus's name I forbid my body to be deceived in any manner. Body, you will not be deceived by any disease germ or virus. Neither will you work against life or health in any way. Every cell in my body supports life and health (Matt 12:25; 35a).

Immune System

My immune system grows stronger day by day. I speak life to my immune system. I forbid confusion in my immune system. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in me and quickens my immune system with the life and wisdom of God, which guards the life and health of my body.

Healthy Bones and Marrow

I speak to the bones and joints of my body. I call you normal. In Jesus's name. My bones and joints will not respond to any disease; for the Spirit life of 1 Peter 2:24 permeates every bone and joint of my body with LIFE and HEALTH.

Father, I make a demand on my bones to produce perfect marrow. I make a demand on the marrow to produce pure blood that will ward off sickness and disease. My bones refuse any offense of the curse (Prov 16:24).

I make a demand on my joints to function perfectly. There will be no pain or swelling in my joints. My joints refuse to allow anything that will hurt or destroy their normal function (Prov 17:22).

Enforcing Life

Mix thoroughly with faith and authority. To be taken by word of mouth as often as needed to maintain health and life.

Body, I speak the Word of Faith to you. I demand that every organ perform a perfect work, for you are the temple of the HOLY GHOST; therefore, I charge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the authority of His holy Word to be healed and made whole in Jesus's name (Prov 12:18).

Father, I resist the enemy in every form that he comes against me. I require my body to be strong and healthy, I enforce it with Your Word. I reject the curse, and I enforce life in this body (Jas 4:7).

I will not die but live and declare the works of God (Ps 118:17).

You have forgiven all my iniquities; You have healed all my diseases; You have redeemed my life from destruction; You have satisfied my mouth with good things so that my youth is renewed as the eagles (Ps 103:2; 5).

Lord, you have blessed my food and water and have taken sickness away from me. Therefore, I will fulfill the numbers of my days in health (Exod 23:25, 26).

Understanding the Principle

Now that you have gone through the scriptural confessions, let's look at the principle that could be the key to you being a partaker of God's provision concerning your healing.

There is probably no other subject as important to your healing and health than the principle of **CALLING THINGS THAT ARE NOT***. We see in Romans 4:17-22 that Abraham became fully persuaded that God would do what He had promised. The way he became fully persuaded was by calling those things which were not manifest as though they were.

We pick up on this in verse 17:

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickened the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were (Rom 4:17).

Appendix E

Recruitment Letter

Total Life Ministries Church Member
Total Life Ministries Church
2260 E 5th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43291

Dear Total Life Ministries Church Member:

As a graduate student at the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. Research that may assist in a better understanding of prayer from a Kingdom perspective, different types of prayer, and see if this will increase prayer and increase prayer service attendance levels. The title of my research project is Evaluating Instruments and Strategies for Change Through Prayer, and the purpose of my research is to ascertain perceptions and perspectives concerning group and individual prayer practices of the members of Total Life Ministries before and after 4 Sunday sermons are preached on prayer. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, a member of Total Life Ministries, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a 6-question survey at the beginning of the research study. It should take approximately 20 minutes. You will also be asked to attend 4 Sunday services to listen to 4 sermons (that will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour each) and answer another 6-question survey at the end of the week 4 session, which will take approximately 20 minutes. The Sunday sermons will occur once a week each Sunday for 4 weeks and will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Your name will only be requested on the email that is sent to the email address.

No other identifying information will be requested as part of the participation in the study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, complete the six-question survey (which will also serve as your consent for me to do the research and use your answers as a part of the research process), answer the Pre-survey/Questionnaire and submit it to Lisa M. Hunter's email which is lmhunter@liberty.edu, and attend the four Sunday services to hear the sermons for the four-week research study for further instructions. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Hunter, Pastor/Overseer

Appendix F

1



My Daily Confession by Charles Capps

“I am the body of Christ, so Satan has no power over me, and I overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21; 1 Cor 12:27).

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, for my righteousness is of (from) the Lord. But whatever I do will prosper for I am like a tree that’s planted by the rivers of water (Ps 1:3; Isa 54:17).

My God will meet all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

“I am of (from) God and have overcome Satan, because the one who is in me is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

“I will fear no evil, for You are with me, Lord; Your Word and Your Spirit, they comfort me” (Ps 23:4).

“I am far from oppression, and fear does not come near me” (Isa 54:14).

“I am delivered from the evil of this present world for it is the will of God...” (Gal1:4).

“I am a doer of the Word of God, and I am blessed in my deeds” (Jas 1:22).

“I take the shield of faith and quench every fiery dart that the wicked one brings against me” (Eph 6:16).

“Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law. Therefore, I forbid any sickness or disease to come upon this body. Every disease germ and every virus that touches this body dies instantly in the name of Jesus. Every organ and every tissue of this body function in the perfection to which God created it to function. And I forbid any malfunction in this body, in the name of Jesus” (Gen 1:30; Matt 16:19; Rom 8:11; Gal 3:13).

“I am an overcomer and I overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of my testimony.” (Rev 12:11).

“The devil flees from me because I resist him in the name of Jesus” (Jas 4:7).

“The Word of God is forever settled in heaven. Therefore, I establish His Word upon this earth” (Ps 119:89).

“Great is the peace of my children for they are taught of the Lord” (Isa 54:13).

Note: The article from The Tongue-A Creative Force by Charles Capps

Let's learn to take God's medicine daily.

Capsules*

To Defeat Worry and Fear Confess These God-pills Three Times a Day

I am the body of Christ and Satan hath no power over me. For I overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21; 1 Cor 12:27).

I am of God and have overcome him (Satan). For greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

.....
*These are not direct quotations from the Bible, but these are paraphrased confessions based on the Scriptures under them.

I will fear no evil for thou art with me Lord, your Word, and your Spirit, they comfort me (Ps 23:4).

I am far from oppression, and fear does not come nigh me (Isa 54:14).

No weapon formed against me shall prosper, for my righteousness is of the Lord. But whatever I do will prosper for I'm like a tree that's planted by the rivers of water (Ps 1:3; Isa 54:17).

I am delivered from the evils of this present world for it is the will of God (Gal 1:4).

No evil will befall me neither shall any plague come nigh my dwelling. For the Lord has given His angels charge over me and they keep me in all my ways, and in my pathway is life and there is no death (Ps 91:10-11; Prov 12:28).

I am a doer of the Word of God and am blessed in my deeds. I am happy in those things which I do because I am a doer of the Word of God (Jas 1:22).

I take the shield of faith and I quench every fiery dart that the wicked one brings against me (Eph 6:16).

Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law. Therefore, I forbid any sickness or disease to come upon this body. Every disease germ and every virus that touches this body dies instantly in the name of Jesus. Every organ and every tissue of this body function in the perfection to which

God created it to function, and I forbid any malfunction in this body, in the name of Jesus (Gen 1:31; Matt 16:19; Rom 8:11; Gal 3:13).

I am an overcomer and I am overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the words of my testimony (Reve 12:11).

I am submitted to God and the devil flees from me because I resist him in the name of Jesus (Jas 4:7).

The Word of God is forever settled in heaven. Therefore, I establish His Word upon this earth (Ps 119:89).

Great is the peace of my children for they are taught of the Lord (Isa 54:13).

If Overweight, Take This Capsule Before Meals Three Times A Day

I do not desire to eat so much I become overweight. I present my body to God, my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in me. I am not my own, I am bought with a price therefore, in the name of Jesus I refuse to overeat. Body settle down, in the name of Jesus and conform to the Word of God. I mortify the desires of this body and command it to come into line with the Word of God (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 6:19).

For Material Needs Confess These Three Times a Day Until They're Manifest

Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law. Christ has redeemed me from poverty, Christ has redeemed me from sickness, Christ has redeemed me from spiritual death (Deut 28; Gal 3:13).

For poverty He has given me wealth, for sickness He has given me health, for death He has given me eternal life (Isa 53:5-6; John 5:24; 10:10; 2 Cor 8:9).

It is true unto me according to the Word of God (Ps 119:25).

I delight myself in the Lord and He gives me the desires of my heart (Ps 37:4).

I have given and it is given unto me good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, men give unto my bosom (Luke 6:38).

With what measure I meet; it is measured unto me. I sow bountifully; therefore I reap bountifully. I give cheerfully, and My God has made all grace abound toward me and I have all sufficiency of all things—do abound to all good works (2 Cor 9:6-8).

There is no lack for my God supplies all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

The Lord is my shepherd and I DO NOT WANT. Jesus was made poor, that I through His

poverty might have abundance. For He came that I might have life and have it more abundantly (Ps 23:1; John 10:10; 2 Cor 8:9).

And I, having received abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness do reign as a king in life by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17).

Appendix G

July 2, 2021

Lisa M. Hunter

IRB Application 4210: Evaluating Instruments and Strategies for Change through Praying

Dear Lisa M. Hunter,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in identifying whether possible changes to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office



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