A Model for Active Participation in Mission Service for the African American Church: A Phenomenological Case Study

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor

of Philosophy

Omega Graduate School

September 23, 2023

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to go beyond the common discussion of the underrepresentation of African Americans serving in foreign mission service. This research discovered an African American church that created a five-fold mission service model. This research study aimed to describe and explore the lived experiences of missionaries serving vigorously in mission service utilizing the five-fold mission model created by Ebenezer Baptist Church located in Charlotte, North Carolina. Three African American males and six African American females participated in this study. This research was a Phenomenological Case Study. The research yielded the perceptions of missionaries serving at two locations, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Chosen City Church. a church plant of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Data collected consisted of one-on-one interviews with missionaries from both locations. Analysis of the data revealed three overarching themes: A missionary lifestyle of servant leadership, the importance of training and preparation, and the importance of effective leadership. The subthemes were passion, compassion, service opportunities, vision casting, and modeling behaviors. Recommendations for future research included implementing the present qualitative study to follow and document teaching the five-fold mission model to other African American congregations. eliminating the gap in all areas of mission service, not foreign missions alone. The five-fold mission service model documented in this research encourages active participation in the following areas of mission work: local, stateside, national, international, and disaster relief mission efforts. This research found that the five-fold mission model is feasible to generate energetic involvement in African American churches to increase participation in all areas of mission service.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents, Pastor Emeritus Barron Damon Sr., and Georgia L. Damon. Although my mother is no longer here to celebrate this accomplishment with me; her spirit has been with me throughout this process. To my siblings, Regina Damon, Barron Damon Jr. (Dr. Katrina Damon), and Lakorche Hammett (Edward Hammett), each of you brings something remarkable to my life, and has held me up during different phases of this research journey. To my extended family and many prayer warriors at Chosen City Church: you have allowed me to become a part of the family of God and for that I am forever grateful. I get to serve with phenomenal servant leaders who love missions and the people of God.

To my babies, Mariah, Joshua, Jalen, and Jordin, never give up on your dreams, keep striving, keep pushing, and always keep God first.

Last but certainly not least, I appreciate my husband Frantz Duval, who may not say much but always has my back, cheering me on from the shadows. My friend, my companion, my confidant, this is the end of the journey but the beginning of our next best chapter. God gave us this missional vision, and I look forward to walking it out with you. May God continue to order our steps together today and, in the years, to come.

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Epigraph

“I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light.”

John Keith Falconer

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Missionary service has long been a vital component of the universal church body of Christ. The Great Commission instructions in the Bible were meant to be followed by the whole Christian Church and all future generations. A church with a passion for missions would consistently push its members to see themselves as servant leaders and educate them on how to do so. A church on a mission with God equips its members with the means to become effectual disciples of Jesus Christ and integrate their faith into every aspect of their lives.

Specific to African Americans in global missionary activity, researchers continue to be intrigued by the issue of the underrepresentation of African Americans in missions. Yet, according to Stevens & Watson (2009), African Americans have made significant contributions to the dissemination of the Gospel Jesus Christ proclaimed in distant places of the globe throughout history. Throughout history, the African American community and the African American church encountered several obstacles that have prohibited them from engaging fully in worldwide missions (Stevens and Walston 2009). Many African Americans and the African American church have shied away from the call to serve God on the mission field because of their complex history of both good and evil in missions. The researcher, a minister of the Gospel, and a missionary is aware of the urgent need for a solution to the issue of African American underrepresentation in mission work that has existed for many years in the African American church.

“A new vision of pastoral leadership is needed at the outset of the 21st century in which many denominational Black congregations are struggling to fulfill their traditionally priestly prophetic roles in communities that really need the services that these congregations provide (Tribble, 2002, p.3). Every congregation member should have the objective of actively participating in the church’s mission (Logan, 2016). Nonetheless, global mission work is not the only area of mission where the African American church lacks a substantial presence or commitment.

Partners at Ebenezer Baptist Church are recognized as a missionary, and the Church’s five-fold mission plan involves not only worldwide mission activity but local, stateside, national, global, and disaster assistance. Blanchard and Hodges’ (2003), concept of ‘servant leadership’ founded in basic Biblical behavioral principles, contends that leaders should serve others (Couto, 2006; Frick, 2004). Ebenezer Baptist Church is conscious that traditional weekly services are as vital to the church’s functioning as the church’s various outreach activities. Connection with the local community is vital to Ebenezer Baptist Church’s five-fold mission model. This is in line with what can be inferred from Greenleaf (1977), that servant-leaders first ensure that the community’s’ highest-priority needs are served. To support the many outreach services provided daily, weekly, and monthly to individuals in need, Ebenezer Baptist Church has created relationships with more than ninety different organizations in and around the Charlotte, North Carolina metropolitan area.

Ebenezer Baptist Church and its missionaries have succeeded in their endeavors to preach the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission. As a result, the Church offers opportunities for its congregation to follow Christ’s commission to preach the gospel in the United States and beyond. The five-fold mission model used by Ebenezer Baptist Church’s predominantly African American congregation is a unique paradigm for missions, a phenomenon that this researcher had never seen in all her years working in missions in the African American church.

The initial objective of this research project was to investigate the ongoing underrepresentation of African Americans on the worldwide mission stage. However, following the firsthand experience with Ebenezer Baptist Church’s five -fold mission model, the focus of the study has shifted. The research will entail a phenomenological case study into missionary service in the African American Church with Ebenezar Baptist Church’s Five-Fold Mission Model to engage members in active participation.

Through semi-structured interviews with Ebenezer Baptist Church pastors, mission team leaders, and lay missionaries, this research aims to present a phenomenological understanding of the five-fold mission model used by Ebenezer Baptist Church. At the commencement of this investigation, prioritization was given to the creation of a template that will serve as a model for other African American churches. If effective, this could be a start toward finding a solution to the underrepresentation of African Americans and the African American church in mission service on the worldwide stage.

Problem Statement

It is unknown what is necessary for the African American Church to build a comprehensive mission service that spans the five-fold areas of mission endeavors, local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) and a transformative mission movement. These are the areas of mission work: the United States, the world, and disaster relief. In the discussion of the topic, how mission service of African American churches promote relevant biblical and theological content for an active participation paradigm is explored. As a result, this study analyzes the mission service of the African American Church by employing a phenomenological case study and attempting to demonstrate that the necessary development for a full mission service that encompasses the five-fold areas of mission efforts (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) and creates a transformational mission movement within the African American Church remains unknown. Theology recognizes that pedagogy is concerned with concepts of teaching and learning geared to the education of all age groups, while andragogy is primarily concerned with the training of adult learners. However, literature in the social sciences suggests that adult education must move from pedagogy to andragogy. Since the research focuses on adult learners and not children, adults and children do not learn in the same way, adult learners may choose to apply what they have learned to real-world situations. Therefore, the problem statement advises that adult education should use transformational learning and mentoring to bridge the gap between the classroom and real-world experience. The researcher therefore seeks to communicate the findings of this research study in such a way as to suggest mission service education and a model for participation as a strategic course that promotes the successful integration of a full mission service model into theological education, for instance, ensuring that members and leaders of Ebenezer Baptist Church are well-sensitized in the need to promote mission service in the African American Church and African American church practice.

Purpose

This phenomenological case study analyzes and seeks to understand the Ebenezer Baptist Church missionaries' active five-fold mission endeavors; this researcher will conduct interviews with church-affiliated missionaries to explain the phenomena of missionaries working in the five-fold areas of mission service (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) at Ebenezer Baptist Church. This researcher understands the significance of constructing a contextualized strategic plan and model for active involvement in transformational mission work on behalf of the African American Church.

This literature review's principal purpose is to understand the topic under inquiry comprehensively. The secondary purpose of this examination of the relevant literature is the identification of potential gaps in the academic work that has previously been conducted on this topic. In establishing a knowledge gap for strong mission involvement from an African American church, the concept of a five-fold mission service model necessitates additional study to enable future studies on this neglected style of mission service.

Background of the Problem

Several academic research studies have focused on the underrepresentation of the African American church in overseas missions. It is a long-standing challenge that extends to African Americans' lack of participation in mission work; this lack of engagement in global missions is a component of this broader issue. In the organization of the African American Church during the last century, the topic of mission activity has deep roots and is plagued with hurdle a challenging dilemma that requires more than a discussion to resolve to return African Americans and the church to their deep roots in missions. According to Stevens and Walston, the history of African American missions, from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, is filled with tales of formerly enslaved people who departed the United States to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth century (Stevens & Walston, 2009), African Americans left the United States without fear, hesitation, or an unwillingness to convey the gospel to their place of origin and other countries beyond the United States. The establishment of Jim Crow laws in the United States marked the beginning of the culminating in the African American Church moving inward. Many circumstances, including those stated above, have caused the African American Church to withdraw from active engagement in international mission activity (Stevens & Walston, 2009).

The Setting of this Research

This research will investigate the five-fold ministry mission model used by Ebenezer Baptist Church in detail. The Ebenezer Baptist congregation is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina. As part of this study, a representative sample of the missionary team from Ebenezer Baptist Church will be sought out and questioned. Ebenezer Baptist Church maintains an extraordinary missional presence in the city and a continually growing membership. The five-pronged strategy for mission work used by Ebenezer Baptist Church and the results of this research may be of tremendous help to other African American churches.

Thesis Statement

This study aims to analyze African American missionaries' experiences actively engaged in all five aspects of mission work within the framework of Ebenezer Baptist Church’s vibrant and life-altering mission movement, including local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief.

Research Questions

This study aims to analyze African American missionaries' experiences actively engaged in all five aspects of mission work within the framework of Ebenezer Baptist Church’s vibrant and life-altering mission movement, including local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief.

In contrast to the members of Ebenezer Baptist Church, there is a noted underrepresentation of African Americans in missionary service. The aim of this study contributes to existing research on this occurrence and provides information to African American churches, based on the findings of the impact of the five-fold mission model, on how to engage members in active participation in missionary service.

RQ1: How has the five-fold mission model of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church impacted the lived experiences of African American members in active participation in mission service?

RQ2: How has active participation of African Americans in mission service affected the lived experiences of the communities (local, stateside, national, global and disaster relief) served by the Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church?

RQ3: What principles of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church’s Five-Fold Mission Model can be used to create a working prototype targeting the lived experiences of African Americans to address their underrepresentation in all mission service areas?

To gather data that will help the researcher answer these questions, the qualitative researcher must explicitly address issues about how and why the data will be collected. “There is one golden rule for phenomenological research subject selection. The research must always center on lived experience. In addition to experience, phenomenological research is concerned with perception (“Populations”, 2021).

As a dedicated missionary participant within the fold of Ebenezer Baptist Church, a significant juncture arrived where a compelling sense urged me to depart from the congregation, I had faithfully been a part of for seventeen years. This departure was motivated by a sincere desire to engage more closely with the missions carried out by Ebenezer Baptist Church. Amid a thorough exploration of various research methodologies, it became evident that employing a specific technique stood out as the most effective means to encapsulate the rich lived experiences of the highly active missionaries associated with Ebenezer Baptist Church. This conclusion was reached after a comprehensive evaluation of multiple available options. This researcher wished to comprehend the five-fold model of mission work implemented at Ebenezer Baptist Church and investigate if other African American churches might reproduce this model; this clarified my study topic. As I sought to comprehend Ebenezer Baptist church’s five-fold paradigm of mission service, my research question became apparent.

Is it feasible for the African American Church to successfully replicate Ebenezer Baptist Church’s (EBC) five-fold model of mission service to increase participation in mission work?

Definition of Operational Terms

The following terms defined in the research provide readers with contextual meaning of the dissertation work.

African American Church (AAC): The term Black church or African American Church refers to Christian churches that minister to predominantly African American congregations in the United States (artandpopularculture.com).

Case Study: An intensive investigation of current and past behaviors and experiences of a single person, family, group, or organization.

Chosen City Church (CCC): A church plant established in 2019; non-denominational, predominantly African American congregation.

Codes: Used in qualitative analysis; most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative attribute for a portion of language based on visual data (Saldana, 2021).

Convenience Sampling: A non-probability sampling strategy that uses the most easily accessible people to participate in a study.

Dedoose: An alternative to other qualitative data analysis software, specifically aimed at facilitating rigorous, mixed methods research.

Ebenezer Baptist Church (EBC): A historically, predominately Black church, in existence for over 100 years, serving the African American community. A church organization passionate about helping all communities through mission service activities that reach beyond its community, meeting needs internationally.

Experience Questions: Questions a researcher asks to learn what an individual is doing or has done.

Field Notes: A text document that details behaviors, conversations, or setting characteristics, as recorded by a qualitative researcher. Field notes are the principal form of data gathered from direct observation and participant observation.

Five-Fold Mission Model: A mission service model created by Ebenezer Baptist Church and adopted by Chosen City Church that encompasses five distinct areas of mission service to include local, stateside, national, international, and disaster relief mission work.

Informed Consent: An agreement between parties about the data and/or the disclosure, reporting, and/or use of data, information, and/or results from a research experiment.

Leaders: Persons at EBC & CCC who lead ministry within the church. Leaders in the congregation are responsible for carrying the vision of the Pastor, overseeing ministry activities, rallying congregants to participate in the vision, connect, and engage with church lay members regularly.

Lived Experience: A function of qualitative phenomenological research wherein the “lived experience” refers to the first-hand involvement or direct experiences and choices of a given person and the knowledge they gain from it, as opposed to the knowledge a given person gains from second-hand sources.

Mission Blitz: An organized mission opportunity to share the love of Christ by meeting the needs of various organizations in the community. Hundreds of EBC and CCC partners serve across the city.

Missionary: A person sent out by a Christian religious organization/church to promote and demonstrate the love, life, and Lordship of Jesus Christ, to all persons encountered, either locally or on foreign soil.

Missions: From a Christian perspective, an organized effort engaging like-minded volunteers and servant leaders to advance the Christian faith through compassion, love, and service.

Participant Observer: The act of a research investigator taking part in group activities that the researcher plans to study. The researcher also reveals to the group that he/she is studying the group’s activities.

Partner: The terminology used at CCC and EBC to describe a person who has joined the work of the church. This term replaces the standard terminology of “member” used in churches.

Partner(s)/Partnership: A reference to various organizations, in and around Charlotte, NC metropolitan area, that assist EBC & CCC in performing the work of missions in the community.

Phenomenology: A qualitative methodology with roots in philosophy and a focus on the lived experiences of individuals.

Pilot Study: A small scale study administered before conducting an actual formal study. Its purpose is to reveal defects in the research plan.

Purposive Sampling: A non-probability sampling strategy in which the researcher selects participants who are typical of the wider population.

Replication & Duplication: Refers to the idea of using the five-fold mission model in other religious organizations to fill the gap of underrepresentation of mission service in the African American Church.

Saturation: In qualitative research, a situation in which data analysis begins to reveal repetition and redundancy; new data tends to confirm existing findings rather than expand upon them.

Semi-Structured Interview: A method of data collection in which the interviewer uses a pre-determined list of topics or questions to gather information from a respondent. The interviewer may stray from the list to follow-up on statements the respondent makes during the interview.

Servant Leader: Persons at EBC & CCC who lead others and serve alongside congregants with an unselfish mindset, empowering others while creating relationships; building a culture of trust and fostering leadership in others to carry out the work of kingdom building.

Research Approach

This phenomenological case study investigates the lived experiences of missionaries actively participating in the five-fold mission ministry at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The objective of this research is to provide insight into the actual experiences of missionaries. The overall theoretical framework for phenomenological research is phenomenology. Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology are the primary schools of thought one may choose from when using a phenomenological method (Peoples, 2021). This specific research attempt employs Martin Heidegger’s hermeneutic approach as its underlying theoretical foundation.

The philosophy employed using Heidegger’s hermeneutic approach helps to guide the researcher’s investigation and understanding of the phenomenon, as the lived experiences of the participants reveal the unique stories of each individual journey.

Anticipated Outcomes

The basis for a documented, coordinated, five-fold outreach ministry service model that other congregations might employ is anticipated to be one of the outcomes. This study provides a foundation for understanding servant leaders’ physiological and psychological impact on the individuals they serve. These findings can guide future research into why a substantial portion of the African American Church does not engage in missionary activity.

This phenomenological case study will shed light on a paradigm currently in use in the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church. The study will specifically examine how the approach has benefited the church congregation. It is essential to conduct extensive research on the five-fold mission service model. The anticipated outcome of this project is establishing a formalized procedure for organized mission service that other churches can adopt for their congregations. The primary objective of a Community Mission Church Alliance (CMCA) will be the unification of African American churches. These churches will collaborate to establish community partnerships to receive instruction and training on implementing a five-fold mission model in their various ministry rotations. This research project’s primary objective is to determine whether it is possible to develop a formal model for the delivery of mission service that emphasizes equipping the African American church of this generation to participate in all aspects of such service.

Research Assumptions

Compared to other churches of its size and type, it is believed that a significant proportion of Ebenezer Baptist Church’s African American congregants are actively engaged in mission service; that Ebenezer Baptist Church leadership have an enlightened understanding of Jesus’ command in the Great Commission. The command was exactly that, not a suggestion, for all Christians. The primary contributing factors to underrepresentation in many African American churches do not appear to inhibit the congregation’s participation in mission work at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

As a participant observer, this researcher hypothesizes that the successful engagement of Ebenezer Baptist Church congregants stems from intentional pastoral leadership and appointed church leaders who maintain a servant leadership lifestyle that serves as a model for the congregation to emulate. The deportment of church leaders is also assumed to be why Ebenezer Baptist Church members have consistently engaged over time.

Significance of the Research

The value of this research as a future blueprint and strategic plan for African American pastors to establish transformational, revolutionary mission activity is its significance. This research can influence how the African American Church and community incorporates the vision of the Great Commission into the fabric of the church by applying the five-fold mission service model of local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief to encourage the African American Church to forego historical limitations and homebound sentimentality.

# **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

This literature review's principal purpose is to understand the topic under inquiry comprehensively. Secondary in purpose is examination of the relevant literature in the identification of potential gaps in the academic work that has previously been conducted on this topic. In establishing a knowledge gap for strong mission involvement from an African American church, the concept of a five-fold mission service model necessitates further study on this neglected style of mission service. Expressed differently, the phenomenological case study aims to analyze and understand Ebenezer Baptist Church missionaries' rigorous five-fold mission activities.

The purpose of this phenomenological case study is to analyze and obtain a deeper understanding of the Ebenezer Baptist Church missionaries' active five-fold mission endeavors Diluth (1977). In his contribution to the phenomenological framework, Diluth referred to it as a historical perspective, necessary “to the hermeneutic task of understanding an author better than the author understands his or her own experience.” Hence, this researcher conducted interviews with church-affiliated missionaries to explain the phenomena of missionaries working in the five-fold areas of mission service (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Missionaries serving in local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief capacities will be interviewed.

The researcher had a better understanding of how to construct a contextualized strategic plan and model for active involvement in transformational mission work on behalf of the African American Church as a whole because of the results of this study. To understand human experience, in addition to descriptions of the experience as such, it was necessary to study history; this study is dependent on historical groundings and descriptions to form a whole (Diluth, 1977). The outcomes of this study have improved the researcher's understanding of the construct a contextualized strategic plan for the African American Church's active participation in transformational mission activity requires.

Rationale for Topics

This qualitative phenomenological case study is essential and required. There is a gap in the conversation around all types of mission activity. Most of the available information about the African American Church and missions focuses on the paucity of African Americans working in global or international missions. The bulk of previous academic study of African Americans who have worked in missions has been quantitative and concentrated on the marginal number of African Americans who have chosen to work in global missions. The remarkable five-fold mission service model of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, the focus of this research, is the subject of this inquiry; the goal of this study is to focus on qualitative findings to get a thorough understanding of this model.

This study will not only provide information to other social researchers who are interested in this model and want to look beyond historical reasons why the African American church is largely absent from global mission service. It will also contribute knowledge to an understudied aspect of a five-fold mission service model; a case study conducted in a primarily African American church of average size. A sizeable section of the congregation attends this church; a sizeable number are actively involved in at least one of the five mission service areas.

Surveys indicate that the United States has more missionaries serving overseas than all other top 10 sending countries combined. In 2010 that figure was 127,000 (Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2019). While this may be true, it is crucial to note that the number of African Americans serving as missionaries is disproportionate to that of other racial groups. “The historical Black Church signifies an institution in missional crisis,” (Everett, 2012, p.14).

This chapter’s overview will address the literature on the history of the African American church, the historical backdrop of African American missionaries, the impact of slavery, women in African American missions, pastoral leadership in the African American church, leadership styles, various theologies, the African American church in contemporary society, mission service, and missionary movements.

This study will utilize a phenomenological case study into missionary service in the African American church with Ebenezar Baptist Church’s (EBC) five-fold mission as a model to engage members in active participation. A review of the relevant literature reveals that the current research study contributes to an essential academic conversation on missions and the African American Church; This study seeks to fill a gap in past academic research on African Americans in mission service by concentrating on all neglected areas of mission activity where African Americans are underrepresented.

## **The History of the African American Church**

According to historical accounts, the first American missionary was an enslaved African American named George Liele, born in Virginia around 1750 (Holmes., 2021). Liele, Henry Shopp’s servant, became a devout Christian after accompanying Shopp to church meetings. Liele was tasked with interpreting the Bible for other enslaved persons of Henry Shopp (Paul Easterling, 2017).

Henry Shopp released Liele as a direct result of Liele’s growth as a Bible teacher. Liele was consecrated as a pastor by the local Church in Shopp, and he later founded what is recognized as the first congregation of people of color in the United States of America (Paul Easterling, 2017). He traveled to Kingston, Jamaica in 1782, in fear of being sold back into slavery (Paul Easterling, 2017). Liele proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ on sugar estates to enslaved persons. Because of his efforts in ministry, many individuals were baptized, and churches were founded. Additionally, he founded a public school to educate the children of enslaved persons who worked on plantations (Students et al., 2010).

By the time he died in 1828, over 20,000 Jamaicans had become Christians, and churches had been constructed around the island (Liele & Holmes 1964). Liele was the first person to depart on a mission trip from the United States. He traveled to Jamaica’s mission territories ten years before William Carey traveled to India (Smith, 2011), and he traveled to India and Burma thirty years before Adoniram Judson (Jason Deusing., 2012).

Despite historic recollection of the first American missionary being African American, unfortunately, only a tiny percentage of African Americans currently engage in missionary activity. As of July 2019, there were around 43 million African Americans residing in the United States, according to Quick Facts United States (2019). In a recent edition of Christianity Today, an article entitled “Southern Baptists Have Only Thirteen African American Career Missionaries” was published (Telford, 2001). What Specifically Is Required to Rally More Support? The Southern Baptist International Missions Board has claimed that just 0.3% of its 3,700 staff are African Americans operating on the mission field, according to facts supplied in the article (Cole, 2009).

The African American Church has experienced many of the same occurrences as African American communities, including change, growth, difficulties, struggle, and perseverance (DuBois, 2011). The historical significance the African American Church has had in African American communities also embodies its historical significance and role in missionary service. This section will discuss the origins of the African American Church during slavery, its participation throughout the Civil Rights Movement, and its current relevance in the lives of African Americans in the twenty-first century (McEwan & Schoorman, 2019). The first scholarly assessment of the status of the African American Church at the beginning of the 20th century was published in 1903 under the title “The People of Color Church” by Dubois (2011). As African Americans started to establish their congregations, which was later followed by the design and construction of their church structures, it is possible to question whether they were constructing an African-centered holy place for themselves (DuBois 2011). In traditional African religion, sacred space was defined by an appreciation of the relationship between humans and the natural world, natural settings, and cosmology that placed humanity at the center of its attention.

Dubois, (2011) in the People of Color Church, opens a discussion regarding the social status of Black America at the time, the issues faced by Black people, and the Church’s possible role in finding answers to these problems. The state-by-state technique used by DuBois to organize the facts in the book facilitates comprehension of the scope of the African American Church's establishment and development in both the North and South (DuBois 2011). This technique also emphasizes urban and rural examples of African American church architecture and regional and vernacular influences on building form. In the past, churches have earmarked vast amounts of resources to build the most eye-catching community constructions in which they were situated (Everett, 2012). Everett (2012) also highlighted great music, compelling teaching, and a host of programs designed to attract and gather people were the staple of such church communities. Leading African American churches of today continue these services for members and its surrounding communities.

Concerning the customary traditions followed in West Africa, DuBois examined information and concluded that African religion has an intense and profound origin in both the cosmos and nature (Farrell, 2022). Nevertheless, due to the four-hundred-year slave trade, it is impossible to uncover the final remnants of any extensive religious system on the west coast of Africa today (DuBois, 2011). This arose because of the extensive mixing and demoralization caused by the slave trade.

In an extract from the book “African-Caribbean Religions” Murrell (2010), a philosophy and religion professor at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington explains the roots of several African religious traditions; the origins of several ideas about God and the universe may be traced back thousands of years to African philosophy. These are transmitted via the telling of sacred stories, legends, myths, proverbs, symbols, rituals, and the words of knowledgeable individuals; when these notions are combined, a picture emerges that illustrates a deep understanding of the cosmos (Murrell 2010, p. 29). When Christianity was introduced, it challenged various African religious rites and ceremonies, most of which were constructed from a polytheistic perspective. In his work “Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South,” Albert J. Raboteau, a former religion professor at Princeton, discusses the transfer of enslaved people from traditional African faiths to Christianity (Raymo, 2014), the transition from traditional African faiths to Christianity was his primary emphasis. According to Raboteau, (Raymo, 2014), belief in a High God or a Supreme Creator of the cosmos was prevalent in several African tribes, this High God seems relatively detached from the events occurring in the world of humanity.

The belief systems and theological theories of traditional African religions are maybe the most influential African remnants. Henry Mitchell, a professor of History and African American Church Studies, has written the following on the importance of a person’s religious views on the need to survive slavery; these ideas and doctrines are intertwined with the orthodox Christian religion and have merged with it (Mitchell, 2004, p.16). Furthermore, these African cross-cultural notions were so effective in aiding African Americans to retain their psychological health in the face of persecution that they fared in America (Mitchell 2004, p. 16).

Mitchell asserts that the will to live motivated Africans brought to America and this motivation caused them to discover ways to merge their ancient religious beliefs with Christian teaching or syncretize; this freshly developed syncretic worldview has been handed down from one generation to the next (Mitchell, 2004). Traditional difficulties, such as “cultural and linguistic barriers that had delayed the evangelization of prior generations of African-born enslaved persons were essentially no longer a problem,” and was no longer regarded as a barrier to the spread of Christianity (Raboteau 2004, p. 212). Enslaved persons born in Africa posed a continuing obstacle regarding their capacity to convert to Christianity; they could not know sufficient English to grasp the principles of Christianity. Born in the United States, enslaved Africans could comprehend white culture and language, making them more appropriate candidates for Christian conversion (Raboteau 2004, p. 214). Enslaved persons, compelled to resist the desire to survive, engaged in acts of defiance directed against sermons given by white southern clergy. White clergy endeavored to make enslaved people more submissive while simultaneously attempting to temper the cruelty of their masters (Mitchell 2004, p. 20).

Between 1740 and 1780, there were several religious revolutions across the United States, including the North and South. The ecclesiastical debate over whether enslaved people had souls that needed to be saved, and even more significantly, the potential danger to enslavers of exposing their enslaved persons to Christian teachings of spiritual equality among all men and women, would become a threat to the institution of slavery, thereby fueling uprisings (Urbaniak, 2018). These occurrences address the dichotomy presented by the Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening to African Americans. Dr. Noel Leo Erskine, a professor of Theology and Ethics at the Candler School of Theology at Emory, authored the book “Plantation Church: How African American Religion Was Born in Caribbean Slavery”. In his book, it is noted that “several African Americans reported that white clergy, committed to preserving slavery, attempted to encourage good conduct, contentment, labor, and humility in the quarters and to discourage theft, lying, and rebellion” (Erskine 2014, p. 115). In his article titled “I Saw the Book Talk: Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening,” Lambert (1992) said that the Great Awakening “was as much a movement of the written word as it was of the spoken word.” (p. 186). George Whitefield, a vital member of the Revival movement, intended to “proclaim the gospel of the new birth to African Americans,” saying that its significance was the same for all people regardless of race.

Slaveholders resisted revivalist efforts to teach African Americans to read and become lay preachers out of concern that such activities would sow the seeds of discord among enslaved persons (Lambert 1992, p. 188). There was also the issue of whether enslaved individuals had souls to rescue. As a direct result, slaveholders began encouraging their enslaved persons to convert to Christianity, provided they were permitted to do so under their absolute control. However, there was fear that the expansion of Christianity among enslaved persons may lead to arguments against the institution of slavery because it conflicted with Christian values (Smith, 2019). Revivalists like Whitefield, who were hesitant to attack the system of slavery itself, did not trust enslaved persons and sought to influence their understanding of the new birth. They emphasized the biblical command for enslaved persons to submit to their enslavers. In addition, enslaved persons were not permitted to disparage their owners (Lambert, 1992).

The revival acted as a vehicle for the growth of the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches (Newsome-Camara, 2012). Several factors contributed to the increase in the number of people of color who converted to Christianity under the influence of revivalism (Raboteau 2004). Revivalist preachers awoke a latent religious consciousness, resulting in the beginning of a religious renaissance in the South, headed by the evangelical religion that the revivalists espoused. The affinity of enslaved people for church and religious ceremonies stemmed from their fondness for singing, dancing, praying, and spirit possession (Erskine, 2014). Later, when they established their church, they included drumming and preaching in their religious ceremonies. Enslaved persons devised an understanding of Christianity vastly distinct from their owners and their chosen preachers; this resulted in considerable religious conflicts (Moore & Collins, 2002). White clergy stressed memorizing the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and other scriptures, emphasizing submission and obedience. Hidden from slaveholders and white preachers, enslaved people maintained a vibrant religious life. Enslaved persons devised various tactics to conceal their religious meetings and rites so their owners would not find them. The term “quiet or brush harbors” was used to describe their meetings in concealed regions, such as impenetrable woodlands, gullies, ravines, and thickets (Raboteau 2004, p. 215). Johnson and Jersild (2014), a theologian and assistant professor of religious studies at the University of South Carolina, explores the significance of the ‘tranquil harbor’ - out of the furnace of their African experience and the terrors of their captivity, enslaved persons started to build a distinct image of Christianity in the framework of their brush arbor gatherings on plantations. “These gatherings were held on plantations and beneath brush arbors” (Johnson and Jersild 2014, p.10).

These customs and behaviors would be considered an “invisible institution” since they persisted in the United States despite the presence of white people; as a direct result, enslaved individuals developed a desire for a worship space of their own (McEwan & Schoorman, 2019). Because they developed in the presence of white people, the religious traditions, and practices of people of color in the United States led to their eventual separation from Anglo religious traditions and practices (Avent & Cashwell, 2015).

The separation from Anglo influence required a complete separation from the necessity to manage the Christian narrative and its interpretation of enslaved people; this obligation existed in several pre-Civil War localities and was engrained in Southern customs and law. Since the United States was in the middle of the Civil War at the time, the only option for people of color to practice their faith without interruption was to fight for freedom (DuBois, 2011). African Americans began organizing their congregations in the late 18th century. DuBois (2011) documented the inevitable separation of churches visited by people of color and whites.

Small congregations of persons of color, headed by preachers of color, sprang up wherever they were accepted. They were often discouraged in public but often encouraged in private (Raboteau 2004). Many southern plantation owners and church officials saw Christianization as the only means of "civilizing" and exerting power over enslaved persons (Johnson & Jersild 2014, p. 10). During the antebellum era, the first praise homes were constructed - where enslaved people on plantations gathered for worship (Campbell, 1994). Johnson (2014) highlights the plantation missionaries, which were factors influencing the enslaved with the construction of the Plantation Mission System, the institutional manifestation of white evangelical efforts to convert Christianity to southern enslaved persons on a broad scale (Kernodle, 2022). After the 1820s, following closely on the heels of the Vesey and Turner Uprisings, white denominations made a concerted effort to spread the Gospel to plantations where enslaved persons were housed. The dynamic tension experienced by enslaved individuals, stemming from the interplay between the spirituality they cultivated within their brush arbors and their resistance against the dominion of plantation owners and clergy aiming to Christianize them, fostered an environment where the enslaved population independently crafted their own interpretation of Christianity. This interpretation not only acknowledged African traditions but also preserved their cultural identity while evading submission to the desires of plantation owners. This internal struggle among the enslaved, stemming from their cultivated spirituality within the secluded brush arbors and their resolute defiance against their masters' authority, remained ever-present. (Johnson & Jersild, 2014).

## **The Impact of Slavery**

During slavery, many plantation owners restricted gatherings of more than five Blacks without a White overseer present to watch the situation. This restriction made it impossible for enslaved persons to congregate for religious services, although they longed to express their religious and spiritual convictions. Additionally, it impeded their sense of community and reduced their opportunities for fellowship (Lincoln, 1973). Therefore, to evade the repercussions of breaching these restrictions, enslaved persons resorted to gathering for worship in unofficial, concealed locations, such as marshes and woodland areas (Frazier, 1963; Lincoln, 1973). According to Pinn (2011), these unofficial gatherings became less secretive and more accessible to the public towards the middle of the 1700s, laying the foundation for what would later be known as the African American Church. Enslaved persons could not get an education or establish a community anywhere else on the estate outside the churches, which constituted the center of their society (Pinn, 2011).

Plantation owners felt that if enslaved persons could read the Bible, their tendency to postpone dreams of freedom until after death would diminish, and a rush of strength and yearning for liberation would emerge; this concern accompanied the founding of the African American Church (Taylor et al., 1987). Enslavers feared that enslaved persons might comprehend the Bible comprehensively, illuminating the inconsistencies and illogical ideas that supported a totalitarian slave system (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). If enslaved persons had a thorough comprehension of the Bible, they would have an increasingly difficult time comprehending a biblically based society that abducted and enslaved innocent people (Taylor et al., 1987). As anticipated, enslaved persons ultimately became dissatisfied with their living circumstances and turned to the church to effect positive change in their lives. As their grasp of the Bible expanded, so did enslaved people's unhappiness with organized religion, particularly Christianity. Enslaved persons felt that Christianity was another instrument used by whites to subjugate them (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

African Americans' overwhelming flight from the Methodist Church was one of the first big civil rights rallies carried out by African Americans (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Richard Allen laid the cornerstone for what would become the first African American Methodist church in 1807 (Wilmore, 1998). Black Methodist churches, considered the first of their kind, were founded in response to the Methodist tradition of having separate congregations for African Americans and Whites. Instead of offering a haven for mistreated African Americans, the Church became another forum for white people to exert their dominance, which many African Americans found overwhelming (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). To satisfy their yearning for places of worship on southern plantations and to escape discrimination on Sunday mornings, enslaved persons founded their own churches (Lincoln, 1973).

The subsequent development of primarily African American congregations within the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal religions (DuBois, 1903) set the ground for the African American Church's significant growth during the Civil Rights Movement. In these churches, enslaved people believed they were free to be themselves and that their status as enslaved people did not supersede their individuality. These services provided both a therapeutic respite and an escape from the tensions and harshness faced on the plantation (Wilmore, 1998). Enslaved persons drew parallels between Christ's crucifixion and the growing prevalence of lynching Black men (Pinn, 2010; Terrell, 1998). Terrell (1998) emphasized that the link between Jesus and enslaved persons was related to the biblical story of Judas betraying Jesus for financial gain; this was thought to be related to Jesus' relationship with enslaved persons. Enslaved persons were aware that their white owners had sold them into slavery, captured them, and transported them to the New World for economic benefit (Pinn, 2011; Terrell, 1998). During this era, the Church was the primary resource for those seeking assistance and change. It is likely that the trend to seek consolation in religious organizations began during the era of slavery and continues to this day (Ayalon & Young, 2005). This aligns with the need for the African American church to operate at the forefront of missionary service and servant leadership and serve those in their communities with the most pressing needs (Bunch, 2013).

## **The Impact of Civil Rights**

In the 1950s and 1960s, the African American Church began widening its theological concepts, creating seminary facilities to select and teach its leaders; this resulted in the Church's growing independence (Lincoln, 1973). In addition, the African American Church provided a venue for campaigners to lecture, advocating for equal rights for African Americans (Chandler, 2010). The African American Church was involved in both global and micro-level socioeconomic concerns. Large groups, such as the NAACP, could get assistance from the African American Church in the form of financial and emotional resources (Chandler, 2010; Students et al., 2010; Moore & Collins, 2002). Individuals who had difficulty paying their financial obligations received more granular economic assistance.

The establishment of self-help theology was motivated by the African American Church's growing financial independence. African Americans could not depend on aid from other sources at the time. African Americans realized that to survive, they had to be self-sufficient in all areas of life, financially, mentally, emotionally, and socially (Littlefield, 2005). Some African Americans likely continue to hold this mindset; consequently, they may be less likely to seek help from service providers, such as professional counselors. During the Civil Rights Movement, the African American Church was particularly significant as a resource for African Americans to experience status, position, and power that were often denied to them by institutions controlled by the majority's culture (Douglas & Hopson, 2001). Consequently, many African Americans may doubt the counseling relationship, as it may represent the dominant culture, from which they have faced discrimination and persecution (Sue & Sue, 2013).

## **Active Participation in Mission Service among the African American Church in the 21st Century**

The African American Church of bygone decades fought for equal rights in society and the African American Church of today has unique difficulties that other religious groups do not share. These impediments include health-related issues, such as HIV/AIDS, and social-related issues, such as welfare reform and disproportionately high unemployment rate. (Billingsley & Caldwell, 1994). Despite this, African Americans have made considerable strides, compared to previous decades, especially in the areas of education and jobs. Many feel that at least a large percentage of these advances should be attributed to the African American Church's efforts (Byrd, 2001). Because of the challenges the African American community faces, such as disproportionately high rates of physical illness, demands on financial resources, anxiety, despair, and familial concerns, these developments are particularly relevant (United States Department of Health and Human Services 2001; 2011).

African Americans have been impacted in every aspect of life by the African American Church (Billingsley & Caldwell, 1994). It is therefore imperative that mission service be investigated for its impact on lived experiences in related communities and affected populations.

## **The State of the Church**.

The institution's existence depends on the church's business status. People who attend a healthy church are unified with Christ and in accord with one another as a community of faith, all working to carry out God's plan; this enables the church to function correctly, as part of Christ's body (Manala, 2010). This is done using four fundamental components, namely, sound theology, holistic relationships, biblically based responsibilities, and a lifestyle defined by robust growth concerning both God and other individuals (Manala, 2010).

Every pastor hopes his church will be a place where love, unity, and strength blooms; a house of God that operates as a living organism, with strong leadership, intelligent management, and dedicated and committed service (Manala, 2010). Nehemiah, a servant in the Bible, exemplifies the servant-leader concept, blending superior business savvy with dynamic leadership. (Manala, 2010). Nehemiah’s role in convincing the workers of the value and responsibility of building the wall, delegating authority to those connected to his leadership, and appointing appropriate leaders and workers to work alongside him, inspired everyone to complete the task for God's glory. Nehemiah was able to convince the workers of the value and duty of constructing the wall (Manala, 2010).

## **African Americans and Global Missions: The Great Omission**

More than 42 million African Americans live in the United States, yet only 400 to 500 are cross-cultural missionaries (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). The Great Commission has been the Black Church's most significant area of neglect for most of the previous twenty years (Bennett, p. 344, cited in RMNI 2021). Before 1980, there may have been over 700 African American missionaries “abroad," many of whom traveled to Africa; today, there are more persons serving than ever before. Compared to the number of African Americans living in the United States, 500 African Americans serving in cross-cultural mission service is relatively small, based on the overall number of Protestant missionaries working in North America; 12 percent of the United States population is African American (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

The abolition of slavery in the United States did not occur until 1865; thus, it was difficult for missionaries to spread the Gospel in other nations during a time when enslaved persons could not travel freely without a pass. To gain their freedom, enslaved people needed first to hear the Good News. Despite this, people like Lott Carey were able to discover Christ, freedom, and the mission fields of Liberia. Most Black denominational mission groups were not created until the 1870s, when almost half of Black missionaries served during the Reconstruction Era, the pursuit of even the most basic civil freedoms was a top priority for Black people after the abolition of slavery (RMNI 2021). There was a preliminary expansion of voting rights and access to public services. Hundreds of individuals were hanged, voting rights were revoked, and states were segregated as white "Jim Crow" vengeance for the freedom of Black people (Lerone Bennett, cited in RMNI 2021).

From 1943 to 1969, violence returned in the form of riots, and the Civil Rights movement, which battled to reclaim the rights taken away after Reconstruction, persisted until the late 1960s (Bennett, p. 344, cited in RMNI 2021). In addition, racism existed within the white evangelical Christian community, as seen by the exclusion of African Americans from evangelical mission groups and institutions. Furthermore, relatively few African Americans were welcomed by white missions between 1920 and 1960 (Bennett 1976, p. 416, cited in RMNI 2021).

## **The Role of Women in African American Missions**

African American women have a unique role in missions in the African American church and many have made significant contributions as missionaries, combining their faith with a commitment to issues around the areas of social justice, education, healthcare, and community development. African American women have played important roles as missionaries, educators, and advocates for social change (Stevens, 2009, pp. 117-120).

According to historical accounts, the first American missionary was an enslaved African American named George Liele, a devout Christian and family man (Holmes, 2021).

Liele’s limited history documents his family to include a wife (Hannah) and four children. Missionary wives had crucial roles alongside their husbands on the mission field. The contribution of missionary wives included practical support, caregiving for the family, and active involvement in education, healthcare, evangelism, and community development. African American Missionary wives often participated in the establishment of schools for local children, creating the curriculum, teaching, and ensuring access to education. In areas where healthcare was limited or lacking, missionary wives provided medical care and support. They attended to the sick, offered basic medical assistance, and promoted good hygiene and public health to women in local communities (Stevens, 2009, pp. 32-33).

Recent significant contributions from African American women in missions include Mary McLeod Bethune (1875 - 1955), primarily known for her work in education and civil rights, Bethune was also heavily involved in missionary work. She founded what we now know as Bethune-Cookman University in Florida and is noted for establishing a mission in Africa (Stevens, 2009, p. 12).

Daisie Whaley (1924 - 2007), a graduate of Manna Bible Institute, served as a missionary for 30 years on the Ivory Coast. Whaley taught children and worked with women, traveling from village to village teaching about Jesus (Stevens, 2009, pp. 113-120).

Ida B. Robinson (1882 - 1946) a pastor and founder of Mount Sinai Holy Church of America. Robinson was engaged in missionary work, establishing churches, and promoting religious and social services (Pope-Levison, 2004).

## **Pastoral Leadership**

The role of a pastor encompasses a complex web of situational learning. Pastors navigate a myriad of responsibilities that include economic challenges, congregational dynamics, sermon preparation, troubleshooting, community engagement, and a multitude of external variables. For African American pastors, the role bears the weight of historical legacies that continue to reverberate, particularly in confronting economic disparities and addressing the social and political issues that profoundly affect the black community (Harrison, (2010)).

Central to the African American pastor’s mandate is the pivotal role of preaching, a beacon that radiates a message of hope, faith, and love. This is not confined solely within the church walls; rather, the leadership of African American pastors extends robustly into the community. Anchored in the church, African American pastors have ingeniously initiate outreach endeavors that exemplify their distinct pastoral role (Everett, 2012).

Distinctive from the traditional white Protestant pastor, the role of an African American pastor carries unique cultural expectations. This often manifests in a leadership style that embodies traits of servant leadership or transformational leadership. These models prove invaluable as pastors construct a cohesive community, articulate visionary direction for followers, and fervently participate in social initiatives to meet the evolving needs of their congregations (Everett, 2012).

Servant Leadership Styles

The African American church is a focal point of the Black community and serves as a center for social justice, educational support, and a source of refuge for African Americans. Leadership within the African American church contributes to the physical growth and spiritual maturity of the congregation as individual lives are impacted (Addison, 2019) (Lincoln, 1990, p. 116).

Pastoring a congregation is a challenging responsibility and African American pastors face many challenges. Black pastors attract people with their ability to preach and lead, as well as an innate charisma, sincerity of purpose, and hard work (Lincoln, 1990, p. 117). Previous research has indicated that African Americans benefit in a multitude of ways when they are involved with religious organizations (Chaney, 2008).

African American churches provide a positive forum of support and play a significant role in positive self-worth and self-esteem of its members (Chaney, 2008). People follow leaders because they believe they possess a clearly defined vision. The concept of servant leader was coined by Robert Greenleaf. Much research has been done on the topic of servant leadership. Researchers argue the concept of servant leadership is founded in Biblical principles. Greenleaf’s first book, “The Servant as Leader”, is a treatise on the dichotomy between two roles fused in one real person (Greenleaf, 1977).

A pastor’s primary role is that of a servant. This is one of the dominate leadership philosophies of Jesus. This represents the paradigm of pastoral leadership found in the Black church today. “The servant-leader is servant first.” (Frick, 2004).

Greenleaf posits a leader is one who “goes out ahead and shows the way.” (Frick, 2004). Jesus modeled servant leadership and taught his disciples this concept during his time with them. Several scriptural references refer to the principle of the servant leader being a servant first and a leader second (Flanike, 2006). One of the strongest examples of the servant attitude of Jesus was when he washed the feet of the disciples. Jesus modeled service leadership in humility, as stated in John 13:4-5 (New International Version):

“So, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”

The leadership example, as demonstrated by Jesus, is an appropriate model for pastoral leadership of African American pastors (Bunch, 2013).

The history of the African American church is useful in understanding the leadership of African American pastors. Pastoral leadership among African American churches is unique to the Black church. While pastoral leadership may be learned via secular sources, its primary source is rooted in the Word of God (Bunch, 2013). Pastors have the power to influence followers because they are under the direction of God.

According to Greenleaf, a servant-leader practices acceptance and empathy, using power ethically, with persuasion (Frick, 2004). The African American pastor uses positive internal experiences that speak to the psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs of the Black congregation, using their powers of persuasion (Chaney, 2008).

Greenleaf also describes characteristics of the servant-leader which include the leader as guide, listener, intuitive, persuasive, and goal-oriented to name a few (Flanike, 2006). These are characteristics of a good servant leader. Serving others is one of the key responsibilities of being a pastor, but the primary focus of service is obedience to God (Bunch, 2013). The concept of servant leadership, as coined by Greenleaf, is to serve others. The role of the pastor as servant leader is a Biblically centered ideology. The original idea of servant leadership is a secularly centered ideology geared toward work leadership styles in organizations (Bunch, 2013).

The African American pastor is largely regarded as the single most important African American leader. Pastors in the African American church are both servants and visionaries (Lincoln, 1990) (Barna, 2004).

Maxwell asserts that leadership can best be defined by influence, “The true measure of leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.” (Maxwell, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership Follow Them and People will Follow You, 2007).

Maxwell further suggests that leadership is not defined by one’s power, position, popularity, or the ability to persuade, but on the ability to influence (Hall, 2012). Maxwell states “If you can’t influence others, they won’t follow you. And if they won’t follow, you’re not a leader.” (Hall, 2012). “If you don’t have influence, you will never be able to lead others.” (Maxwell, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership Follow Them and People will Follow You, 2007).

When people believe in their leaders and the vision, they will follow their leaders, regardless of the conditions. To achieve this level of buy-in from followers, there must be a level of trust and credibility. Once people respect and trust a leader, they will follow without reservation (Maxwell, 21 Laws of Leadership in the Bible Learning to Lead from the Men and Women of Scripture, 2018).

Transformational Leadership Style

Leadership is defined as a person who encourages others to give their all to achieve a specific goal. Research has attempted to discover successful leadership styles that contribute to positive results (Agbarakwe, 2021). Another noted leadership style is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire people to do more than they expected; they motivate and encourage follower commitment. The behaviors of the transformational leader transform and drive followers to achieve beyond expectations and transcend one’s self-interest for the sake of the organization (Agbarakwe, 2021).

Transformational leaders are change agents of organizations. They adjust the culture of the organization to meet the specific environment of that organization. Transformational leadership, from a Christian perspective, exemplifies examples of transformational leaders from the scriptures who created visions, demonstrated courage and confidence, cared about people, and displayed a sense of justice (Stetzer, 2010). Transformational leaders enable people to understand the purpose and goals of the vision. From both a secular and biblical perspective, transformational leadership inspires, develops, and empowers followers. Jesus embodied transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership typically has four theoretical constructs: Idealized Influence (II), which refers to how much followers admire the leaders’ actions. Inspirational Motivation (IM) reflects how much the leader’s vision appeals to and motivates followers to achieve the stated goal. Individualized Consideration (IC) demonstrates the concern the leader has for followers; and Intellectual Stimulation (IS) demonstrates the leader’s ability to question, take risks, and receive feedback from followers (Agbarakwe, 2021).

Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration are all components of transformational leadership and can be significantly impactful to the followers’ buy-in and performance in service (Hamid, 2021).

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders impact followers. Transformational leaders lead with integrity, model desired behavior, make meaningful changes, and empower followers to carry out the vision (Agbarakwe, 2021).

Jesus was the greatest example of a transformational leader during His mission on earth and His time with the disciples. As followers of Jesus Christ, and as Pastors or lay leaders within the church, we can follow Jesus’ example of a transformational leader (Stetzer, 2010). In the book “Transformational Church”, Stetzer and Rainer provide six ways we can become transformational leaders like Jesus. (1) Articulate a clear and appealing vision, (2) Explain how the vision can be attained, (3) Act confidently and optimistically, (4) Express confidence in followers, (5) Lead by example, and (6) Empower people to achieve the vision (Stetzer, 2010). Leadership continues to be a subject of great interest and is relevant in both business and churches. (Hall, 2012)

## **African American Church Theology**

Understanding the historical context of the African American Church is crucial to fully comprehending its fundamental belief systems and its responsibilities and actions. Theology serves as a uniting element for the African American Church and a distinguishing factor for local congregations. Frequently, various denominations and churches have divergent theological beliefs; consequently, they approach their mission, duties, and responsibilities using diverse methods (Barber, 2011; Lincoln, 1974). People prefer to see the African American Church as a single institution instead of a collection of diverse congregations. Due to theological conflicts, however, this is nothing more than a farce (Barber, 2011). These theological viewpoints can serve as broad guiding principles and influences for parishioners' individual lives and decisions, including for instance, whether to seek professional counseling. Despite specific doctrinal differences, most African American churches have a similar theological perspective, in that their members experience a personal visit from Jesus during worship sessions.

In most situations, this theological principle serves as the foundation for how services are conducted; these visitations may occur by performing rituals, such as yelling, singing hymns and gospel music, or speaking in tongues. Moore (2003) identified these behaviors as examples of the free-spirited worship often associated with the African American Church. Considering this, we might claim that these practices are characteristic of the African American Church and puzzling to those seeing from the outside (Johnson, 2010). Counselors unfamiliar with the culture of the African American Church may find these complexities perplexing.

In addition, many observers are perplexed by the many theological divergences and often contradictory characters of an organization that, on the one hand, may be contemporary in its theology but, on the other, can be rather conventional in its theology. This seeming lack of clarity prompts many observers to pause and contemplate (Douglas & Hopson, 2001). If counselors are interested in enhancing their intercultural competence and knowledge of African American clients, they may find it helpful to grasp the Christian theology that guides the African American Church. This theology often influences the personal decisions of individual congregational members, such as whether to seek professional counseling. The following section contains further information on several theologies and how African American consumers reveal their beliefs.

**Liberation Theology**

James Cone founded one of the most influential schools of thought in the African American Church, liberation theology (McBeth, 1981). According to liberation theology, African Americans seized Christianity, previously seen as the religion of White males, and adapted it to their trials and accomplishments. This is a fundamental principle of liberation theology. In comparison to other schools of thought, liberation theology is all-encompassing, since it considers how people connect to God and relate to one another (Douglas & Hopson, 2001). According to liberation theology, the African American Church gave oppressed African Americans a sense of freedom that they could not otherwise experience in their daily lives; this was particularly true for church members. In the African American Church setting, African Americans had the opportunity to assemble and express pent-up fury on the issues they faced as a community. In addition, the African American Church acted as a platform for initiating and carrying out social change (McBeth, 1981; Douglas & Hopson, 2001).

Churches whose members subscribe to liberation theology tend to concentrate less on oppression and more on the freedom felt when congregational members experience fellowship, as opposed to churches whose members belong to other theologies, which tends to emphasize Caucasians as oppressors (Burrow, 1994). African Americans place a significant emphasis on establishing and keeping positive connections; enslaved persons saw the relationship between master and slave as the embodiment of wickedness (Burrow, 1994; Douglas & Hopson, 2001). The holistic care of individuals is highly emphasized in liberation theology, which emphasizes the mind-body connection (Burrow, 1994).

**Alternate Society Theology**

Frazier's vision of an alternative society resembles liberation theology in that he advocated for the African American Church to operate as a sovereign community in which African Americans could express their genuine selves completely. Frazier conceived this concept for an alternative civilization (McBeth, 1981). Frazier founded this religion because Caucasians lacked an understanding of African Americans and could not adequately meet their needs (Frazier, 1963). Frazier was a proponent of the notion that the African American Church should act as its own nation inside the United States and care for the many needs of African American communities, not only in the spiritual realm (Frazier, 1963).

In a perfect world, the African American Church would build educational institutions, financial institutions, residential communities, and social meeting places (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Ironically, Frazier knew that this alternate society would make it more difficult for African Americans to adapt to the dominant culture in which they were expected to live and function (Frazier, 1963).

**Womanist Theology**

Delores Williams is considered the founding foremother of Womanist Theology, one of the most influential womanist theologians known for her scholarship and contributions to the field of feminist and womanist theology (Williams, 1993). Williams focuses on addressing issues of gender, race, and spirituality in relation to the experiences of Black women. Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk, one of Williams most notable works, looks at the views of womanist perspectives and highlights the experiences of Black women within the African American church and Christian tradition (Bunce, 2009). According to womanist theology, the concept involves asserting the liberation of Black woman from multiple forms of oppression (Williams, 1993). Williams is among many voices who express concern for Black woman and have contributed to the development of womanist theology as an important field of study.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, a sociologist and womanist theologian, examines the religious practices of African American women and their lived experiences in a religious context. Her work around this topic includes a roundtable discussion: Christian ethics and theology in womanist perspective (Sanders, 2006). Womanist refers to a particular dimension of the culture of Black woman in theological and biblical studies. This movement was sparked in 1983 and Black woman scholars in religion have published works using the womanist perspective notably since 1985 (Sanders, 2006).

Jacquelyn Grant, a Methodist minister and pioneer in womanist theology, is considered one of the four founders of womanist theology. Grant has made significant contributions to the field of womanist theology, known for her book “White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response.” Grant has written extensively on issues of race and gender within the context of African American women’s experience. In her work, Grant proposes a womanist theology and Christology that emerge from the reality of contemporary Black woman (Grant, 1989).

Womanist theology continues to evolve and incorporate new voices and new perspectives that continually contribute to the continuing ongoing discussions about Black woman, race, gender, and their roles within the African American church. Black and womanist theologies have always been theologies of freedom and care for black bodies. An increasing number of trained black pastors, and black womanist theologians are addressing “lingering colonial wounds.” (Harris, 2019).

## **Other-Worldly and This-Worldly Theology**

It is claimed that a church is alien if its members believe that salvation and reward are reserved for the hereafter. In other words, the adherents of these faiths are more forgiving of the misery and suffering they endure in this life because it is believed they will find peace in heaven once they die. The singing of spiritual songs often calmed, led, and relieved African American enslaved persons, and these songs later became an integral part of their religion. These songs have served as a reminder that the suffering endured on earth is only temporary, and that beyond death, an eternal promise of heavenly peace awaits (Cashwell & Young, 2011). In addition, theology is essential to the pastor's function as a powerful voice. During slavery, preachers often reminded their congregations of life beyond death, contrasted with life lived now, which was one of servitude. Even though some of the issues African Americans experience now may be different from those they encountered in the past, pastors continue to offer sermons encouraging congregations to be patient in the face of adversity and to anticipate the blessings that come with death (Wilmore, 1998).

Attendees of other-worldly religions may be less inclined to seek therapy, but when they do, counselors must recognize that clients may be less concerned with finding solutions to issues and more concerned with life beyond death. Attendees of non-traditional churches may be less inclined to seek therapy (Chatters et al., 2009). Counselors may focus on problem-solving activities early if they do not wholly appreciate and embrace this perspective, which is potentially detrimental to therapeutic interaction. On the other hand, churches often advocate publicly for the right of African Americans to experience freedom and pleasure on earth. A church member who holds a belief in the afterlife might find solace in the prospect of receiving physical healing through such means. Conversely, a church member with a focus on earthly existence may explore alternative avenues to mitigate pain and suffering, with the goal of prolonging life whenever feasible (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

## **The Salience of Religion and African Americans**

The more significant church attendance percentage among African Americans as compared to their White counterparts has significant implications for the function of African American churches as essential institutions in the lives of Black people. Compared to non-Hispanic whites, African Americans participated in religious activities at a higher rate, on average (Chatters et al., 2009). Seventy-five percent of African Americans, according to 2014 research on Religion and Public Life performed by the Pew Research Center, regard religion as highly important in their lives; 47 percent of these persons attend religious services at least once per week.

Comparatively, 59% of Whites said religion plays a massive part in their lives, and only 34% routinely attended religious services weekly or more frequently (Chatters et al., 2009). Since most churches are dominated by one racial or ethnic group and have a small number of members from other groups, church congregations reflect a divided nation (Roozen, 2011). Regardless of the general trends indicating a decline in church membership over the last two decades, race-based analyses of these trends reveal that White churches saw a decline while Black congregations have seen growth (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

The literature highlighted the importance of African American churches in the everyday lives of African Americans. Historically, African Americans in the United States have been affiliated with a church; 80 percent of this group is affiliated with the seven mainline Black denominations, while only approximately 13.5 percent claim membership in predominantly White protestant groups or Roman Catholicism. Historically, African Americans in the United States have been recognized for their religious affiliation (Green, 1995; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Although some African Americans are members of white churches, most continue to attend traditional African American churches. The seven most significant and 34 oldest Black denominations include:

1. African Methodist Episcopal [A.M.E.]
2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion [A.M.E.Z]
3. Christian Methodist Episcopal [C.M.E.] Church
4. The Church of God in Christ [COGIC] (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).
5. The National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated [NBCA]
6. The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated [NBC], and
7. The Progressive National Baptist Convention [PNBC].

The Baptist movement is credited with building the first African American churches and is home to the most significant number of African Americans, as Baptists were among the first immigrants to the United States. Baptists existed over a century before the Methodists, giving them a significant religious head start (Ngunjiri et al. 2012). Initially, Black Baptists had no political goals; instead, they concentrated on constructing their sacred spaces on southern plantations, which confined their existence to that of enslaved persons. This pushed their political ambitions into the background for a considerable amount of time, preventing them from escaping the system of servitude (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

In contrast, current Baptist denominations are not strongly related to one another, instead, they work autonomously. Moreover, contemporary Baptist denominations engage in various activities, including evangelism, civil rights, education, and community development. Members of the Methodist church and movement constitute the second biggest subgroup of the African American Christian population. It is widely accepted that Methodists were the first African Americans to form religious organizations.

In contrast to the Baptist movement, the first Black Methodist churches were founded in the northern states by free Black individuals challenging racist attitudes and ideas they had encountered in White Methodist churches they had visited. These liberated Black individuals established the first Black Methodist churches. These freed Black people wanted Black Methodist churches to establish their own Black Methodist denomination (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

Approximately 65 percent of African Americans who identify as Christian in the United States are either members of the Black Baptist or Black Methodist churches (Green, 1995). Although between 66% and 88% of churchgoers are Black women, Black men have long held most leadership positions in African American churches; this pattern has endured throughout the history of the African American church (Barnes, 2006; Green, 1995; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Because the participants in this research were African American church leaders, it is essential to have a conversation regarding gender inclusion; due to the Black church’s long-standing history of opposing women in positions of authority inside the church (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Ngunjiri et al., 2012).

In contrast, the dominant beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors emanating from African American churches suggest questionable support for gender inclusivity under the guise of social justice; this solidarity is seen in how African American churches handle transgender individuals. The primary concepts of Black Liberation Theology argue that African American Churches must combat sexism as a form of oppression, in addition to racism, as racism and sexism are both oppressive practices (Barnes, 2006; Ngunjiri et al., 2012, p. 102).

## **Historical Roles of African American Churches**

The relevant material analysis showed the crucial role that African American churches play in the lives of African Americans in the United States. At the time, the African American Church was the only organization wholly administered by individuals of African heritage (Speakes-Lewis, Gill, & Moses, 2011, p. 241). Brand Gary recognized several ways the African American Church helps its community, including psychological affirmation, social identity, social support, political protest, economic aid, educational opportunities, artistic expression, and social connections (Brand Gary 1991). Paris's claim that no other institution in American culture puts a more significant premium on the well-being of African Americans than churches demonstrate the significant role that African American congregations play in American society (Paris 2008, p. 478).

Consequently, African American churches were at the forefront of assuming multiple roles and obligations to meet their people's needs. African American houses of worship continue to play a vital role in the lives of African Americans. In their investigation, Lincoln, and Mamiya (1990) discovered that the African American church experience was not only a reproduction or derivation of the White church but a parallel institution with significant cultural characteristics; there was no African American before the White church. Following the end of slavery, the African American Church emerged as the primary source of services for the Black population. These services included establishing schools, financial institutions, insurance firms, housing, political forums, and nurturing young, creative talent (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). According to Gaines (2010, p. 375), the African American Church gave publicly oppressed people a private space to grow, rejoice, and be validated This may be an oversimplification of the church's influence in African American history, as an earlier study has shown.

According to Gaines (2010), "a substantial element of the success of the Civil Rights Cause depended on training and equipping people so that they would be assets to the movement rather than liabilities." During the Civil Rights Movement, African American churches used the intrinsic qualities of the Black community to effectively mobilize vast numbers of people (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p. 377). The cultural deficit theories of the 1960s are challenged by asset-based mapping, which puts African American churches in disadvantaged areas as assets instead of falling to the deficiency orientation of such groups, which is unduly reliant on contributions from outsiders. Asset-based mapping assists communities that rely excessively on outside inputs (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). In a similar spirit, Littlefield (2005, p. 687) characterized the objective of the African American Church as "self-help, defined as a value system that demands oppressed individuals to overcome their situations." Littlefield categorized the agenda of the African American Church in this manner.

Sociologists in the 19th and 20th centuries, according to Billingsley and Caldwell (1991), stated that the African American Church was an important institution within the African American community. Billingsley and Caldwell provided specifics. The African American Church has represented the persistent desire for liberation from many types of oppression throughout history. In the 20th century, this oppression included slavery, a lack of voting rights, and the Great Migration to northern states in pursuit of better employment opportunities. (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Littlefield, 38, 2005; Speakes-Lewis et al., 2011). Consequently, African American Churches have significantly influenced African American communities on several fronts, including socially, politically, educationally, and economically. (Barnes, 2014; Barrett, 2010; Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). During the era of slavery and the years that followed, African American churches acted as vital educational institutions, assisting in the fight against prevailing racial and structural injustices of the period; including encouraging enslaved persons and freedmen to read and write (Barnes, 2014; Barrett, 2010).

From Reconstruction in 1865 until integration in 1954, scholars acknowledged the significance of African American education as an issue that communities of African ancestry should consider. Studies undertaken in the early 20th century revealed that African American churches valued community outreach efforts, like the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts (Barnes, 2004; Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991). During the latter half of the 20th century, research unveiled a notable trend within African American churches. This trend involved heightened community engagement through actions like providing financial support to African American colleges and actively participating in government-backed initiatives, such as Head Start and programs for senior care. (Barnes, 2004; Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991).

African American Churches in Contemporary Society

In racially stratified societies, African American churches are solid and fundamental institutions that assist members in navigating life. Due to the lack of authenticity in predominantly White churches, traditional African American churches emphasized the eradication of racial prejudice in their teachings (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Barnes highlighted the priestly and prophetic responsibilities played by African American churches in their respective communities. The priestly office's function was emblematic of traditional church roles in encouraging members to pursue religious devotion and anticipate reward in the afterlife (Barnes 2004).

On the other hand, the prophetic role represented liberation for 39 marginalized individuals in their contemporary reality; this involved applying practical solutions to societal problems, such as unemployment and poverty (Barnes, 2004). Due to the historical significance of African American churches and their ability to influence the lives of their members, the prophetic function and its efficacy in contemporary culture have been called into question. The emergence of the megachurch, according to Speakes-Lewis et al., has allowed the African American Church to deviate from its original mission of liberation for its members and the community. This has allowed the church to embrace a more consumerist perspective, where individual empowerment is emphasized at the cost of group identity, and social justice considerations are at the forefront (Speakes-Lewis et al., 2011). In the middle of the twentieth century, these authors praised Adam Clayton Powell Jr. of New York City for his position as the first African American congressman from Harlem and a prominent preacher. Powell developed a theological praxis to advocate for improved health care and job opportunities for the African American community.

The ability to pursue social justice while adhering to the principles of nonviolence, is why Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is often considered the most important leader of the Civil Rights movement. Activist leaders and clergy working in the paradigm of faith-based community organizers (FBCO) recognize, problematize, and fight a comfortable church culture, according to Delehanty (2016). This church culture is defined by a cultural orientation to religious life that, as an extension of individualistic forms of religious devotion, generates skepticism against structural and systematic analyses of inequities and collective action connected with such analyses. Delehanty (2016, p. 38) stressed that this general reference to FBCOs and the difficulties associated with a congregational aversion toward social justice primarily covers 40 African American churches. This cozy church culture hinders the efforts of FBCO leaders in cultivating long-lasting cultural commitment to social justice advocacy.

Delehanty (2016) argued that despite the African American churches' historical commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and contemporary trends for increased social activism, several African American Churches have adopted an individualistic approach to the comfortable church culture, which opposes identification with collective social justice advocacy, which formed the basis of Delehanty's thesis. This study conceived and detailed the significance of African American Churches in the lives of Black male students in the post-Civil Rights period, which has been exemplified by modern movements, such as Black Lives Matter. This study conceived and detailed the function of African American churches in the lives of Black male students, given that African American churches and its leaders have traditionally advocated for social justice in areas affecting African Americans.

Mission Service

Partnerships

Partnerships are an important method for the church to perform holistic ministry. serving individuals and communities. There is a great cultural divide that distances Christians across social and economic lines. Partnerships help to narrow that divide when churches come together to collaborate on projects, incorporating their own unique perspective in a shared vision (Sider, 2008).

Churches and individuals who desire to get involved in ministry partnership must strive to work from a point of equality, mutual respect, diversity, and a biblical understanding of God’s economy, with a shared sense of mission. (Sider, 2008). Partnerships can be a cross-cultural encounter or a partnership of like ethnic or cultural make-up. Partnerships of any kind require “taking advanced missiological insights seriously to meet the challenge of genuine partnerships for the sake of the Kingdom.” (Sider, 2008, p. 27)

Community partners are vital to meeting people where they are, working to meet their needs. Pastors, church leaders, and missionaries armed with knowledge and understanding of the Holy Spirit’s guidance can introduce them to the Gospel. Dr. Fuder provides tips to church communities who endeavor to cross cultural lines to partner with communities in his book “Neighborhood Mapping”. To engage in partnerships (1) go as a learner, (2) seek out an “informant” a gatekeeper or person of peace, (3) build a relationship – be a participant observer, (4) use an interview guide to stay on script, (5) filter through a biblical worldview, (6) expand into the broader community, (7) network available resources, (8) determine what God is calling you to do, and (9) continually evaluate, study, and explore (Fuder, 2014).

Baptist on Mission (BOM)

Baptist on Mission is one of many partnerships shared with Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church. This organization is an example of bridging the ethnic and cultural gap between Christian organizations. Historically, it has been difficult for white mission organizations to accept African Americans serving as missionaries. Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church are the first African American churches to fully partner with this organization and have a seat at their table. The collaboration of this partnership resulted in over twelve thousand families in the African American and Latino communities gaining access to food services during the 2020-2022 world-wide pandemic.

Baptist on Mission’s vision statement is “Every Christian sharing God’s love with hurting people through word and deed.” Baptist on Mission’s purpose is to help churches engage their members in missions and ministry in Jesus’ name. Baptist on Mission is an auxiliary organization to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Business as Mission (BAM)

Rooted in the notion of holistic missions, Business as Mission embodies a kingdom perspective and an overarching commitment to glorifying God. The mission in Business as Mission is the vehicle, used in nontraditional ways, to take the gospel to the world. Many BAM organizations have bridges to local churches as part of their kingdom bottom line. The primary objective is not solely financial profit but the integration of business practices and principles to holistically influence communities, individuals, and societies to address both material and spiritual needs (Johnson, 2009).

The Business as a mission model can be a powerful tool for effecting economic transformation of a community, with an emphasis on missions as the transforming agent, through business activities, intentionally making Jesus known, encountered, and followed. Business as Missions integrates faith and work to create a greater sense of purpose and meaning in both areas. Faith based values are inherently interwoven in business practices (Johnson, 2009)

Understanding God’s mission is essential. The connection between Business as Missions and God’s mission purpose for the church is shown through scholarly works, practical implementations, mission conferences that connect congregations to the idea and work of Business as Mission. These gatherings focus on missions and social entrepreneurial platforms that make way for discussion on Business as Missions’ alignment with God’s mission (Baer, 2006). According to scripture, kingdom purpose goes beyond profit and customers for organizations. “A way in which the business specifically and intentionally connects to the growth of God’s kingdom in the world and thus brings glory to him.” (Baer, 2006, p. 47).

Overall, the connection between Business as Mission and God’s mission purpose for the church is continuing to evolve. Numerous books and articles have been written that examine the connection between Business as Missions and the church’s mission purpose.

The phenomenon of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church is the five-fold mission model that incorporates the Great Commission for the Black church in the twenty-first century. A major principle of this model is partnership. Business as Mission also uses partnerships as a principal component of their service model. This is a key value in mission service work. Johnson states in his book, Business as Missions, a comprehensive guide to theory and practice, “It is virtually impossible to negotiate a new culture and establish a BAM company without the assistance of local partnerships.” The call to serve on the mission field no longer resembles the same old way of serving to meet the needs of people. Mission service can be as effective serving in the marketplace as it can be in the traditional mode of missionaries going out to serve. The work of the Great Commission is not for certain organizations or the conventional Christian, but the calling is for everyone who is mission minded and makes themselves available to serve in a capacity that resonates with them (Cooper, 2021).

The church and people with their imperfections is God’s idea to facilitate His missional plan to all the earth (Winter, 2009). Cooper quotes a missiologist (Newbigin) in his book Missional Marketplace, as it relates to missions and the church. “The mission of the Church is missions; the mission of missions is the Church.” (Cooper, 2021, p. 178).

The dedicated missionaries who participate in mission endeavors exemplify God’s love and advance the message of His kingdom by embracing organic opportunities. Through their actions, they contribute value to the communities and individuals they engage with, effectively becoming vehicles for God’s love and transformative impact. Top of Form

Missionary Movements

Movements have historically changed the world through the transformative, catalytic impact, and influence in society. Movement thinking is a vision of the kingdom that is dynamic enough to shift history (Addison, 2019). The body of Christ is intended to carry the good news of the Gospel around the globe. Movement thinking leaders are strategic and sharpened by connection with co-leaders in the movement who share insights, experiences, innovations, and learning.

Addison contends there are recurring patterns in the strategy of movements found in the ministry of Jesus, his training of the disciples, and the multiplying phenomenon of the early church. Jesus and his disciples were movement pioneers. Jesus is calling us today to lead his people into missionary movement. Movement pioneers (1) see the end; their identity is aligned with God’s purpose, (2) connect with people, crossing boundaries to establish contact with those far from God, (3) share the gospel of God and salvation through Christ, (4) train disciples and teach them to obey what Jesus has commanded, (5) sow into communities where they join together in churches to study and obey God’s Word, and (6) multiply workers by equipping local church leaders to produce disciples and plant churches (Addison, 2019, p. 53).

“The key to rapid growth of any movement is face-to-face recruitment within pre-existing social networks. The stronger the social network, the faster the movement spreads. For a movement to grow, it must not only reach new people, but it must also keep them and build them into a committed force for change.” (Addison, 2019, p. 54).

Conceptual Framework

The main objective of the conceptual framework for this study was to analyze the lived experiences of missionaries who actively participate in the five-fold mission ministry of the Ebenezer Baptist Church using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis framework (IPA). Phenomenology is a rigorous qualitative study used to examine people's experiences and how individuals make sense of their experiences (Young & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2016). The area of phenomenological psychology includes the scope of idiographic psychology. In idiographic psychology, those observed are invited to construct meaning from a shared experience (Peoples, 2021). The objective of qualitative research is to obtain firsthand knowledge of the links between causes and consequences, undertaken by utilizing a range of research techniques (Young & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2016).

This literature review examines several active mission activity paradigms within the African American church context. According to Bill Hybels, the founder of Illinois's Willow Creek Church, regarded as "the hope of the world," the local church is the most critical institution in the world. His comment is especially significant because of the importance and impact of the African American Church within the African American community (Jim Sutherland., 2020). In addition to providing educational and social services, the African American Church has been a source of spiritual guidance and a guiding light for the African American community throughout history. In addition, the African American Church has been a source of strong leadership during eras of racial inequality and social injustice. There is no way to diminish the influence that the leadership of the African American Church has had on society, government, and the community at large. To accomplish the mandate of the Great Commission, spiritual leaders, and churches from each of the world's people groupings are necessary. These leaders and churches will need to have a substantial social or communal footprint and a profound understanding of what is required to take their places on the global missionary stage. No exemption is made for the African American Church.

Comparatively, approximately half of African Americans prioritize religious activity, but over 80% do nothing significant. (Pew Research Center, 2009). In addition, most African Americans identify as Christians and half attend religious services in their communities regularly. The overwhelming majority of African Americans are members of a primarily African American church (Pew Research Center, 2009). Many African Americans see their trust in God as a crucial component of their capacity to cope through difficult moments in their lives (Bell Tolliver & Wilkerson, 2011; Whitley, 2012). In addition, African Americans assert that engaging in religious activities, such as attending worship services and Bible study, being actively involved in their churches, making time for devotional activities, and listening to religious sermons and gospel music helps them conceptualize their struggles within the context of a larger struggle between good and evil, as well as God and the devil (Whitley, 2012).

When Christianity was introduced to African Americans, it challenged African religious rites and ceremonies, most of which were constructed from a polytheistic perspective. In his work "Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South," Albert J. Raboteau, a former religion professor at Princeton, discusses the transfer of enslaved people from traditional African faiths to Christianity. The transition from traditional African faiths to Christianity was the emphasis. According to Raboteau, "belief in a High God or Supreme Creator of the cosmos was widespread throughout African civilizations" (Raboteau, 2004). However, this High God was somewhat detached from the human realm's activities.

Although "lesser gods and ancestor-spirits were actively and perpetually engaged in the daily lives of the individual and the problems of society," it was thought that the High God was unique from the other gods of the world (Raboteau 2004, p. 8). Popular among the ancient religions of West Africa was the notion that the High God is the father of the more minor and lower gods, who are often seen as intermediaries between man and God. According to this belief, there are several lesser divinities or subsidiary gods. People in several African civilizations regarded the relationship between themselves, the Supreme God, and the lesser gods in terms of "pantheons," or groups of gods associated with natural forces and occurrences (Raboteau 2004, p. 9).

**Narrative Description**

This research will examine the experiences of African American missionaries who actively engage in all five mission service areas (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) as part of Ebenezer Baptist Church's Mission Movement. It is unknown what is necessary for the African American Church to build a comprehensive mission service that spans the five-fold areas of mission endeavors (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) and a transformative mission movement. These are the areas of mission work: the United States, the nation, the world, and disaster relief.

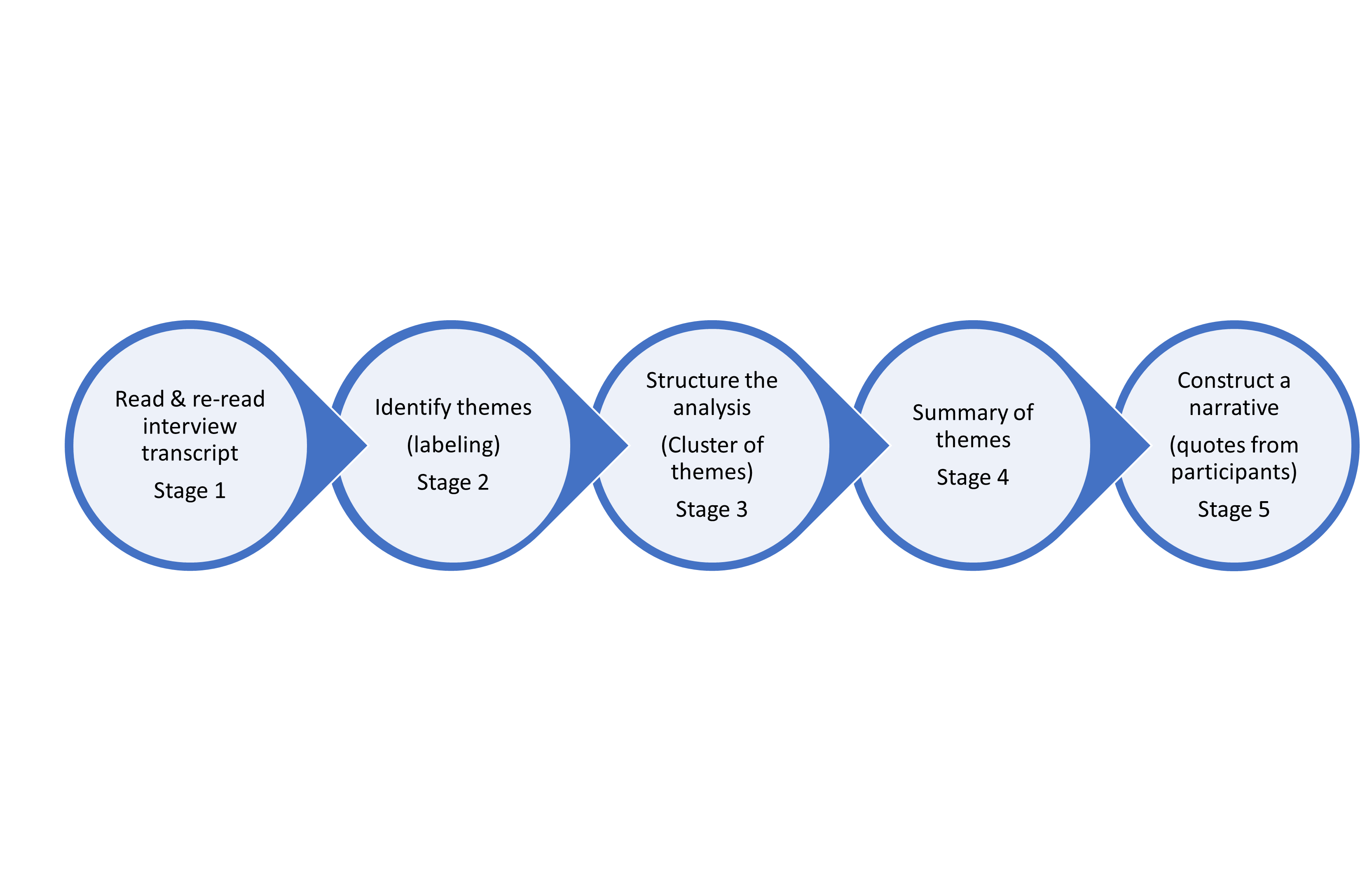
This research is significant as a prospective road map and strategic plan for African American pastors to create dynamic transformational mission ministry. This study can affect how the African American Church and its communities integrate the Great Commission into the church's fabric. This may be achieved by utilizing the five-fold mission service paradigm, which comprises local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief, to persuade the African American Church to abandon historical constraints and emotional attachments to home. This phenomenological case study aims to analyze and understand Ebenezer Baptist Church missionaries' active five-fold mission endeavors.

This researcher will conduct interviews with church-affiliated missionaries to explain the phenomena of missionaries working in the five-fold areas of mission service (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) at Ebenezer Baptist Church. These meetings will occur at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The researcher has a better knowledge of how to construct a contextualized strategic plan for active involvement in transformational mission work on behalf of the African American Church as a whole because of the results of this study. Interviews with missionaries participating in the mission’s ministry at Ebenezer Baptist Church (the EBC missions ministry consists of five areas: local, stateside, national, global and disaster relief) would be the primary data source for this qualitative research design-focused study.

In addition, the research would include organized interviews that would be conducted methodically to ensure each participant would be given the same predetermined questions. Therefore, the data analysis would consist of conducting semi-structured interviews with members of leadership and missionaries’ teams, using any collected documents, reports, or artifacts. For the study's Content Analysis, the Dedoose Analytical tool would examine the acquired research data, which may include text, audio, video, spreadsheets, questionnaires, and demographic information. This study's conclusion will enable the researcher to examine the potential of developing a mission program model that will aid African American churches in collaborating as a community to engage more people in all areas of mission activity.

**Figure 1**

*The Five Main Stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*



The figure above is adopted from the five main stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis by Carla Willig: Interpretation in Qualitative Research (2001).

Employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), this study delved into a qualitative exploration of participants’ lived experiences. The primary focus of this research was to construct a paradigm that outlines the active involvement of African American church members in mission endeavors. The study findings revealed that African American Churches employ protective mechanisms to uphold their resilience when confronted with challenges and pressures within educational contexts and programs.

In projects of this type, IPA research questions typically adopt a broad and open-ended framework. The study utilized a small sample obtained through purposive sampling, carefully selecting individuals with similar demographic and socio-economic backgrounds to ensure specificity in the research. Through the interview process, the researcher sought to unearth recurring themes and establish connections among these themes, thus unveiling deeper insights into the subject matter.

## **Chapter Insights**

Since only a small number of African Americans are active in missionary activity, the study literature attempts to fill the void left by prior academic research on African Americans in mission service. According to public data, the Southern Baptist International Missions Board asserts that just 0.3% of its 3,700 staff employees operating in different mission areas are African Americans. In Virginia, Liele, an enslaved African American born in Virginia in 1750 and regarded as the first American missionary, served in missions. According to the study, it is feasible to ask if African Americans were establishing an African-centered holy place for themselves since the Church's importance may be better understood by those trained to provide it after reading its history. Because data indicates that African Americans were enslaved persons in the United States, this is the case.

According to the available literature, the arrival of Christianity caused diverse challenges for the African people's many religious rites and celebrations. The belief that the High God is also the father of the lower and weaker gods was widespread among ancient faiths in West Africa. A variety of minor deities or subsidiary gods are believed to have existed by supporters of this idea. It was a terrible and confusing period for enslaved people when they were forcibly separated from their traditional means of religion; this was particularly true for individuals with intense recollections and experiences of their previous life in Africa. Most individuals born into slavery at this time in American history were American born. Between 1740 and 1780, there were several religious uprisings in the United States. Enslaved persons born in the United States could learn the culture and language of White people, making them more viable candidates for conversion. Slaveholders opposed the revivalists' efforts to teach African Americans to read and become lay preachers.

At the heart of the conversion, the issue was whether enslaved people had souls that needed rescuing, and there was widespread concern that the rise of Christianity among enslaved persons may ultimately lead to arguments against the institution of slavery. Considering this, Raboteau (2014) argues that switching to Christianity made the faith more accessible to illiterate individuals, including slaveholders. The Revivalists’ reluctance to confront slavery as an institution directly correlated with their diminished trust in enslaved individuals. This in turn, facilitated the expansion of the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian Churches as a direct outcome of the Revival movement.

With the growth of the church came an escalation in the religious zeal of the enslaved population. Landowners began to take a more vested interest in both the spiritual devotion of their enslaved individuals and their own religious practices. Enslaved people exhibited a strong affinity for activities such as singing, dancing, praying, and movement by the Holy Spirit which further contributed to their deep-seated appreciation for religious festivities. Enslaved persons used various methods to conceal religious meetings and rites from their owners (Riggs, 2014). White clergy propounded the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and other biblical texts, encouraging submission and obedience into the skulls of Black people. African Americans began forming their own congregations in the late 18th century, ultimately leading to the erection of church buildings. DuBois documented the inevitable separation of churches frequented by people of color and whites throughout this period (Rusaw, 2004).

At the time, the United States was in the middle of the Civil War. The only option for people of color who wanted to practice their faith was to fight for their freedom. DuBois asserts in his book "The Souls of Black Folk" that the churches of African Americans were not the result of a white missionary effort (DuBois 2011).

The black church was largely founded in reaction to White people's racism toward African Americans. Black-led congregations and denominations arose almost simultaneously in the North and South; this phenomenon ascribed to the development of an "invisible institution." (Students et al., 2010; Moore & Collins, 2002; Newsome-Camara, 2012; Smith, 2019). Liberation theology may have inspired Frazier's concept of an alternative society. African Americans place great value on developing and maintaining positive interpersonal connections. If they seek guidance from church leaders, members of congregations where this technique is prevalent may be prohibited from receiving professional therapy outside the African American Church.

Singing religious hymns often aided, directed, and soothed slave communities in the Americas. Throughout slavery, preachers often urged their congregations to believe in life after death. Pastors continue to preach sermons encouraging their congregations to have patience, although some of the obstacles African Americans experience in the modern world are different from those they faced in the past. Churches worldwide take a public stand in favor of the right of African Americans to live in freedom and happiness, wherever in the world they choose to reside. People who attend non-traditional churches may be less likely than those who visit regular churches to seek therapy. It is inconceivable for counselors to engage in problem-solving activities if they do not fully comprehend and embrace this strategy.

This section's study highlighted the relevance of African American churches in the daily lives of African Americans; a relevance tied to the fact that more African American students than white students attend church. Eighty percent of this group's followers are members of the seven primary Black churches, while just 13.5 percent claim membership in mostly White protestant groups or Roman Catholicism. Baptists are the most populous African American Christians, and their congregations built some of the first churches in the history of the African American Church. Black Baptists existed more than a century before Black Methodists. This provided Black Baptists with a significant religious advantage. People connected with the Methodist church and movement represent the second most significant component of the African American Christian community.

Black men have occupied the bulk of leadership positions in African American churches from the beginning of the Black church. Under the guise of social justice, African American churches' dominating beliefs, attitudes, and actions indicate a questionable commitment to gender inclusiveness. Despite focusing extensively on Christ's message of freedom, equality, and justice for the downtrodden, a substantial element of Black theology mirrors conventional Christian male domination and patriarchy.

The conceptual framework to analyze the study, the Interactive Phenomenological Approach, IPA has foundations in Ethnography and Hermeneutics. The use of this framework to examine the lived experiences of members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church will investigate the impact of the EBCs five-fold mission model and aim to apply findings to the wider African American Church population to replicate active participation in missionary service.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

**Chapter Overview**

The literature review described related research findings in respect to the historical context of American missionary service in general, the formation, and current role of the African American Church and the implications of both on the active participation of African Americans in missionary service. Based on these data, this chapter explains the methodology of this research of how relevant data for the study will be gathered, collected, and evaluated. It also includes information on the relevant philosophies employed and their justification to ensure validity and reliability as choice methods for this study.

This research is a phenomenological case study into missionary service in the African American Church with the Ebenezar Baptist Church five - fold mission as a model to engage members in active participation.

**Research Objectives:**

RQ1: How has the five-fold mission model of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church impacted the lived experiences of African American members in active participation in mission service?

RQ2: How has active participation of African Americans in mission service affected the lived experiences of the members communities (local, stateside, national, global and disaster relief) served by Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City missionaries?

RQ3: What principles of the Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church Five-Fold Mission model can be used to create a working prototype targeting the lived experiences of African Americans to address their underrepresentation in all mission service areas?

The researcher is a member of Chosen City Church (CCC), formally a church plant campus of Ebenezer Baptist Church. The researcher currently serves as both a participant observer of CCC’s missionary team and Co-Pastor over the Missionary Ministry. Over the last five years, the researcher has participated in various mission-related tasks as a team member. The five-fold mission service areas at both Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church are the subject of this approach, which required that the groups observed be scrutinized organically while actively engaged in the five-fold mission service experience. This mixed-method technique included an observational component, a participant component, an interview component, a photographic component, a video component, a journaling component, and a document analysis component.

The phenomenological case study is used to analyze and understand the rigorous five-fold mission activities performed by Ebenezer Baptist Church missionaries. This researcher conducted interviews with church-affiliated missionaries to explain the phenomena of missionaries working in the five-fold areas of mission service (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) at Ebenezer Baptist Church. These meetings occurred at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The outcomes of this study have improved the researcher's knowledge of how to construct a contextualized strategic plan for the African American Church's active participation in transformational mission activity.

Overview of Qualitative Design

The essential knowledge for this chapter is understanding the approach chosen, a phenomenological approach provides consistent, step-by-step, data narrative analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the method followed during the duration of this project. The phenomenological research method attempts to adopt a mixed-method research project that qualitatively integrates the phenomenological method with the case study research method. The phenomenological research methodology necessitates an adaptable depiction of the experimental group's daily experiences.

The phenomenological research method enabled me, as the researcher, to evaluate Ebenezer Baptist Church's robust mission initiatives in its natural environment. Regarding participant observer and missionary, the researcher aimed to utilize the Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church missionary teams as a case study. Participants who have served in a range of missional opportunities with the teams over the last five years were used to determine the group being monitored, examined, and viewed organically. In addition, the participants lived their experience of serving in the five-fold mission work prevalent at both Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church, respectively.

Patton (1990) has summarized the values of participant observation research: (1) By direct observation the researcher is better able to understand the context in which the people live and share activities and their lives; (2) First-hand experience enables the researcher to be open to discover and deduce what is significant; (3) The researcher is able directly to observe activities and infer meanings not in the awareness of participants and staff; (4) Through direct observation, the researcher can learn things that research participants and staff may not be willing to disclose; (5) The researcher can include his or her own perceptions of what is essential in understanding the setting, its participants and staff; and (6) First-hand observation and participation enable the researcher to gather data through direct experience; thus able to understand and interpret the setting and participants being studied and evaluated (Moustakas, 1994).

Overview of Methodology

Research methodology is a systematic framework that focuses on research, from the fundamental theories of the project to the phase of collecting and analyzing data (Creswell, 2014).This qualitative research project used interviews, observation, and document analysis approaches to gather data. This researcher’s perspective was molded by the natural course of events that started when this researcher worked as a missionary for another congregation in Charlotte, NC and saw the work of the Ebenezer Baptist Church mission team. This resulted in this researcher’s departure from that congregation after seventeen and a half years to work more closely with Ebenezer Baptist Church, which finally led to this researcher becoming a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church and serving in different areas of the ministry there; this evolution has influenced this researcher’s approach. Subsequently, during this researcher’s transition to Ebenezer Baptist Church, an additional campus was planted.

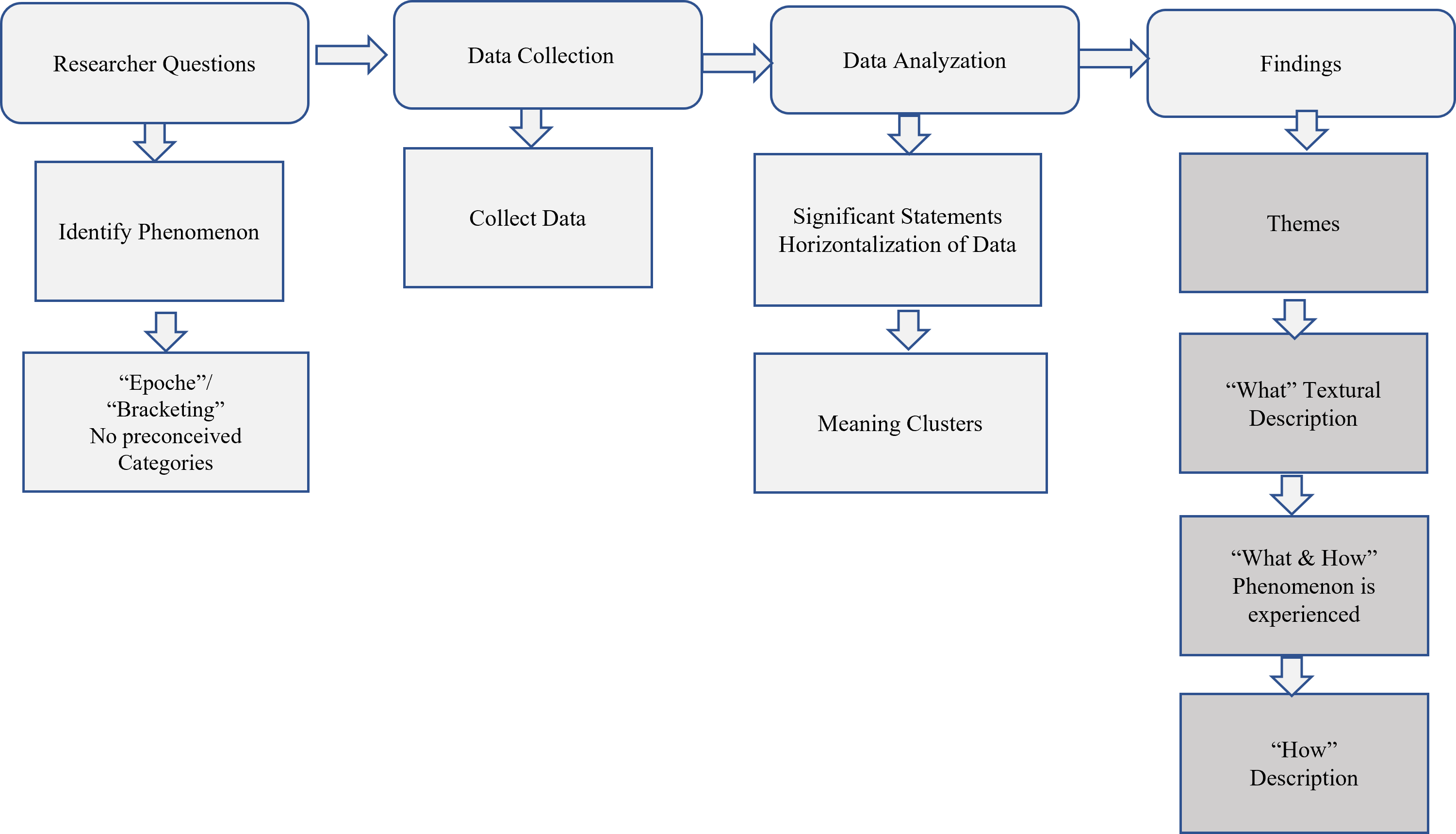
This Ebenezer Baptist Church plant is now known as Chosen City Church. The only objective of phenomenological study is to comprehend events in their experienced form (Peoples, 2021). As this researcher became more engaged in the mission team's operations, journaling became a natural component of the overall observational approach. According to this researcher, this corpus of work was analyzed using hermeneutic phenomenology. Dilthey (1976) believed that to understand human experience, in addition to descriptions of the experience as such, it was necessary to study history; studies of experience are dependent on historical groundings and descriptions to form a whole. Throughout my engagement with this church, which has now spanned more than five years, this researcher was able to watch the detailed workings of the mission service activity at Ebenezer Baptist Church, from leadership to lay members. Consequently, this researcher updated her viewpoint from when she initially joined this church.

The establishment of a church plant in Chosen City Church is now part of the new information included in the observation. This researcher observed two mission teams: one that was established utilizing the five-fold mission model created over years of service, and the second team, while incorporating the five-fold mission model as a template, adjusted the model as necessary to meet current needs.

The following graphic is adapted from Creswell Qualitative procedures intended to depict "what" and "how" something was viewed in connection to a phenomenon. The following figure, adapted from Creswell’s work in Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (2009), depicts a phenomenological approach to phases and procedures.

**Figure 2**

*Steps for Phenomenological Methodology Based adapted from Creswell Qualitative Procedures:*

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Participant Observation

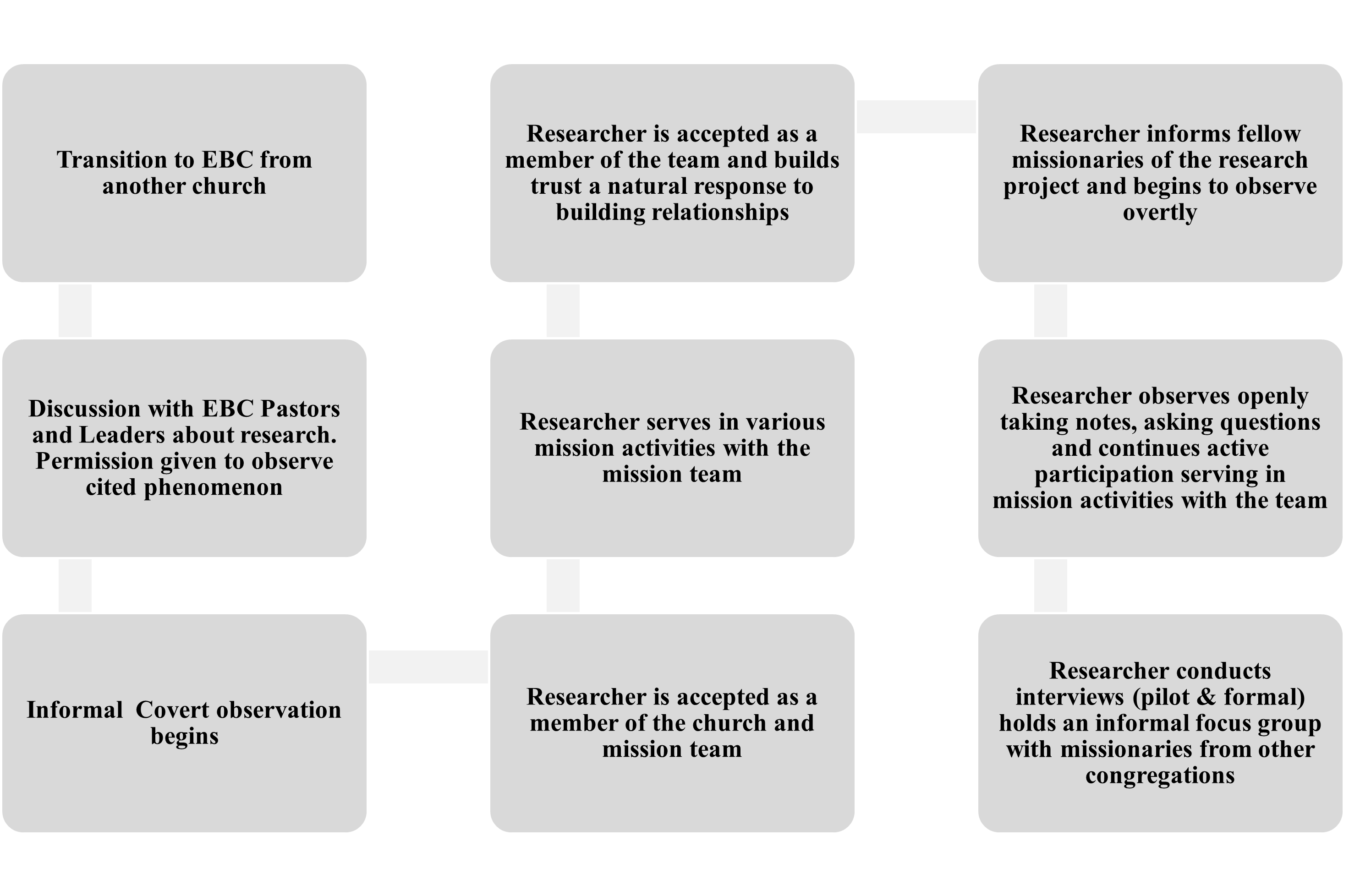
Researchers draw on their experiences in a range of social contexts. The notion of this researcher’s active involvement in the lives of the participants she observed, enabled the researcher to understand their world and interact with them as a participant observer, in ways that made sense to the subject of the observation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Participant observation is a technique for collecting data used in qualitative research across various disciplines. In this study, participant observation was used, and field notes were taken as this researcher actively participated in mission service activities with Ebenezer Baptist Church congregation members.

This researcher learned about their mission practice by continuous exposure and interaction, monitoring behaviors and activities in the typical daily occurrences of missionaries who frequently serve in a variety of mission service regions. This allowed this researcher to obtain knowledge about their mission practice. In the study done by DeWalt and DeWalt (1998), it was posited that a participant observer needed to be both a good listener and receptive to the unexpected. The use of participant observation as a data gathering method extends back more than a century and is regarded as the foundation of anthropological study (DeWalt, 1998). Participant observation is categorized by such actions as nonjudgment and an interest in learning more about others, in addition to good listening skills, an openness to learning, and sanguinity when faced with the unexpected. (Kawulich, 2005).

The following figure depicts the participant observer this researcher followed. The researcher considered the sensitivity to the subject matter as an outsider, becoming a part of the team helped to build trust, and over time helped the participant group become familiar with the study topic. As shown in the figure below, this process begins as an informal covert exercise. As time progressed and the researcher was accepted as a member of the mission ministry, the need to become transparent as a researcher and participant observer was necessary for credibility and preparation for the conduction of data collection and the interview process.

**Figure 3**

*Participant Observer Process*



**Note**: The span of time for the figure depicted above is five plus years of working and serving as a participant observer.

Overview of Phenomenological Case Study Design

This research examined the experiences of African American missionaries actively engaged in all five mission service areas (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) as part of Ebenezer Baptist Church's Mission Movement. This movement facilitated a church plant in Chosen City Church to carry out the work of the Gospel and model the significance of mission service within the African American Church. The African American Church can benefit from a comprehensive mission service that spans the five-fold areas of mission endeavors (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) and create a transformative mission movement. These are the areas of mission work: the United States, the nation, the world, and disaster relief. This research is significant as a prospective road map and strategic plan for African American pastors to create dynamic transformational mission ministry. This study can affect how the African American Church and community integrate the Great Commission vision into the church's fabric; this may be achieved by utilizing the five-fold mission service paradigm, which comprises local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief, to persuade the African American church to abandon historical constraints and emotional attachments to home.

The purpose of this phenomenological case study is to analyze and get an understanding of the missionaries of Ebenezer Baptist Church's active five-fold mission endeavors. This researcher will conduct interviews with members of the missionary community at Ebenezer Baptist Church to explain the phenomena of missionaries operating in the five-fold areas of mission service. These sectors include local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief services. The researcher has a better knowledge of how to construct a contextualized strategic plan for active involvement in transformational mission work on behalf of the African American Church as a whole because of the results of this study. The central focus of this study used a qualitative research technique, which included interviews with missionaries actively engaged in Ebenezer Baptist Church's mission ministry, the primary source of data for this investigation. EBC mission’s ministry consists of five different areas: local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief.

Overview of Pilot Interview Design

The inclusion of independent factors, such as views, attitudes, roles, movements, and other EBC and CCC attendees, the research included servant and transformational leadership as independent variables. In addition, the research included organized interviews conducted methodically to ensure that each participant was given the same predetermined questions. In selecting the participants for the pilot interviews, this researcher considered their knowledge, experience, and willingness to participate in this research. The three participants in the pilot study were purposefully selected and informed of the semi- structured, open-ended interview questions and given a consent form to properly document their voluntary participation. The consent form included language to ensure participants of the efforts made to protect their identity. Once the consent forms were completed, this researcher planned for interview locations according to their respective convenience. A copy of this consent form can be found in the appendix.

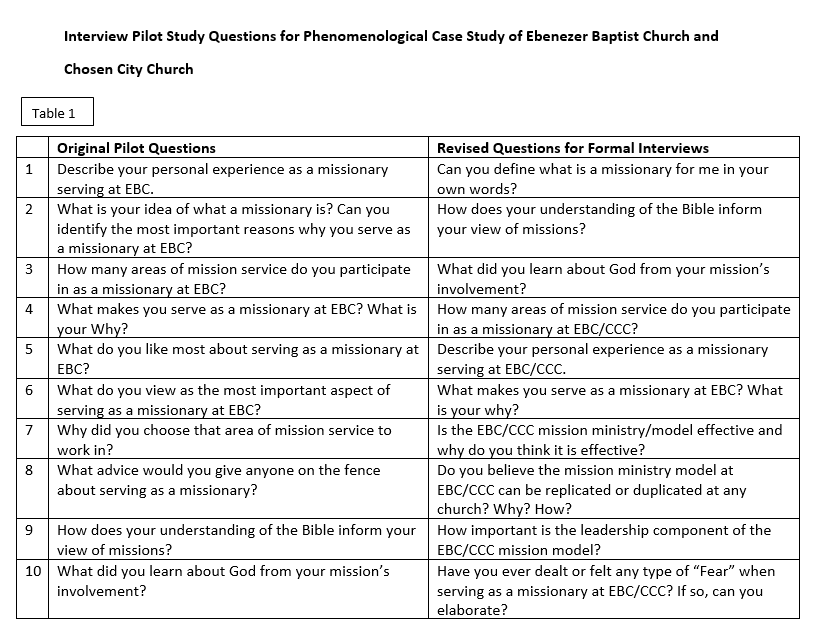
Participants were given detailed instructions prior to the beginning of the interview to ensure they fully comprehended the reason for the study and to ensure the minimization of risks during the interview process. The researcher ensured the anonymity of research participants by assigning coded numerical names.

As a result of the pilot interviews, several changes were made to prepare for the formal interview process. Four significant changes came from the pilot study. (1) The researcher documented the original questions and noted the change in verbiage for some questions and restructured the questions by essentially combining redundant questions. (2) Deleted questions that did not add value to the interview. (3) Changed the order of some of the questions to a more logical sequence. (4) Added three new questions not found in the original interviews. These were added based on the organic flow of the interviews and the responses from the participants. The additional questions included concepts around leadership styles, and the viability of duplicating and replicating the five-fold mission model currently used by Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church.

The final question focused on any element of fear experienced while serving as a missionary and why. The following table depicts the questions asked and the changes made because of the pilot study.

**Table 1**.

*Pilot Study Interview Questions*



The data analysis consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with members of leadership and missionaries, using collected documents, reports, or artifacts. Analyzed data is available by listening and transcribing the recordings of the interview. The transcription for the recorded interviews was completed by using the application tool Otter.AI. This software is a program that shows captions for live speakers and generates written transcriptions of speech. For the study's Content Analysis, the Dedoose Analytical tool examined the acquired research data, which included text, audio, video, spreadsheets, questionnaires, and demographic information. This study's conclusion enabled the researcher to examine the potential of developing a mission program model that will aid African American churches in collaborating as a community to engage more people in mission activity.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research project occurred through several years of participant observation and interviews, designed to explore the lived experiences of missionaries serving at Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church. A purposeful sampling method was used in this research. The sampling technique employed was a vital element of the overall sampling strategy (Wilmot, 2005). Qualitative research uses non-probability sampling since statistical inference was not required. A feature of qualitative sampling is that the number of cases sampled is often small and a phenomenon can only appear once to be of value to the research project (Wilmot, 2005).

Sample size for qualitative research is one that adequately answers the research question, and the number of participants can change as the study progresses and new categories, themes, and patterns emerge (Marshall, 1996). The researcher chooses the sample size based on recommendations from Creswell for a phenomenology approach; sample sizes for this approach can be between three to ten (Kumar, 2020).

This researcher used purposeful sampling to collect data in this study because the participants were knowledgeable about and experienced with the phenomenon of interest. The participants were also willing, available, and had the ability to communicate their experiences in an articulate, open, and insightful manner that was useful for research (Etikan, 2016).

The researchers behind a research endeavor that examined a sampling framework for conducting personal interviews within the realm of qualitative research have outlined three distinct methods for establishing an appropriate sample size for qualitative studies. These three methods encompass: (1) Utilizing Doctoral Theses, (2) Employing Expert Guidelines (Rule of Thumb), and (3) Applying the Saturation Principle. (Kumar, 2020)

According to (Mason, 2010) the guiding principle of sample size in qualitative research should be the concept of saturation. The number of interviews can vary based on the methodological discipline. As it relates to this research on sample size, (Creswell J., 2013) has made recommendations for five different approaches, to include case study with four to five cases, and phenomenology with between three to ten cases (Kumar, 2020). Regarding the issue of saturation, (Mason, 2010) describes saturation as the point where diminishing returns set in, where more data will not yield additional information. Saturation is key to excellent qualitative work; however, it is difficult to pinpoint definitive published guidelines of adequacy for estimating a sample size to reach saturation (Kumar, 2020).

During the collection phase, the researcher was diligent in upholding impartiality, allowing participants to freely express their viewpoints and responses without any undue influence. Ensuring an unbiased approach is paramount, as it underpins the credibility and validity of the research outcomes. To counteract the potential for researcher bias, a conscious effort was made to cultivate self-awareness regarding personal beliefs that might inadvertently impact data interpretation.

Moreover, to bolster this endeavor, a preliminary pilot study was conducted, aiming to uncover and address any potential sources of bias. A diverse spectrum of participants was deliberately chosen to mirror the broader population under study, contributing to a more representative analysis.

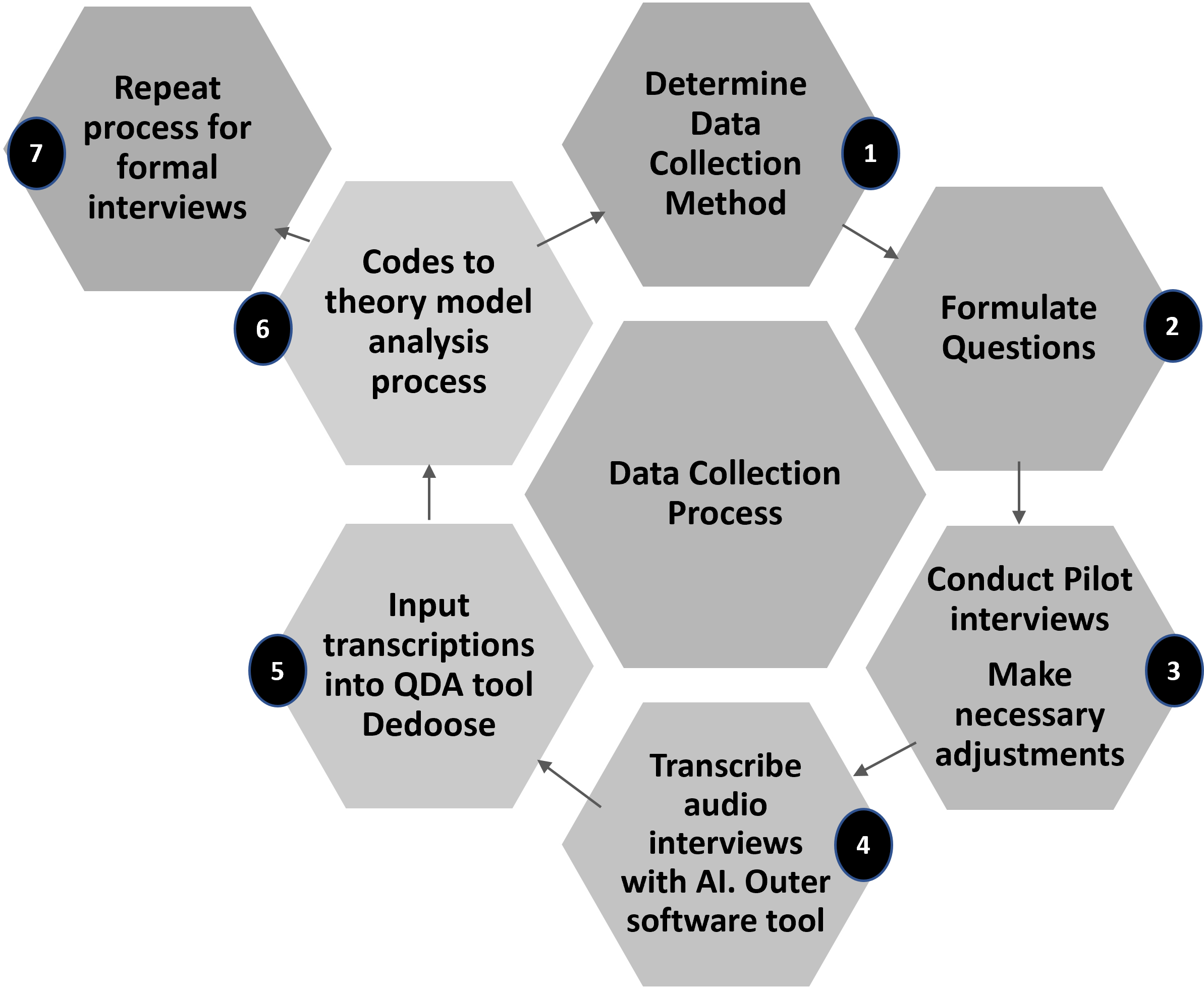
In order to further mitigate any potential bias, the researcher adopted the triangulation technique, leveraging multiple data sources to corroborate findings and diminish individual bias. Transparency was upheld through the disclosure of potential conflicts of interest that could potentially sway the research outcomes. In essence, a comprehensive set of measures was implemented throughout the research process to maintain an unbiased stance, thereby fortifying the integrity of the study’s findings (Peoples, 2020).

The three participants included in the researcher’s pilot study reached the point of saturation, according to (Mason, 2010), at the end of the third pilot interview, new ideas, thoughts, and concepts did not emerge from the conversation.

The following figure is the researcher’s depiction for data collection. This model is adapted from Saldana (2021) Codes to Theory Model in Qualitative Research.

**Figure 4**

*Datta Collection Process for Phenomenological Case Study of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church*



**Collecting Data through Semi-structured Interviews and Documentation**

During the semi-structured interview, data about the subject and topic framework of the study, actively involved in mission service for the African American Church, was gathered, and research-related questions were answered. Structured and unstructured interviews were the principal mode of data collection for this qualitative research, utilizing an exploratory social science type of compilation. Even though a great majority of the questions were predetermined, a few depended on the development of the argument as the research was conducted. The semi-structured interview included characteristics of the structured and unstructured interviews. Therefore, semi-structured interviews have the advantage of both structured and unstructured interviews, such as gathering comparable and reliable data and asking follow-up questions.

The ability to design a theme structure in advance was one of the most apparent advantages, which helped maintain focus for both the interviewer and the interviewee, lowered the possibility of distraction, and fostered conversation in both directions. In addition, semi-structured interviews provided richness and depth to the acquired data. Even though they are methodologically equivalent to structured interviews, questionnaires, and surveys, the open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews allowed for more meaningful information and depth because structured interviews require precise information to perform appropriately. To accomplish this objective, participants were, depending on the circumstances, asked to extend, restate, or explain their opinions.

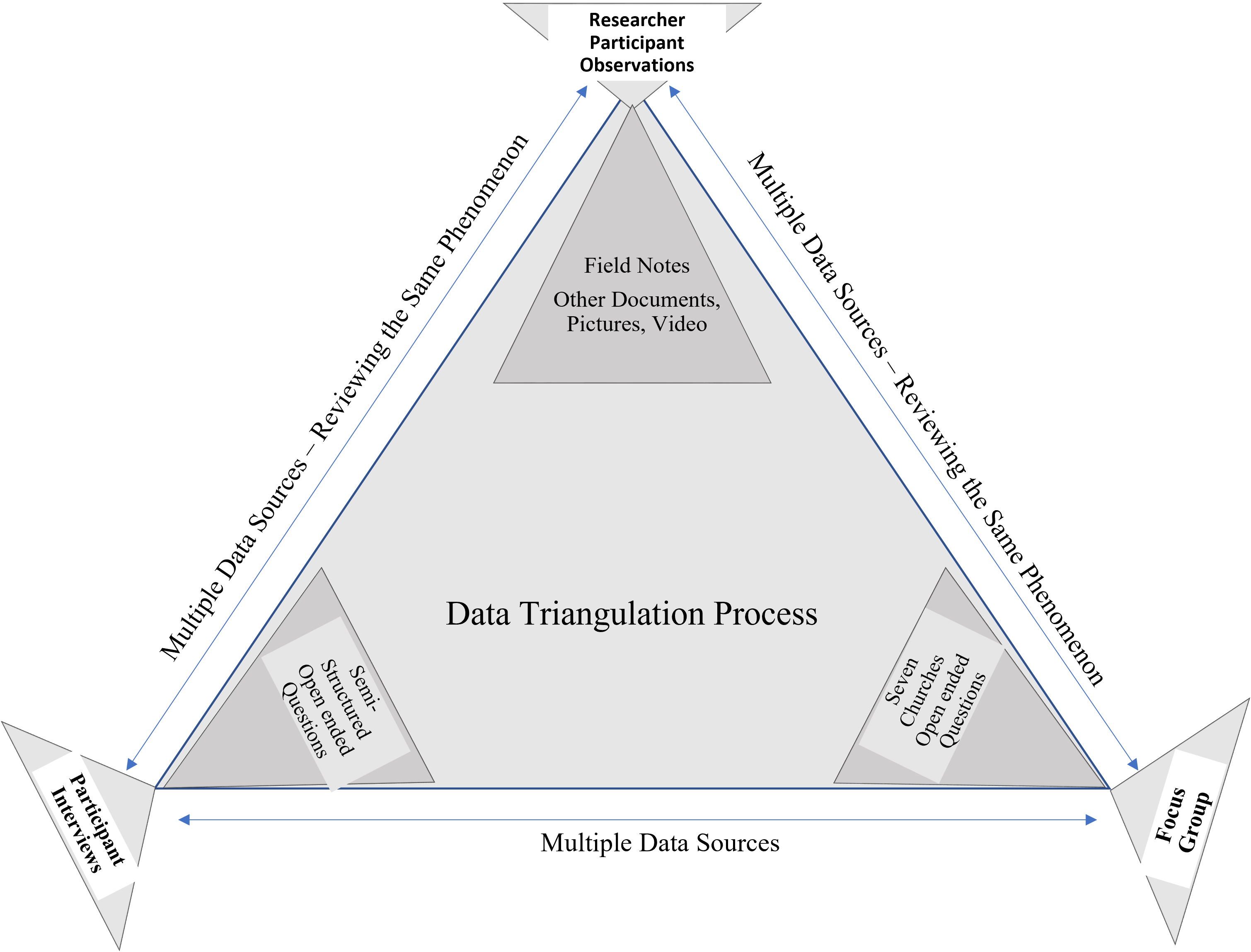
**Data Triangulation**

Denzin’s conceptualization of triangulation within Qualitative and Mixed Method Methodologies encompasses several distinct forms. In this study, the researcher employed data triangulation, a method involving the utilization of diverse data sources. Data triangulation entails investigating a singular phenomenon through various lenses, including different temporal contexts, geographical locations, and participant groups, as recommended by Denzin. This technique empowers the researcher to enhance validity by converging insights from these diverse sources, ultimately culminating in a cohesive and corroborated outcome. By relying on a multitude of data sources, researchers can comprehensively explore a subject, employing tools such as surveys, observations, interviews, focus groups, and archival materials (Flick U. , 2018).

In this research endeavor, the researcher employed a comprehensive methodological approach, encompassing participant interviews, an impromptu focus group session, and meticulous observations. This multifaceted methodology facilitated a nuanced exploration of the same phenomenon from a range of vantage points. Notably, the inclusion of the impromptu focus group introduced an element of diversity, as it comprised missionaries representing seven distinct congregations. The interplay of group dynamics within this focus group context significantly enriched the insights garnered from individual participant interviews (Flick U. , 2018). The figure below represents the data triangulation process for this research.

**Figure 5**

*Data Triangulation process model adapted from Doing Triangulation and Mixed Methods (2018) Uwe Flick (pg. 12, 106)*



Throughout both data collection methods, participants were granted ample time and space to eloquently articulate their perspectives on the subject. Subsequently, an analysis was performed on the accumulated interviews and focus group discussions, revealing recurring themes, shared viewpoints, and discernible patterns. This process served to distill cohesive and coherent findings from the amalgamation of collected data.

**The Coding Process**

The coding process employed by the researcher combined both manual techniques and the utilization of the qualitative analysis tool Dedoose. In dissecting the data for this research endeavor, the researcher adopted an analytical perspective. Notably, the researcher methodically tracked the occurrence of key concepts voiced by the participants, while also taking note of explicit verbiage that directly conveyed the discussed concepts. Engaging in this approach, the researcher skillfully structured and grouped words and phrases possessing parallel meanings, thereby generating a coherent and organized thematic framework.

The researcher adeptly formulated generalizations wherever applicable, utilizing recurrent concepts as building blocks to construct comprehensive overarching themes. Employing the method of thematic analysis, the researcher discerned the underlying significance embedded within the expressions and terminologies conveyed by the study participants. These reiterated concepts played a pivotal role in unearthing substantial and illuminating key revelations from the data.

This methodical approach enabled the researcher to structure distinct categories encompassing the most frequently employed words and phrases extracted from the transcribed interview data. The procedural framework consisted of the following sequential steps: (1) Data Collection and Compilation (2) Organization and Interconnection of Data (3) Data Coding (Categorization Application) (4) In-depth Data Analysis for Insights and (5) Elaboration of Derived Insights.

Participants in Pilot Interview Group

Executing these preparation processes as part of a pilot study ensured the quality of the primary research endeavor. As the demographic data for this research project contained African Americans between the ages of 35 and 65. Additionally, both males and women were included in the demographics. Having all protocols in place, including interview criteria and a method for evaluating the data collection's quality, was essential. Therefore, each step of the study technique was modified to be applied to the African American Church. Such preparations should be the standard when establishing research projects; nonetheless, they are seldom apparent during the planning process.

The researcher applied a phenomenological method to design the pilot study. In addition, three goals were established for the pilot study. These goals included gathering data and providing guidance for comprehensive research that could be tailored to the Ebenezer Baptist Church mission team members, who are African American adults who participated in the study. Also, ensuring a critical interrogation of participants by using the most effective conduct of a pilot study, which included the use of observational and video-recorded data, a "collaborative, self-study approach" methodology. Lastly, there is an emphasis on missionaries as a way of data collection, with a concentration on discovering mission service needs affiliated with the African American Church.

Participants in Focus Group

A focus group is another qualitative research method that involves a small diverse group of participants discussing a specific topic. The focus group in this research study was an unplanned event and not initially anticipated or explicitly sought out by the researcher. This focus group has been convened as a direct outcome of emergent data related to the theme of mission work. The EBC mission team engaged in relief efforts within a disaster-stricken area and extended an invitation to other churches, resulting in the collaboration of seven distinct congregations. The mission site, situated in Florida, necessitated an approximately 12-hour journey from North Carolina. During the return trip following a week of joint service among individuals who were largely unfamiliar with one another, a spontaneous dialogue emerged regarding their shared experiences.

Within this context, a member of the group proposed the idea of formally documenting this unplanned conversation. Recognizing its relevance, participants understood the topic would contribute meaningfully to the researcher’s ongoing study.

The researcher skillfully documented fragments of the conversation by recording comments made by different individuals during their time together in the van. With a focus on inclusivity, the researcher made a deliberate effort to capture the unique perspectives of each congregation member that participated. To achieve this, the participants were engaged in open-ended discussions, wherein they were encouraged to share their personal experiences and reflect on the individual impact of their mission service.

The researcher guided the dialogue by posing a pivotal question: How did this experience alter or augment their understanding of mission service? The unexpected nature of the focus group occasion yielded valuable emergent data. Participants found themselves at ease within this environment, allowing them to openly share their individual thoughts and personal perspectives on mission work and their recent encounters. The information gleaned by the researcher unveiled fresh insights and revealed recurrent patterns stemming from the discussions. Notably, similarities emerged in the participants’ reflections on their church experiences and the perceived lack of active mission engagement within their respective congregations.

Throughout the conversation, the researcher astutely observed the participants body language, tones, expressions, and growing enthusiasm. As the van’s occupants collectively grasped the significance and relevance of the moment, a palpable sense of transformation and excitement permeated the atmosphere. Individually impacted, each person underwent a profound shift in their perception of mission work.

Participants in Formal Interview Group

This research project's demographic data comprised African Americans aged 35 to 65. Additionally, the demographics included both men and women. These research participants were all members of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church's outreach team; this examination focused almost exclusively on missionaries, who also served as its central data source. This research examined the experiences of African American missionaries who actively engaged in all five mission service areas (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) as part of Ebenezer Baptist Church's Mission Movement. The African American Church must build a comprehensive mission service that spans the five-fold areas of mission endeavors (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) and a transformative mission movement. These are the areas of mission work: the United States, the nation, the world, and disaster relief.

This research was significant as a prospective road map and strategic plan for African American pastors to create dynamic transformational mission ministry. This study can affect how the African American Church and community incorporates the vision of the Great Commission into the fabric of the church via the use of the five-fold mission service model of local, stateside, national, global, and crisis relief. This paradigm urges the African American church to abandon its historical restrictions and emotional inward focus to the community and go beyond its current boarders.

Sampling Strategy

Examination is the objective of this study; sampling is the method used. The emergence of a paradigm for active engagement in mission work within the African American church: a phenomenological case study. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is a regularly used approach. This type of sampling permits researchers to conduct interviews with people whose contributions to the study are considered especially significant. Typically, the researcher would choose the study participants before beginning the investigation. Various sampling approaches are applied to recruit participants for qualitative research efficiently (Etikan, 2016).

Purposeful sampling stands as a qualitative research approach designed to enlist an individual possessing specialized and comprehensive insight into the subject of investigation. This methodology is driven by the fundamental objective of acquiring propound and targeted knowledge. The researcher meticulously evaluated the eligibility of each potential participant for inclusion within the study. Consequently, the study exhibited a subjective nature, where the researcher outlined distinct criteria for participant selection (Etikan, 2016).

Specifically, the established criteria encompassed several dimensions. The participants were required to be African American adults aged between 35 and 65 affiliated with the mission teams of both the Ebenezer Baptist and Chosen City churches. Furthermore, participants were expected to possess a missionary background involving engagement in at least one of the five-fold mission service realms. The researcher approached the selection process deliberately, encompassing individuals occupying leadership positions and those among the congregation who were both seasoned and new partners. Conscious efforts were undertaken by the researcher to ensure a representative sample that mirrors the broader church congregation. This strategic approach aimed to encapsulate a spectrum of perspectives drawn from the expansive church population.

Ethical Compliance

Numerous ethical issues and considerations must be considered while performing qualitative research. The researcher's recognition of the subjects' right to self-determination (autonomy) is the crucial ethical problem that occurs throughout the research process (Watts, 2006). Participation in this experiment was ‘at-will’; participants could opt out at any time and participation was optional. Information was privately and securely stored; participants' names were never revealed. Each participant gave informed consent prior to participating in the study. They were given a document that outlined the purpose of the research, the purpose of the interview, and the process for protecting their names and identities, following the standards and expectations of the Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Each participant also had the opportunity to decline participation in the research and withdraw from the inquiry at any time.

Demographic Data

This research project's demographic data comprised African Americans, aged 35 to 65. Additionally, the demographics included both men and women. These research participants were all part of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church's outreach team. This inquiry focused primarily on missionaries and utilized them as its primary data source.

Analysis and Synthesis of Data

Qualitative research employs structured open-ended questions with the aim of data collection. In qualitative research, the participants' lived experiences were highlighted, allowing the researcher access to a richer diversified pool of knowledge (Janesick, 2004). The technique for collecting data in qualitative research is often more time-consuming than the procedure for collecting data in quantitative research; nevertheless, the depth of the participants' responses enabled the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the studied issue (Janesick, 2004). A multiple-method approach to data collecting, "triangulation," was used to acquire the study's data, which was then used to correlate the data collection. This was done to decrease the possibility of the data collected being misunderstood (Flick, 2007).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Through their engagement as active participants, observers, and present members of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church, the principal subject(s) of this research project, the researcher, earned the trust of the church's leadership and missions’ team. In addition to holding a leadership position, this researcher is licensed as a minister and serves as a leader of those in service. The congregation was familiar with this researcher’s presence, due to her continual commitment to this community and church body. Since this researcher is now an active member of the congregation of Chosen City Church, both the members and the church's leadership saw this researcher as a valid and viable candidate for the employment of a high-quality research project.

The research evaluated four crucial qualities, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, to establish the reliability of these data. Because trustworthiness is a component of the trustee, it serves as the basis for consumers' judgments of the business, considering factors such as hidden values and prior acts (Devlin et al., 2014).

Regarding credibility, which pertains to the veracity of the facts, the participants’ viewpoints, and the researcher's interpretation and portrayal of those, it was essential to emphasize that (Cope, 2014). The approach used to ensure the credibility of the results was structured interviews, which improved the accuracy of the results, depending on the participants' approval of the data interpretation. Participants were invited to discuss their subsequent experiences.

To satisfy the dependability criteria, the research must be reliable. The reliability of information is judged by its consistency across comparable situations (Cope, 2014). Consistency's strength presents a threat to reliability. The approaches applied in this research to demonstrate dependability contributed to the reduction of this danger. Methods involved accurate alignment of the issue statement, study focus and question narrative, methodology, research design, a detailed explanation of the technique, and documentation of the data analysis procedure.

The notion of transferability evaluates the validity of qualitative research and seeks to generalize the results (Cope, 2014); Furthermore, according to Cope, the word "transferability" refers to information that may be applied to other sorts of communities. This study may be helpful to future policies, practices, and research encouraging individuals in this group to join mission service and expand participation.

Confirmability is the researcher's capacity to deliver data that reflects participant experiences, rather than the researcher's perspective. Lastly, while addressing confirmability, the study exhibits its dependability, as confirmability is the researcher's capacity to offer data reflecting the participants' experiences (Cope, 2014). In addition, the confirmability of this study was enhanced using coding, researcher reflexivity, the detailed methodological description described in the section on dependability, admission, or statement of the researcher's beliefs and assumptions, and recognition of the limitations of both the study's methods and its potential effects. The confirmability of the conclusions was jeopardized by the accuracy of the data collected and the ease with which the researcher assessed the data in their travels. Because reflexivity leads to more responsible and relevant research, it is intended to prevent the researcher's bias from influencing the study's conclusions (Flint & Shelton, 2019).

Limitations of Study

Research studies on missionary service for African Americans, in general. are limited. Due to the underrepresentation of African Americans in missionary service, there is a gap in studies and an absence of information on the background of this study. Nevertheless, there is considerable research available on history and influence of the African American Church, and phenomenological case studies Black Church leadership to provide historic context for this study in line with the Hermeneutic philosophical approach. The focus on consciousness and experience, essential in ethnographic, participant-observation, and grounded theory research, is also a central emphasis in hermeneutics (Dilthey (1976).

The Ebenezer Baptist Church five-fold mission model with an active missionary service membership is not the norm for African American, evidenced by underrepresentation of African Americans in general, in mission service. Notably, the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church served as the only sample for this research. The issue resided in selecting a sample size that was big enough to effectively represent a substantial proportion of the demographics present on the mission team, including those actively working on any of the five-fold mission teams.

Chapter Summary

The researcher was both a participant observer and a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, engaged with other members personally. Participant observers' observations were subjected to the researcher's interpretations and were impacted by their biases (Janesick, 2004). Since this researcher was working as an active participant observer with the Ebenezer Baptist church mission team, she had better access to the data. If she had not been functioning in this role, the researcher would not have had access to this volume of data or direct relationship with the persons under observation. As a researcher and participant observer, it was not her obligation to speak on behalf of any of the participants in this study; instead, it was her duty to authentically portray the participants' lived experiences through the lens of her observations and contacts.

Chapter 4: Summary of Results

Chapter IV demonstrated the results of the study and explored how missionaries of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church experience life as missionaries serving in robust environments of mission service that encompass a five-fold mission model created by Ebenezer Baptist Church. An evident gap in existing research and literature pertains to the absence of comprehensive information concerning the five-fold mission model. This absence of understanding surrounding the dynamic nature of robust mission service within a predominantly African American church stirred the researcher’s curiosity, prompting an exploration into the perspective of missionaries. The study sought to unravel the intricate interplay between involvement in the five distinct domains of mission service and the foundational understanding of how these African American missionaries perceived and interpreted both the act of mission service and the directive of the Great Commission.

A qualitative framework was used to design this study. Methods common to phenomenological research guided data collection and analysis. The results were a culmination of the missionary’s voices and perspective into each of their lived experiences. The documented experiences and insights were intended for use in establishing the validity of this working five-fold mission model for use in replicating and duplicating this mission model for other African American churches and the next generation, to increase the participation of African Americans in all areas of mission service.

Chapter four presents findings that progressed from data collection through interviewing a sample of nine actively involved missionaries selected from two church congregations in North Carolina. The original sample included ten missionaries, however, one of the missionaries decided to remove himself from the study for personal reasons. The interview protocol provided a setting for a rich portrayal of how the missionaries of EBC and CCC experience and understand mission service and the value of living out the Great Commission, as described in the Bible.

Each participant was asked the same ten questions. Follow-up questions were asked as necessary to extract a deeper more thoughtful response. Careful analysis of the interview transcriptions allowed this researcher to identify word and thought patterns, which set the stage for emerging themes (Saldana, 2021). After reviewing and reading each transcript multiple times, this researcher utilized phenomenological reduction by outlining units of meaning. This was accomplished by noting patterns and key words in the way the missionary participants described their experience in mission service. This researcher then clustered the meanings to support the formation of themes. Sequentially, 8 clustered patterns emerged from this effort and rendered the development of three overarching themes.

Description of Sample

The results for this phenomenological study developed through data collected from nine interviewees actively involved in missions from two African American congregations. Prepositive sampling was used to focus the population for her study and further promoted the probability of reaching missionaries who actively served in at least one area of mission service. This sample included persons who: (a) served on either the Ebenezer Baptist church or Chosen City Church mission team; (b) African American adults who served in mission service previously and included at least one area of the five-fold mission model (c) were a mix of leaders and new partners within the congregation; and (d) fit into the age category identified by the researcher, between 35 and 65.

The researcher’s selected sample encompassed a balanced distribution of demographics, comprising three males and six females, between the ages of 35 and 65. This composition thoughtfully encapsulated a diverse cross-section of missionary experiences within the context of both EBC and CCC. The chosen sample effectively represented engaged missionaries who spanned a wide spectrum of mission service involvement.

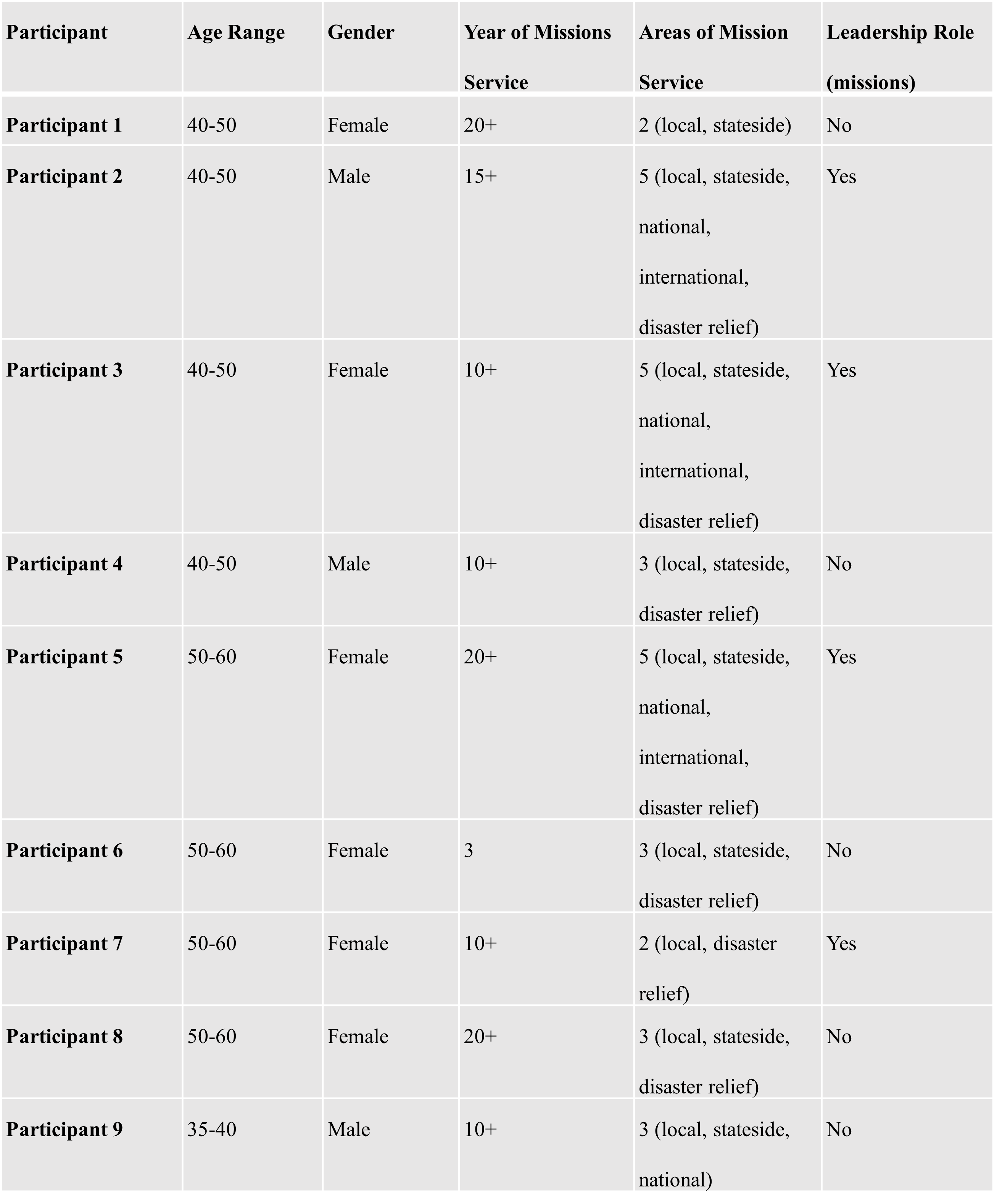
Among the participants, a distinct contrast emerged. Three individuals were newcomers to Chosen City Church, having not previously encountered mission service within an African American Church at the propounded level demonstrated by EBC and CCC. Three individuals were missionaries having served at both EBC and CCC for several mission service activities that spanned many years.

The third set of individuals, in contrast, held leadership roles within the two congregations, collectively amassed over forty years of mission service engagement. Each of these seasoned leaders had participated across all dimensions of the five-fold mission model, thereby significantly contributing to its evolution and operationalization, as observed today.

In tandem with the submission of consent forms, the nine participants provided essential demographic information that offers an overview of their engagement in mission service, including the specific sectors within the five-fold mission model in which they have served. The subsequent table presents a visual representation of the compiled demographic data:

**Table 2**

*Demographics of Participants*

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Descriptive Data

Each of the individual participants mentioned below was meticulously chosen by the researcher in alignment with the criteria expounded in the sampling strategy section. The researcher discerned distinctive attributes of each participant that held the potential to contribute a unique perspective to the research endeavor. While some participants were familiar to the researcher, others were less known. Nonetheless, the researcher noted a remarkable enthusiasm among all participants towards mission service, a factor that piqued curiosity and propelled the decision to include them, even in instances where the researcher lacked a personal rapport with the individual.

**Participant 1**

This participant is an African American female. She is relatively new at Chosen City Church she has only attended since the fall of 2022. The researcher did not really know the participant prior to her serving with the mission team or prior to this study. The researcher was engrossed in her obvious excitement when serving on her first mission service experience at CCC. After learning the participant is a relatively new partner at CCC the researcher wanted to get a perspective from someone not yet fully immerged in mission service at CCC but had experienced at least one opportunity. The participant has prior mission and evangelistic experience in her former church experience but has recently had her first engagement with mission service at CCC. The researcher selected the participant to participate in the study because she is a new partner at CCC and new to the mission experience at CCC. The interview with the participants took place on a Zoom call. The setting was acceptable with no outside interruptions or distractions throughout the interview.

The participant stated that she has been involved in missions for at least 20 years or more. The participant recounted her mission service involvement, which primarily involved volunteering alongside her daughter in community initiatives. She categorized these endeavors as a form of evangelism. As the participant transitioned to CCC, her perspective on mission service evolved. With an increased understanding gained through her time at CCC, she recognized that much of her prior service conducted at different congregations aligned more closely with the concept of evangelism. She elaborated on her experiences, recounting instances where she and fellow church members engaged in door-to-door visits within the neighborhood, extending offers of prayer to residents. Similar activities took place in various locations, such as the parking lot of Wal-Mart and other community marketplaces. When asked about her first mission experience at CCC The participant stated “I would love for us to have a mission blitz once a quarter. I served my first mission experience with CCC at Champion House of Care. This really touched me. It did my heart good to see people laugh, see the smiles, and speak a word of encouragement to them. It makes you want to do more!”

The participant conveyed in the interview she understands the difference between community service and mission service. The difference in mission service is a God-focused agenda, showing the love of Christ and not simply knocking on doors to ask people if they have a prayer request. When asked what she has learned about God from her mission experience, the participant promptly responded saying she learned about the power of God and the Holy Spirit while serving as a missionary. She described how you really must be led by the Holy Spirit, be able to discern the Spirit of God and hear as he leads. The participant stated it is “imperative that we operate in His wisdom and power and not our own.”

When asked about her “Why” for serving in missions The participant stated, “my why is because I want to honor the Lord, it is His commandment, and it floods me with joy.” The participant expressed her feelings of joy when she has done what the Lord asked of her, and she can see the response of those whose lives she has touched. When asked about her knowledge of the mission model used at CCC she responded that she loves how CCC promotes the importance of mission and how the pastor of this congregation instills and encourages the congregation to serve when opportunities arise to volunteer. She mentioned two specific mission service activities members of the CCC team participated in under the categories of disaster relief and international missions.

The participant was not able to specifically name the five-fold areas of the mission model but did note that missions were a daily occurrence at CCC, and it was one of the things that drew her and her family to this congregation. The participant expressed one of the main reasons she likes the way mission service is done at CCC is because it includes volunteers of all ages from the younger children to the seasoned saints. There are opportunities for anyone to serve in a multitude of ways. The participant stated “every age group can develop a lifestyle of missions” based on the way the church and its leaders continue to keep mission service in front of the congregation. The interview with the participant was enthusiastic and reminiscent of a new church convert.

Finally, the participant expressed that every church should have a similar model of mission service if they are following the bible. She adamantly expressed her frustration with different denominations doing their own thing and not getting together as the body of Christ to address the needs of the community or plan a mission event for the good of serving a community together. The participant’s overall perception was leadership is a major reason why mission service at CCC is gaining more and more participation. “I love how the various ministries work together to keep people engaged and various ministry leaders work to promote and advance mission work within their individual ministries. This says missions is important to leadership and this message is echoed throughout the ministry.”

**Participant 2**

This participant is an African American male who serves as one of the mission co-leaders at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The participant has served in every area of missions at EBC and has worked in mission service for over 10 years. The participant has been a member of EBC for approximately 42 years. The researcher met the participant in 2017 while serving in mission service at another congregation. The participant was one of the first persons introduced to the researcher as a new missionary serving with the EBC missions’ team. The researcher selected him to participate in this study because of his longevity in mission service and because of his lifelong commitment to servant leadership. As a leader of missions at EBC and his years as a member, the researcher thought the participant would be an excellent candidate to participate in this study as he could lend historical perspective to mission service at EBC. The interview with this participant took place on a Zoom call. The time and place were selected by the participant to accommodate his schedule. The meeting was held without interruption or distractions.

The participant stated that he has been a member of EBC for 42 years and grew up in the church. The researcher found the participant to be extremely transparent about his understanding of God and missions. He described his struggle as a young man with not understanding the bible, especially the King James version. He was always intrigued by the senior saints’ knowledge of the bible. The participant stated that as he grew older, he began to understand what the older saints in the church meant when they said to know God is to have a personal relationship with Him. The participant stated this was the beginning of his understanding of missions as he began to comprehend the bible and foster a deeper relationship with Christ as the love of God began to dwell within him, and he came to understand he was supposed to do something with that love.

When asked what he learned about God through his mission experience Rod stated, “I learned that God is real, God is everywhere, and we are all God’s children.” The participant also mentioned one of his greatest lessons learned from his prayer time and studying the bible is that we should always look out for others. We should pray for people around the world and help those in need, as God prepares you for the task at hand.

When asked a follow-up question to learning about God through his mission experience, the researcher asked about his preparation. How does he prepare to go out and serve, in addition to prayer and studying the bible? The participant expounded on this question with the process EBC members, and their leaders take to prepare for mission service and the importance of training, team building, group prayer, flexibility, and the importance of making oneself completely available to God. Team members should completely relinquish who they are as individuals, get out of our flesh and align with what God is doing in that moment, whether the team is serving locally or internationally. The participant’s response to preparation provides a more in-depth look at the mindset of the missionaries who serve on EBC’s missions team. This goes far beyond handing out food boxes or clothing. The goal is to learn more about God and what He is doing in the moment, ensuring we are aligned to the movement of God, listening for His still, small voice.

The participant described a lifestyle of living on mission with God and a lifestyle of servant leadership. When asked about his “Why” for serving in missions, the participant responded with the following: “My why is because this is my purpose, it has become what I live for, I am just being obedient. I know this is God’s plan for me. When I get up every morning and God gives me another breath, I know the purpose for God giving me another day is to serve. It has been life changing. Whatever God asks me to do that day, that is what I do.” The participant has served in the military, and he made the comparison to serving in that capacity and serving as a missionary. His role was to protect and serve from a military perspective. According to the participant, he enjoyed serving in the military, but his life was missing something. Once out of the military he realized he still had a desire to serve. Serving in missions gave his life purpose. The participant stated, “Missions saved my life. It gave me a God given purpose and focus.”

The interview with the participants was heartfelt and engaging. When asked if the five-fold mission model of EBC is effective, the participant responded, “Yes, the model is both effective and efficient and because this model has flexibility built into it, we do not have to always do the same thing the same way, that makes it efficient. It is effective because I believe it was ordained by God the creator himself. God has given his children this model so we can serve him by serving others. It was not us coming up with our personal opinions, but it is centered around us being obedient and allowing God to use each one of us. This mission model we use at EBC and CCC is efficient and effective, and I know it works.”

After responding to that question, the participant added the following statement, “This model also weeds out those who do not really have a heart for mission work, for those always complaining and whining about anything. To serve on this mission team, we have learned how to relinquish ourselves to allow God to move and to use us as his earthly vessels. He allowed these earthly vessels to create this model so we can serve him and do what he has called us to do.”

Around the question of the five-fold mission model being duplicatable or replicable, the participant stated the following: “I think it can be duplicated or replicated in any church and it should be everywhere because this model was not designed for one type of person, one skill set, one group of people, one cultural group over another. It’s not for just a Black church or a Baptist church, nor a church in the north, nor in the south. It is a universal model, designed for all people who want to be obedient, have a true heart for God and serving His people.” The participant’s response provided his insight and perspective on the five-fold mission model practiced at EBC and CCC as a model for all people who love God and are open to his leading and directing our paths.

**Participant 3**

This participant is an African American female serving as the leader for missions at the CCC congregation. The participant also served in a leadership role at EBC. When CCC was established as a church plant, the participant accepted the role as the lead for missions and has now established her own team of mission leaders at CCC. The researcher has known the participant since 2017 and have served together in mission efforts locally, stateside and disaster relief. The participant has participated in all five areas of the five-fold mission model and has over a decade of experience in mission service. The researcher selected the participant to participate in this research study because she brings the perspective of leading at both congregations and incorporating this five-fold mission model into a new congregation from the ground up.

When the participant was asked what her interpretation was of “what is a missionary” her response was unexpected. She stated, “I do not use the term missionary for what I do. I grew up in a southern Baptist church and my understanding was a missionary was someone who went off to faraway lands and eventually came back. We also had a traditional missionary circle. I do not think of myself as a traditional missionary. This researcher has known the participant for many years and was surprised at her thoughts around being identified as a missionary.

When asked how her understanding of the bible informed her views around missions and what has she learned about God from her mission experiences the participant responded, “The bible makes it plain: Jesus directed in the Great Commission for us to go out and spread the gospel, to help the least in our society. When we do this, we are doing it for him. From a biblical perspective, that is what we should do. I have learned it’s not just service, but people see God through me when I am building homes in Africa or serving in a soup kitchen locally. People get to see him and feel him through me and through my service.” The participant further expounded that she learned that God would shield you and provide you with just the right words, actions, and provisions to do what he has called you to do if you fully trust him.

The participants provided various examples of serving in all areas of mission service, as described in the five-fold mission model practiced by CCC. When asked if the five-fold model could be duplicated or replicated in any church, the participant stated she felt the model could be replicated in any church but did not think it should necessarily be duplicated. Her perspective comes from serving as a leader of missions in a new church plant. As she explained from her experience, replication and duplication take different things into account. As a new church plant, the community is different, the membership is different, the knowledge base about missions is different, the resources and the vision from leadership can be slightly different. All these things must be taken into consideration. Duplication would imply things must be an exact copy of the original, while replication is the process of coping or experimenting on what works. The process can be replicated to a point but not every detail. The researcher found this perspective to be insightful. In the participant’s current role as a mission leader for a new congregation, she has learned that starting from the ground up requires different planning, actions, appeals, and leadership.

When asked about the role of leadership in this new capacity and the importance of establishing this five-fold mission model at CCC, the participant stated, “Leadership is important because the buy-in from the congregation is necessary to catch the vision. It is important for leadership to walk the talk, allowing time for the congregation to see and get involved in mission opportunities. For a lot of people this is unusual, and leaders must be patient and understand where peoples’ involvement with missions varies as to rate and pace. We are not there yet because we do not have the resources EBC has, as they are well established. Our members hear about mission work all the time and that is important but until they experience it for themselves it doesn’t mean anything. Leaders must be patient with the start-up process and sometimes that can be difficult when coming from a congregation with financial resources and willing servants who have worked in missions for a long time. “

The participants provided great insight into the process of establishing a five-fold mission model for a new congregation. The participant referenced a time when the mission leadership at both EBC and CCC had an opportunity to go to other churches and help them start a mission program. One of the key take-aways for this effort was mission service is not a check-off a list item. It is something that requires time, energy, compassion, passion, and financial support to be successful. If leaders are unwilling to provide this, the missional effort will not be sustainable.

Finally, on the question of leadership as it relates to this five-fold mission model, the participant noted the importance of leaders being flexible, leading by example, being a visionary, going above and beyond, and modeling servant leadership. Leaders must get dirty with everybody else, especially on missions. Leaders cannot just talk about it from the pulpit for engagement, they must be fully committed to the work of missions. Not just sometimes, missions and people who are in need are not in need sometimes but every day. Leaders must practice this every day. We have leaders who demonstrate this; they are committed to the work of missions every day.

**Participant 4**

This participant is an Africa American male. He is a former member of EBC and now serves at CCC on the mission team. The participant has ten plus years of mission experience and has served in three areas of the five-fold mission model. The participant has indicated he is looking forward to serving in all five areas when the opportunity presents itself. The researcher asked the participant to participate in this research because of his mission experience and because he was a former member of EBC. The interview with the participant took place on a Zoom call in the evening to accommodate his schedule.

When asked what he has learned about God from his mission involvement, the participant responded, “I have learned a few lessons from working in missions. First, I learned about His grace, how God does not often show up how we expect, He comes to do the unexpected and we will see the glory in that. I have learned he is a prayer answering God.” The participant continued this thought by expressing he thinks all believers have been called to missions. The function of the church is to go and make disciples of men. I want to be like Isaiah in the bible when the Lord called him. I want to respond and say, “Lord send me!” The researcher followed up with a probing question about God showing up in unexpected ways. The participant recalled a recent mission experience where he served in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood. It was apparent the persons we were there to serve were not expecting to see an African American team of missionaries. The participant noted, “God sent us to that location to be a blessing, even if the blessing did not look like the person expected.”

The participant expressed how various mission experiences allowed him to grow in his walk, to be closer to Christ, stating, “As I follow in His footsteps, my eyes are open to what God has called me to do.” The participant seemed thoughtful for a few seconds; commenting, “I used to think community service and missions were the same thing. I know now that they are not.” The participant noted anyone can perform a community service project, companies do it all the time. You can perform community service without giving God the glory. This is not the goal for mission work. “By its definition, missionaries meet the needs of Christ’s own, evangelize, pray in the spirit, and call on the name of Jesus.”

“The foundation of mission work is Christ!” The participant went on to say the modeling of the pastor has enabled him to value the example of servant leadership and obedience to what God commands us to do as His children. The participant’s final thought on this topic, “It’s important that our motives are pure, and our hearts are clean. We don’t do this to be seen by others but for other to see God in us. That is why we serve faithfully in mission service.”

The researcher found the participant’s responses to be thoughtful. When asked if he believed the five-fold mission model was effective and why, he responded, “Yes, the mission model can be replicated, CCC does a good job with missions training, and we are working the model successfully. It is almost like a plug and play model. Once we train our members, we can plug in workers to serve, and the model continues to grow as our members grow. I see spiritual growth in myself and others as we continue to learn, serve, and experience God while serving in missions.” The participant added he believed the five-fold model can be used in any church, denomination, or ethnic group. “The model can be taught on a grand scale to nations, not just a culture. We do not serve a cultural God. He is a God who is for everybody, and for any church operating in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

When asked if he ever experienced fear while serving on the mission field, the participant noted he had felt some level of anxiety when serving in missions for the first time because he did not know what to expect. He stated, “I only experienced this fear because I never served before and I had many questions: what we will do when we get there, will I say the wrong thing, as well as other thoughts. But now I have become accustomed to serving and all doubts and fear have evaporated. I prepare myself for each service event by tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit so I might be used as a vessel for him and for this life changing work. Now I experience true excitement when I serve on a mission trip and I’m so thankful I can serve.”

The participant provided many insightful answers in closing our discussion and he provided this thought, “When we do what we have been called to do, according to scripture, our paths will be made straight as we build bridges to communities and God’s people across the world. As a result, souls are saved, Christ-focused churches are planted, mission work is promoted, and God is exalted!”

**Participant 5**

This participant is an African American female with the longest amount of mission service experience among the selected participants. The participant brings twenty years of mission service experience. The participant serves as the lead for missions at EBC, is a member at CCC, and serves on both mission teams. The participant proved to be a wealth of information around the topic of missions and provided a historical perspective around the inception of the five-fold mission model used by EBC and CCC. The participant has served in all five areas of the five-fold mission model over her twenty years of service and has trained missionaries and prepared them for service. The participant is attributed to having created structure around the five-fold mission model and elevated the number of partnerships that contribute to the success of the model. When asked what his “Why” was for serving in missions, the participant replied, “My why is me. I hope this does not sound narcissistic. It is between me and God; for me to continually better myself, without attention. I understand we are to be made in the image of God; we are his disciples. Missions are my purpose. I know what I am called to do, that is my why.” When asked about the various areas of mission service she participates in, the participant provided a historical context of the five-fold mission model currently in use. EBC was established in 1887 and like many African American churches, they always had a local and foreign mission service. When the current senior pastor of EBC came on board in 1997, the church had missionary ministry groups (groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). Over time, the congregation and the missionary groups wanted to do more in mission service than performing in local and foreign missions and writing a check to the Lott Carey organization.

In 2012, the executive pastor serving under the senior pastor had a heart for missions and wanted to widen the scope of mission service to extend to the whole congregation not only missionary small groups. With prayerful consideration, missions at EBC were transformed into a church-wide effort, intentional about seeking out mission opportunities. This effort began with approximately 10 people who sought out other churches engaged in mission service. This intentional exploration found an organization that performed a ‘mission blitz’. EBC took a team and went through the mission blitz training, presenting opportunities to work on mission projects within the state and across state lines. Momentum grew within the congregation. EBC connected with another congregation that performed prison ministry and went on a mission trip with this church to Georgia.

The participant elaborated, The EBC mission team began working vigorously in local, state, national and international missions, travelling to Africa and other areas. The congregation continued to grow and interest in mission service continued to expand. The concept of a mission blitz was to span the city performing various mission projects, engaging members of the congregation. This event began to grow larger and larger each year. In October of 2012, hurricane Sandy hit the northeastern shores, causing mass destruction with winds of 120 miles per hour. Many homes were destroyed, and help was needed to assist with recovery efforts. EBC had become known for their mission service and was asked if any volunteers would be willing to assist. The EBC mission team responded and went to serve in the hardest hit areas impacted by hurricane Sandy.

The participant stated the efforts to clean-up took months, traveling to Western Carolina. Several opportunities presented themselves over the years to serve in many areas of mission service. This was the birth of the five-fold mission model. The church was already operating in these areas but did not have a formal plan. The senior and executive pastor wanted to create something bigger and church wide. They wanted this vigor of mission service to extend to more members of the congregation; although the teams grew over the years, the objective was for the entire congregation to catch the vision to actively serve in mission service. The reality is there are far more mission service opportunities than the team could participate in. This is how EBC missions were born. The participant stated, “They started small, performing missions in four areas for a long time. Then the church began to receive calls to help other teams. We must make all of missions a priority and the five-fold mission model were created with a formal plan to serve in place.”

The participant reiterated, “Mission service became a church-wide priority and EBC missions is a brand, people know about our passion to serve across the state and the nation. We are known for our excellence in mission work. We are called on by other churches around the nation to help with mission service. Making mission service a priority ignited a passion in the congregation of EBC to serve in any capacity and to help all persons who came to our door for help.”

When the researcher asked the participant if the five-fold mission model was effective, she responded, “Yes, the model is effective because it is about the Great Commission and what the bible commands. It is effective because it is God’s plan. Aside from that, I believe it is an effective model because it captures you at any age, any gender, any station in life. All people who have a heart for God and a heart for service can serve effectively within this model.” The participant added to this statement, noting that although the model is effective, she believes it can be more effective and CCC is an example of that improvement.

The researcher was intrigued by this statement and asked the participant to elaborate on this statement. She responded, “CCC has incorporated training for all new partners in mission service, they are teaching all members who come through the door about missions. This makes it more effective from my perspective because as a church plant, all members are learning about the importance of missions from the beginning, from the time they walk in the door, and this includes children, as a mission’s class is taught to the kids too. CCC has been intentional in putting this in place from the beginning. I would say EBC is only about 60% successful in this area. Older members of EBC got the vision but we do not perform mission training for new members at EBC. I have found that new members of EBC operate in a “taste and see” what missions is all about mentality. If they hear about an opportunity, they may come out and support it, or they may donate money to a specific cause, but until they participate in a mission service project, they are not actively involved. At one point, I was disheartened about participation being low at times. I prayed about it and was reminded in my prayer time that EBC has staying power, no one is leaving. Missions are still taking place, it is about the quality of people serving, not about the quantity.”

The participant also provided an example when asked if the EBC five-fold mission model can be duplicated and or replicated in any church. She responded, “I know this model works, I have seen it work and have presented it to many churches where the members of the congregation do not look like me.” The participant noted she worked with a Caucasian congregation that had about 50 members. She worked with them for a couple of months to create a small community project that would help new immigrants settled in that neighborhood. The plan was to get at least one local mission service project implemented. Many of the church goers were not happy with the influx of immigrants in their community and were very resistant to this service project. A church-wide panel discussion was held with about 30 of the 50 members in attendance. After a three-hour discussion and a reminder that we are to love all people, the church voted to create welcome baskets to bring to their new neighbors and extend the love of God to them. Over time, old walls begin to break down as more and more members of the church begin to engage with their new immigrant neighbors.

Relationships were formed, hearts were changed and some of the new neighbors came to church to visit. They no longer felt unwanted in the community. As a result of this activity, other people in the community became members and the church began to grow. The participant stated, “This is the power of mission engagement and the church being the church. This church was separated by classism, ethnicity, and financial status. We taught them a portion of this model and helped them to think outside of their small box. I have been asked to come back and have another discussion and help create another mission project. Mission service was able to revive a dead church and change the hearts and minds of people in the church. So yes, this model can be replicated, it can be duplicated in a way that a church can make their own. We must teach people and remind them of what the great commission commands: that we are to reach all nations and make disciples of all people, even if the people do not look like us. At the end of the day, they did exactly what the great commission called for, it just took them some time to get to that point.”

The researcher found the interview with the participants to be informative and educational. The discussion ended on this note when asked if there was anything else she would like to add, the participant stated, “I would add the beauty of serving in missions is the building of relationships. The relationships between the missionaries who serve on the teams are genuine. We learn things from each other and about each other. I think it is important, especially now after the pandemic, that all churches, regardless of the denomination, live out the Great Commission. Live beyond us because the bible says all nations for a reason. What I like about the Great Commission is that we must act beyond the words on the page. The mission of the Great Commission is to act, to go out and live beyond the printed page. This is for every denomination, every gender, every ethnicity; the Word of God never changes, and I love it. I love to serve.”

**Participant 6**

This participant is an African American female with three years of mission service experience at CCC. The participant became actively involved with the mission ministry almost immediately as a new partner at CCC. In her previous church experience, the participant served for many years as an evangelist. The interview with the participants took place via a Zoom call. The researcher selected the participant to participate in the research study because she is a relatively new member to CCC with no previous connection to EBC. The researcher believed the participant would bring a fresh perspective to the research study because much of her previous experience was considered primarily evangelistic versus missional. When asked what the participant’s definition of a missionary was, she responded, “I see missionaries as God’s own people putting in the work for his children. The missionary does not have a single mission field, the world is the missionaries mission field. Missionaries serve around the world, as well as in shelters, providing goods and service to those of limited means, and in local efforts right in our backyards. Those needs are usually crucial. Missionaries represent the heart of Jesus Christ throughout the world.”

When asked how her understanding of the bible informed her view of missions, the participant responded, “The great commandment is an overarching commandment; Acts 1:8 lets us know that we have the power, by the Holy Spirit, to go out, serve and to be His witness. We can be the mouthpiece of Jesus as we witness to people on the mission field.” The participant added that serving in missions is very rewarding to her, as she can see God in different ways and help others see God in different ways from their sometimes-limited understanding of Him.

When asked what she has learned about God from her mission experience at CCC, the participant noted she learned God is no respecter of persons, that God is omnipotent and omnipresent and can show up anywhere and in various ways. The participant again reflected on the content of the scripture in Acts 1:8, noting that she learned the Holy Spirit operates in us as we serve on the mission field, to give us power to witness for Him, stating “We are not sent out as lambs to be slaughtered, God goes before us while the Holy Spirit empowers us to do His will.”

When asked to describe her mission experience as a missionary serving at CCC, the participant cited an example that was very impactful to her while serving with the disaster relief mission team. It was her first experience serving in this missional capacity. The participant states, “I was able to go to New Bern with the disaster relief mission team to help with homes that were destroyed by a recent hurricane. Many people suffered catastrophic injury and loss of their valuables. Homeowners were devastated and heartbroken at the damage to their property. The home I worked on had holes in the roof, the floor, and a great deal of structural damage. After other team members repaired the roof, I painted it. I climbed the ladder to help make repairs and God was in that. In the past, I have had a fear of heights but in that moment, on the mission field, our Father removed that fear and replaced it with his power. Again, he never leaves or forsakes me. People are so grateful for whatever we provide and often ask us for prayer during a catastrophic event. One gentleman asked God to bless us as we worked on houses in that area. That touched my heart; during his heartbreaking situation, he had the heart to ask the Lord to bless us. That whole experience was one of encouragement for me. This man saw beyond his natural sight and saw the goodness of God in his mess. We helped him that day, but he blessed me. I carried his heart with me during that mission trip and I will never forget it.”

When asked about her “Why”, the participant stated, “My why is because I love God and I love his people. I love how God has blessed me and allows me to be a blessing to others. It is a large part of my life and who I am. I see my why as a love for God’s people.” Subsequently, the participant added, “The greatest gift we give is love and service is a great way to show people God loves them. People seldom care about what we say but they always remember how you make them feel. Acts of love, like praying for people, feeding the hungry, building homes, and other missional acts where we provide a service, are inroads to the hearts of people. When we can show people that we are for them, that God cares for them and their well-being, it opens the doors of the heart.”

When asked how important the role of leadership at CCC is as it relates to missions, the participant responded, “Leadership believes the work of missions is a church-wide, full-scale ministry. This is not just the pastor of CCC, but a mandate supported by all leaders who serve in this ministry. The pastor models the character of a missionary from the pulpit to the mission fields. I love that CCC serves the community, state, and world-wide. Our leader is a great example of what mission service should look like. Whenever something is important to an organization, you can see it starts at the head. If CCC’s leader did not see the value in promoting missions, engagement would be minimal. But because of his obedience to the word of God, it is the mantle by which this ministry is built. We are growing a robust mission environment here at CCC, our pastor is a cheerleader for everything mission related. Through his leadership, training classes are available for everyone to engage. That is the kind of leadership needed to have a successful mission ministry.”

When asked if the five-fold mission model, as practiced by CCC, can be duplicated or replicated in any church, the participant simply stated, “Yes, it can certainly be duplicated if leadership has a sincere heart for the work of missions.” The researcher found the interview time with the participant to be straight to the point. She ended the discussion by stating her belief that if more churches would educate their congregants about the importance of mission service and model the example EBC and CCC has created, there would be a surge of workers seeking to serve. The African American church could benefit from the example of our leadership; they have a vision for the work of missions and that speaks volumes for the rapid church growth of CCC. People are drawn to the work and opportunities to serve. The participant ended the interview with this quote: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18. Collaborating with God’s people and living a life that seeks to grow the Kingdom is a blessing. I love it! I can’t imagine any other life for myself.”

**Participant 7**

This participant is an African American female, new to CCC. She became a partner in January 2023. The participant immediately joined the mission’s ministry. Although she has over 20 years of mission service, most of that work was done outside the scope of a church mission ministry and outside the four walls of the church. The participant identifies as a street missionary servant. The researcher did not know the participant well and did not have a relationship with her, aside from seeing her at church. The researcher noticed her enthusiasm while serving at the annual mission blitz and wanted to include her perspective in this research, as much of her mission service was not traditionally church based. The interview with the participants took place on a Zoom call and was very moving.

When asked what a missionary was, the participant responded, “A missionary is someone on a mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity, promulgating the love of Christ.” When asked how her understanding of the bible informs her view of missions, the participant stated, “Matthew 25:40 and Acts 1:8 tells us we should go out and preach the gospel to all mankind. That is missionary work to me, going out and sharing the gospel, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked; whatever we can do to serve the least of those in our society. What we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, Christ said we do it as unto him.”

The researcher asked the participant what she has learned about God in all her mission experience, including what she has learned since joining CCC’s mission team. The participant shared, “I learned that God truly loves us. He’s concerned about us, and He will go to the ends of the earth to reach us. As a missionary, we must have a heart and the same kind of love for His people. God will go to great lengths to retrieve a lost sheep; He will leave the ninety-nine to find the one and we must work the mission fields with a similar concern and heart for God’s children. We as missionaries must be yielded vessels for His will, as we intercede for others.”

When asked to describe her personal experience while serving as a member of the CCC mission team, the participant stated, “One of the best things I have experienced since joining CCC was the mission blitz. It was exhilarating for me, the most exciting thing I have done in missions in a long time. I was so excited about the mission blitz but at the same time I was sad because it is only an annual event. I wish we could do it monthly or quarterly. The idea that we all come together as a collective church body, dressed alike in our tee shirts looking like God’s own army. Words are hardly sufficient to describe the sense of assignment, duty, thankfulness, and gratitude to be able to serve in this capacity.”

The passion and love the participant has for mission service is apparent, based on her emotional response. The researcher asked a probing follow-up question around the perceptions of the African American church in the role of missions. The participant alluded to this during the interview; that a Black church is going out and dispersing hundreds of people around the city in one accord, dressed alike, to serve. This was a phenomenal experience for the participant and as she stated, it impacted her immensely. The follow up question was, please give me more insight around your experience, thoughts, and perspective of how the African American church shows up in missions. The participant responded with the following, “In my experience, too many of our churches are focused on the inward and what we can get, more than what we can give back to the community. It’s frequently a give me, give me, give me type of mentality in many of these churches. How much money can we raise for this anniversary, for this banquet? The Black church is often self-consumed. If we are not fulfilling the command of the Great Commission, what are we doing? Yes, we should be a blessing to our leaders during anniversaries but how many people have you fed, how many needs have you met? The great commission says go out into all the world. It does not say stay in and get as much as you can.”

The participant finished this thought by sharing, “I have a burden for souls and the less fortunate. I am absolutely filled with joy when I get to serve and meet the needs of God’s people. I am built like this and have been like this since I gave my life to Christ in 1997. I have had this burden ever since. I do not like to see people hungry or going without life’s essentials.”

When asked if the five-fold mission model is effective, the participant stated, “I would say it is effective, it is one of the things that drew me to this ministry. This is only the second ministry I have been involved in that operates missions at this capacity, the way God commanded us by going out into the world and meeting the needs of people. We don’t see that often in our churches, so yes, it is effective because it is obedience to God’s commandment.”

When asked if the five-fold mission model, as practiced by CCC, can be duplicated and or replicated, the participant responded, “Yes, in my opinion, it can be replicated or duplicated, but only by churches that are kingdom-minded and committed to fulfilling the Great Commission. With proper training and teaching, CCC’s mission ministry model can be repeatable, and it also depends on church leadership.”

When asked if she ever experienced fear when working on the mission field, the participant stated, “When I worked in street ministry, I was nervous about my approach and how I would be received. I have been in some seedy places, really challenging neighborhoods. The Holy Spirit filled me, and I lost my fear and anxiety. When people see God in you, they respect you and cease from their illicit actions in your presence.”

The researcher found the interview with the participant to be genuine and heart felt, reminiscent of a new convert to Christ, filled with passion and enthusiasm for the work of missions. The participant ended our discussion with the following thought, “I have learned a lot from the mission ministry at CCC and my fellow missionaries. Serving here is another level of servant leadership. I know that starts with the strong leadership of our pastor. He has a true servant’s heart.”

**Participant 8**

This participant is an African American female who has been active in some form of ministry, including missions, for over 20 years. The participant was a part of the EBC mission team and converted to CCC during the transition of the church plant. The researcher engaged with the participant prior to this research study and learned she is a “PK” or pastor’s kid and has seen the work of mission all her life. What she has experienced at EBC and CCC is nothing like what she experienced as a child growing up in her father’s church. The researcher felt her perspective would add value to this research project. The interview with the participants was held in person.

When asked what a missionary was, the participant responded, “When I was growing up, I thought missionaries were the women in church who wore all white on what we called mission Sunday. They would have on the white doily, white stockings, white tops, and long, white skirts. Other missionaries would come from other churches in the community, and we would raise money that was sent to a national location, and distributed. I never recall hearing how that money was used. That was my childhood idea of missions until I left home and came to Charlotte in my 20’s.” The participant thoughtfully expounded on that childhood idea of missions and added, “I later learned that missionaries also traveled to foreign places around the world, spreading the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. EBC woke me up. I began to learn so much more about mission service and how the Black church was involved in mission work. For example, I did not know the first missionary was a Black man. I was never told that, I only saw white missionaries on television who would travel to foreign places and feed children or preach the gospel. I also learned there is a lot of pain we must work through in the African American Church around the topic of missions. What I know about missions today gives me hope.

When asked what she learned about God from serving as a missionary at EBC and CCC, the participant stated, “God is intentional and impactful if we trust him and have faith. God always provides and often uses missionaries to meet needs.” The participant also provided her thoughts around her experience while serving as a missionary at CCC. “I have worked with mission teams on disaster relief, local, and stateside missions. I have come to understand that people don’t merely need money or shelter; they need a system that does not disregard them. A lot of people need to be seen, for someone to look them in the eyes and see them. There is so much hate, fear, and ugliness in every direction. People need hope. They need mercy and grace, and someone to see them and understand their circumstance; that it’s not who they are but their situation. Serving as a missionary here at CCC has changed me; I am able to really see people now. This doctoral research you are doing is around the mission activity at EBC and CCC. It is a part of our church culture which I think makes a difference. It should not be a phenomenon it should be the standard.”

When asked about leadership at CCC, the participant noted,:” Leaders should be God loving and understanding to be effective in missions; they should be intentional, organized, and committed to the work, committed to the vision. The leadership at EBC and CCC are models of intentionality, committed to the work of missions. It is embedded in the DNA of both congregations. The Black church is culturally unconnected to our missional DNA. In many churches, it is not a priority, but that originates from our history. We need congregations like EBC and CCC to bring the act of true mission service back to the forefront; to reimplant it into our DNA, reestablishing it in who we are in missions and who we have been, and more importantly, who we can become again. We can make an impact and that happens when we teach and train our children and our members. Leaders must share the vision and the importance of mission service.”

When asked her thoughts on the ability to duplicate or replicate the five-fold mission model, the participant stated, “Yes, and I think one of the great things about CCC is when a new member joins, they must go through discipleship ministry and take the classes. They are told about salvation, the importance of the Holy Spirit. They learn about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mission service, and participation in small groups where members gather outside of the walls of the church. We are constantly encouraging our members to be involved and to serve. We educate them and give them the understanding that as we serve and bless others we are blessed, and we grow as a congregation and as individuals. Our model can be duplicated if church leaders have a mind and heart for missions and are able to convey the vision to their congregations.”

The participant ended her thoughts and this discussion with “I think it is imperative for all churches, especially African American churches to start to embrace an active mission focus and get more involved with reaching out. With smaller churches who want to start to grow more it would be great if someone could show them how to do missions effectively for their church. Churches and leaders just need something, someone to be their guide, their trainer, their example. The great commission was not a great suggestion mission service is supposed to be an active part of any church, every church we are commanded to go and make disciples.”

**Participant 9**

This participant is an African American male and one of the youngest participants in this research study. The participant has attended CCC for approximately one year and a half. The participant has a great deal of experience working with youth but only a few years of mission experience. He has only participated in one mission service project since coming to CCC and has expressed, on more than one occasion, that he is eager and ready to get involved when more opportunities become available. The researcher did not know the participant well or have a lot of interaction with him prior to working with him in the discipleship ministry curriculum for the youth. The participant was recommended as a participant to capture the perspective of a younger person with minimal mission experience and as a relatively new member of the CCC congregation. The interview was held over a Zoom call. Several technological issues occurred and at one point the call was disconnected. The researcher suggested the interview resume with a regular phone call. The remainder of the interview was conducted without any further technical issues.

When asked what a missionary was, the participant stated, “A missionary is someone who has been called to serve others in a way that pleases them; it helps to feed their soul. It is someone who would give the shirt off their back or their last dollar to help someone else. That is what a missionary is, that is what I saw growing up in church.” When asked how his understanding of the bible informs his view of missions, the participant stated, “My understanding of the bible and missions is from the example of Jesus. He was the greatest example of a missionary. He cared for people, fed people, engaged with people who weren’t popular or accepted in society; Jesus was the example of how we should see and treat our neighbor. Jesus did not come down from heaven to be served, He came to serve. He was the paradigm for mission work. It’s not about us but about helping and serving others.”

When asked what he learned about God from his mission experience, the participant stated, “I have learned that God is able! When you love God, you can serve in mission service with your whole heart. I learned that I feel the love of God in a different way when I serve in missions. It is like a fire that burns within to care for and serve others.” When asked about the five-fold mission model practiced at CCC, the participant was not able to tell me all five components, although he recalled hearing the terminology in class when he first became a member at CCC. After talking through the various areas of mission service he was familiar with at CCC, he realized he described distinct areas of mission service that we refer to as the five-fold mission model.

When asked to describe his experience while serving with the CCC mission team, the participant described the opportunity to serve during mission blitz. This was his first official mission service project with CCC. The participant stated, “I don’t even know how to describe it, mission blitz was like the most fulfilling feeling that I have experienced. It was an honor and a joy to serve because my project was serving at a senior living residence and helping clean up common areas. They were so appreciative of our efforts. Being able to help brighten someone’s environment was a joyful experience. It was icing on the cake when we walked out, and the residents thanked us profusely. I also enjoyed the pep rally, with everyone gathering before we disbursed throughout the city. This was something I have never experienced before. It was fun and it got everybody excited to serve, we were ready to hit the ground running. I look forward to doing this again. This was what I call a spiritually raucous event. The preparation at CCC to serve mission projects fired me and everyone else up and energized us for service and that made a huge difference. We had great leaders who prepared us for service.”

When asked if the five-fold mission model is effective, the participant responded, “Yes, I think it is effective because it gets everyone involved. Everyone can serve, no matter their age. My son was able to join me to serve with the mission blitz. There was something for everyone to do and to include the youth was extremely important because they’re the future. Mission Blitz is a reminder that there is always something to do in God’s Kingdom and everyone can be used, no matter who they are.”

The participant further noted, after a few minutes of reflection, “The inclusiveness of this event was important because sometimes people think that they can’t serve because they are not strong in the Word or can’t evangelize or they are afraid to tell somebody about Jesus. They think they are too young or too old. The model we use at CCC allows everybody to do something. Even with the seniors, I noticed they were walking the halls of the church praying for the volunteers and the events of the day. What an awesome experience.”

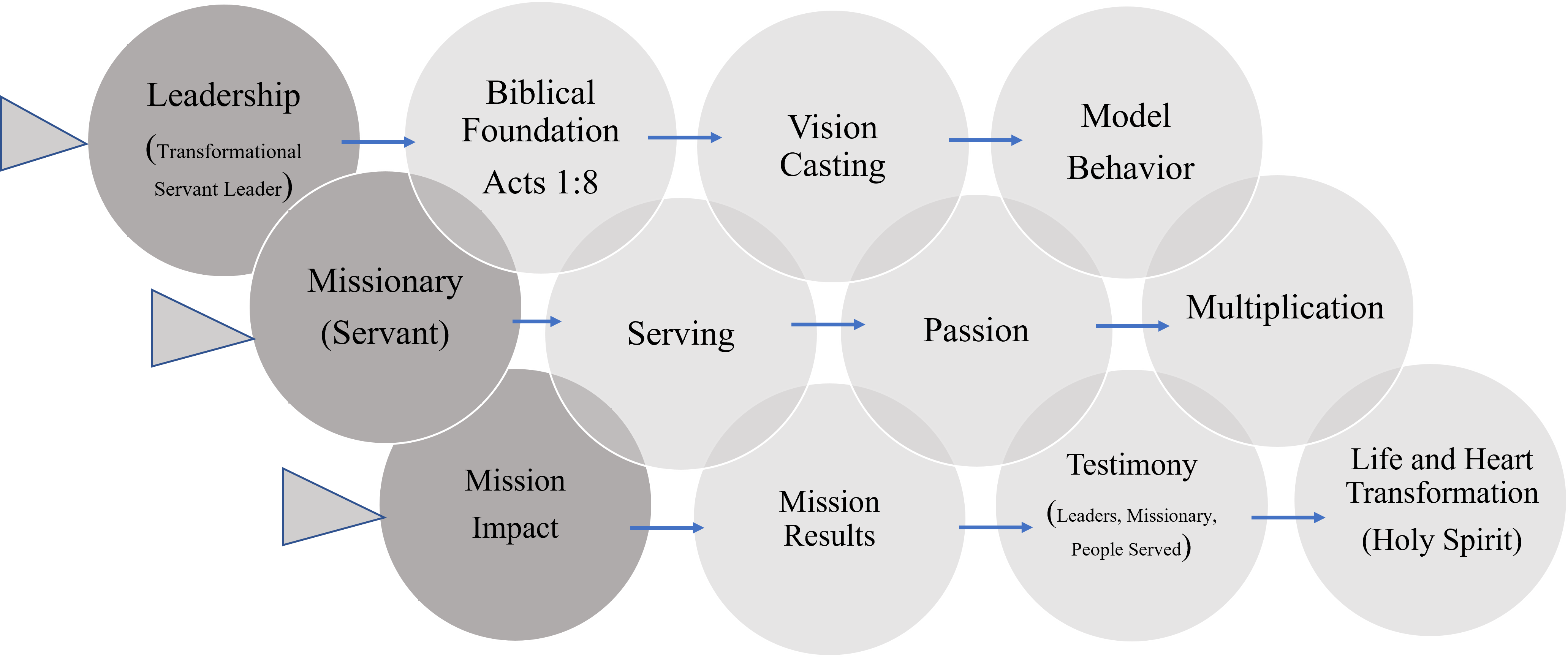
When asked about the importance of leadership as a component of the five-fold mission model, the participant responded, “It is important for leaders to be passionate about their roles, able to convey that passion to the congregation. This was accomplished during Mission Blitz; leadership painted a vivid picture of the fun and blessings experienced serving others, sharing transformational encounters, and sharing the love of Jesus. At CCC, leaders speak about missions a great deal. It’s not a one and done thing. It’s a continuous cycle of training mission workers, sending them out, repeat. The cyclical nature of the mission ministry ensures that it’s always being assessed and improved upon. Our leaders keep the topic of missions at the forefront of the congregation’s consciousness.” The energy of the participant was palpable and contagious. The discussion ended on a high note when discussing the idea of being fearful, he shared “I remember as a child feeling afraid of rejection when I saw my parents serving in missions. They often knocked on doors in the community witnessing to others. When I was old enough to go out in the community, I would always have an experienced leader with me to field any questions I was unsure of. That is what contributed to me being fearful to serve in missions. I was not ready to give a defense of the faith that I believed. Serving with the CCC mission team, I felt comfortable because I was prepared. That is why training is essential. Our church develops discipleship classes for our new partners around the topics of serving and missions, and leadership models this example. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am grateful and honored to be able to talk to you about something I love.”

Overlapping Findings

The nine participants provided data through interviews that demonstrated similarities in their perspectives on several of the questions. As stated, each participant was asked the same initial ten questions. Each participant had a different lived experience while serving as a missionary; several thought patterns had recurring ideas. The perceptions were common underlying messages, worth calling out, as they were relevant to the research questions and the heart of this research study. These overlapping findings helped to identify the overarching themes and patterns found throughout the interview discussions. Figure 5 shows an example of how these ideas overlapped.

**Figure 6*.***

*Over Lapping Themes*

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Emergent Themes and Subthemes

The first theme of a missionary lifestyle of servant leaders encompasses the way each of the participants live their personal lives. The wording used by all the participants included identifying themselves as servants or servant leaders. The essence of this theme related to how the participants experienced life serving as missionaries and devoted themselves to promoting their faith through the service of others. Value was placed on the idea of this lifestyle, each committed to a life of service and incorporating the tenets of serving into daily routines, behaviors, and choices. As missionaries, they not only had a desire to serve, but many of the participants also used passionate language to describe this purposeful life. Several participants also actively work beyond the four walls of the church to engage and build relationships in their communities and serve in various areas of missions that include teaching or preaching. The lifestyle of a missionary is service. As a servant leader, the missionary often puts the concerns of others first, encompassing empathy and compassion, endeavoring to provide a positive example in the way they live every day.

The second theme was the importance of training and preparation, crucial to the success of mission service. Effective missionaries serving on the mission field are rooted and grounded spiritually and biblically. Preparedness for mission service enhanced the effectiveness of missionaries and enhanced cultural competence. Proper training equips missionaries with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the myriad scenarios they may encounter. Several of the participants alluded to the importance of taking discipleship classes, providing them with the tools needed to be confident and successful in mission service. When missionaries are adequately prepared, they gain knowledge, discernment, and a more seasoned spirituality, allowing them to witness more effectively for Christ, through the Holy Spirit, locally and globally. The third theme, the importance of transformational leadership, is of paramount importance and significant to the leading of the congregation. Church leaders play a crucial role in imparting the vision for the church. Several of the participants mentioned the importance of the church’s ministry leaders to support the vision of the pastor and buttress leadership’s mantle. Effective leaders model the desired behavior and inspire others to follow. Many of the participants in the study were leaders and knew the importance of communicating and modeling the mission, vision, and values of leadership to the congregation and the world. Lay leaders inspire congregants to align their efforts to the goals and vision of leadership.

**Serendipitous Emergent Findings**

The research yielded surprising findings because of the data collection process. The serendipitously emerging insights offer noteworthy and relevant information. Several of the revealed aspects contrast with longstanding debates about the involvement of African Americans in mission service and shed light on a significant reason for their hesitance to serve. The identified findings are outlined below:

1. The research encompassed a range of definitions regarding participants’ perceptions of missionaries and their roles.
2. Within the African American Church and culture, perceptions of mission service encompass a diverse array of missionary identities.
3. The inception of the Five-Fold Model was driven by the church’s collective aspiration for congregants to engage directly in mission service rather than solely contributing financially.
4. Recent partner participants at Chosen City Church expressed a desire for more regular and expansive opportunities for service, akin to the annual Mission Blitz event, on a church-wide scale.
5. New partner participants in leadership roles at Chosen City Church encountered challenges in articulating a comprehensive understanding of the Five-Fold Mission model.
6. Notably, the discussion of finances was not a prominent theme among the research participants, demonstrating a departure from previous research that often emphasized financial constraints as a deterrent for African Americans in mission service.

Chapter Insights

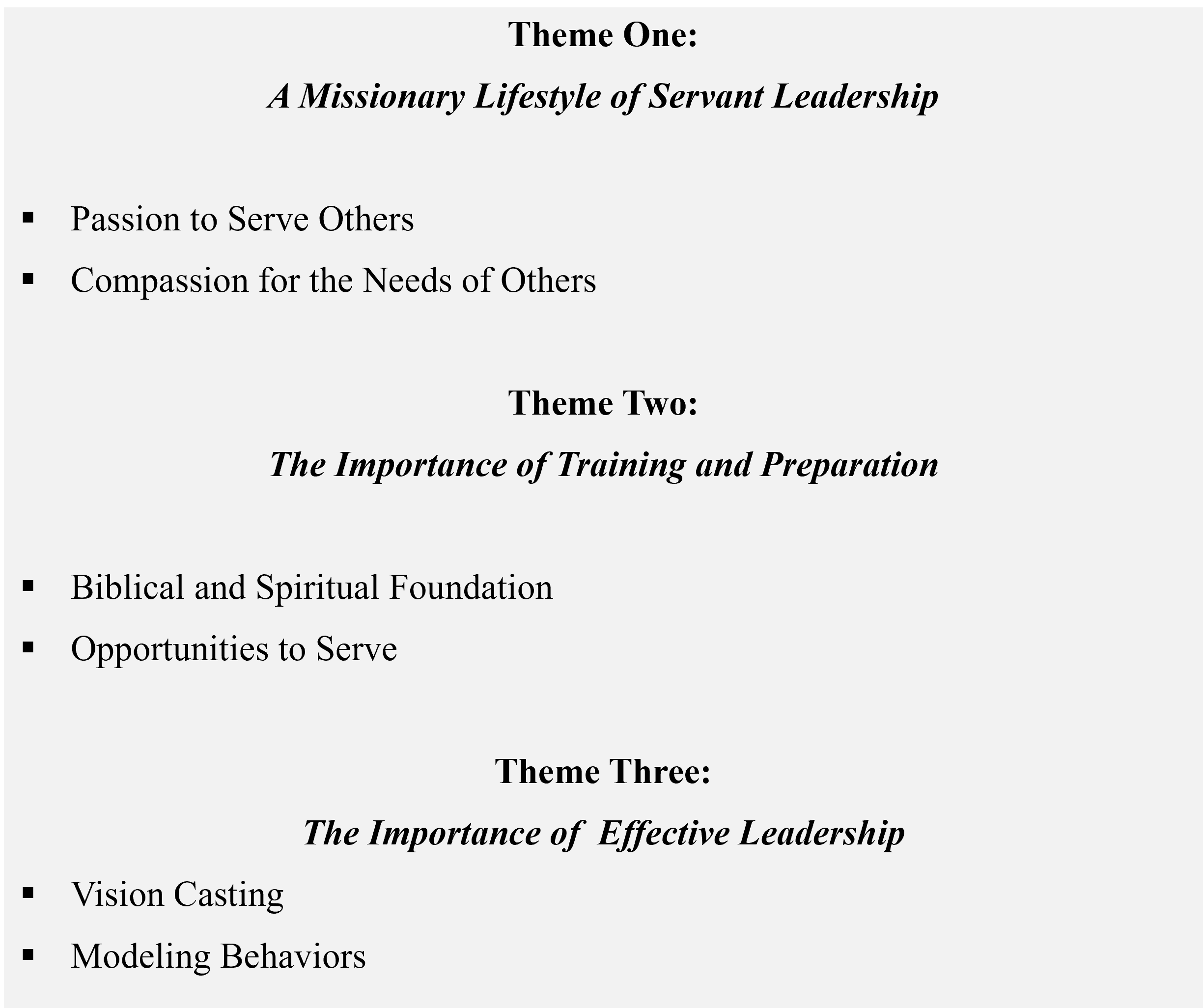
Chapter Four unveils the researcher’s findings, encapsulating intricate portrayals of the missionaries affiliated with EBC and CCC. It delves into their personal experiences while serving on their respective mission teams, shedding light on the value of the five-fold mission model. The methodology employed by the researcher was intentionally tailored to align with strategies that meticulously probe into the lived experiences of the interviewed missionaries.

Employing a narrative approach, the researcher captured the essence of each participant’s interview, using their words to illustrate the robust essence of mission service at both EBC and CCC. Additionally, the chapter expounded upon the participant selection process, presenting self-reported demographics reflecting their diverse mission service involvement. The researcher appreciated the invaluable feedback gleaned from the research participants, which helped shape the course of the interview interactions.

A comprehensive account of the emergent process was provided, showcasing the evolution of initial idea clusters into fully developed thematic frameworks. The emergent themes are concisely summarized in the following table.

**Figure 7**

*Emergent Theme Patterns*

**

The experiential narratives of the participants have intricately shaped the emergence of the three core themes. These themes have evolved through the synthesis of transcribed data, encompassing participants' accounts of their missionary engagements at EBC and CCC, the researcher's years of participant observation notes, and profound interactions with members of the congregations. Chapter Four concludes by synergizing the study's outcomes with the interviews and research questions, channeling the findings into a focused explanation of the participants missionary experiences.

Drawing from the insights gleaned from the nine participants and additional information gathered from the focus group, a prevailing consensus among the participants emerged. They attest to the usefulness of the five-fold mission model, which facilitates hands-on, practical mission service experiences, drawn from their personal journeys.

The impact, as articulated by the missionaries, extends beyond their individual narratives. It resonates with the belief that the five-fold mission model's effectiveness can be extended to other congregations seeking to engage in mission service. This perspective has been informed by their collective experience of working alongside missionaries from diverse congregations.

This research underscores how the five-fold mission model bridges a gap, addressing the underrepresentation of African Americans in mission service. The model presents a multitude of options for churches to engage, offering a dynamic range of opportunities to serve. This versatility resonates with participants, some of whom were previously unaware of the breadth of possibilities beyond local or international missions.

In summation, the participants' narratives and reflections cast a spotlight on the transformative impact of the five-fold mission model, extending their understanding beyond the confines of their prior perspectives.

Conceptual Framework Model

The researcher embarked on crafting a conceptual model for this study by delineating the foundational components of the research and the underlying assumptions that guide its operation. The initial inquiry posed was straightforward: Can the five-fold mission model be replicated across different church congregations? This query stems from the recognition of a prevalent issue, namely, the underrepresentation of African American churches across all dimensions of mission service.

To address this question, the study delves into the response formulated by Ebenezer Baptist Church, the originator of the five-fold mission model. In contrast to the conventional approach of merely financial support or limited local and international missions, this model entails a boots-on-the-ground approach, addressing needs wherever they arise. This process follows a series of discernable steps that enabled the researcher to envision a comprehensive understanding of the study's context, objectives, and theoretical foundations. The resulting framework delineates the research problem, the model’s response, its operational mechanics, and the reasons underpinning its effectiveness.

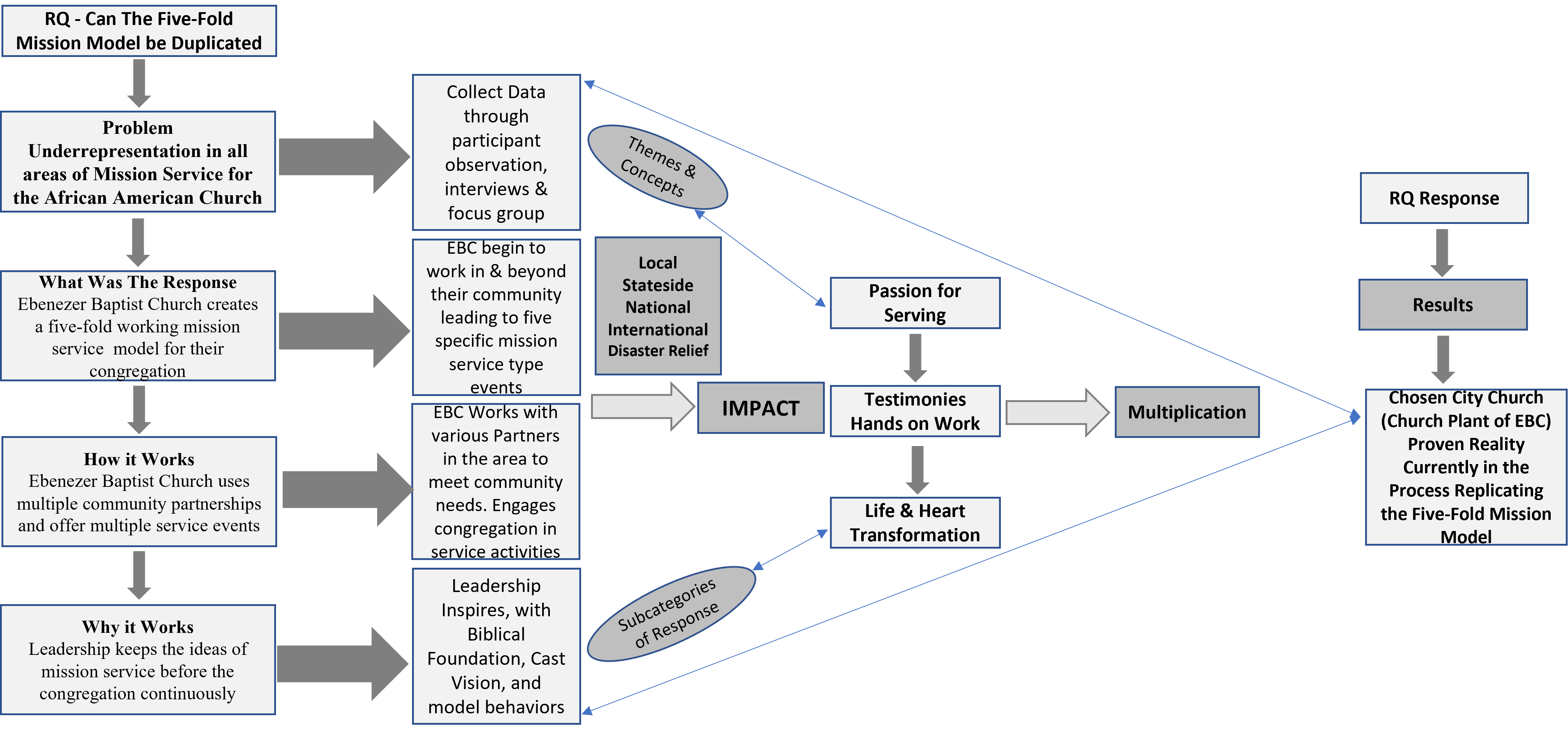
Central to the potency of the five-fold mission model is its capacity to extend service opportunities beyond the boundaries of local communities and occasional international efforts. This characteristic galvanizes the African American church by engaging congregations in collaborations with community partners to address needs, thereby fostering leadership involvement, congregational training, and a wealth of service avenues. This design not only spurs congregants' active involvement but also kindles their passion for service, altering their perspectives on mission work and driving multiplication as impassioned missionaries share their experiences.

The model cultivates an intentional environment for spiritual growth among participants while encompassing the corporate body of the church. Furthermore, its flexible implementation permits churches to adopt it gradually, tailoring its facets to align with the unique culture of each congregation. Chosen City Church epitomizes the practical manifestation of the model’s viability. Derived from EBC, it adapts the model to suit its growth trajectory, leveraging mission service to foster congregational engagement.

This research endeavors to introduce a functional model that stimulates a transformative cultural shift within the African American Church. Its aim is to expand the

perception of mission work, emphasizing the potential to engage in diverse areas of service beyond local and global ventures. The model underscores the power of partnership and proactive participation across all realms (local, stateside, national, international, and disaster relief) of mission service. Its boundaries are only confined by the limits congregations choose to impose upon themselves. The below model depicts a visual conceptual framework for this research.

**Figure 8.**

*Conceptual Phenomenology Model*

Chapter five of this work further aligned the research questions to emerging patterns identified through the collected data and summarized these findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter IV is a discussion of the topic, research questions, service, actions, and a summary of the study through the analysis of data and the perceptions of African American missionaries' experiences actively engaged in all five aspects of mission work, within the framework of Ebenezer Baptist Church’s vibrant and life-altering mission movement of local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief service. This qualitative study presents the perceptions and impact of nine participants in relation to the three research questions:

RQ1: How has the five-fold mission model of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church impacted the lived experiences of African American members in active participation in mission service?

RQ2: How has active participation of African Americans in mission service affected the lived experiences of communities (local, stateside, national, global, and disaster relief) served by Ebenezer Baptist Church?

RQ3: What principles of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church’s’ Five-Fold Mission model can be used to create a working prototype targeting the lived experiences of African American to address their under-representation in all mission service areas?

Subjective Description of Meaning for Each Finding

Discussion of Research Question One

How has the five-fold mission model of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church impacted the lived experiences of African American members in active participation in mission service?

**The Passion**

The data proffered by the perspectives of the ten participants involved in this study were uniquely uniform. The assertion that participation in CCC’s Mission Model stoked their extant passion for ministry was one of the most repetitive factors in this discussion.

The participants in this study indicated past mission service and its early indoctrination in their lives. the participant a youth pastor, indicated that he has been involved in missions for half of his life and the desire to serve is “like fire shut up in his bones.” The participant, a deacon at CCC, saw the duality of his role: to uphold the mandate of Acts 1:8 and support CCC leadership. The participant, a CCC member, has served in homeless shelters, prisons, hospitals, and schools. At the same time, the participant began mission work with her local church in street ministry, witnessing, and participating in tent revivals, feeding the hungry, and clothing the unhoused. the participant related, “I think the EBC, or CCC mission ministry model is effective. Teaching classes with the new partners has opened my eyes to how this ministry blesses me. It has helped me communicate with people more effectively, hear them, and ensure they feel heard in every interaction. We received training for disaster relief for international missions, enabling us to serve in Africa and beyond.”

The passion to serve, as shared by all this study’s participants, was quantifiable and palpable. Participants listed years of mission experience, some of whom started in their youth, serving locally and globally. The participant, a missionary with 20 years of service, spoke about how “it touched her heart to see people laugh and smile when I speak a word of encouragement to them.” And that, in turn, made her want to do more. the participant said, “I don’t want to be caught slipping; when the Lord called, I answered like Isaiah, Lord send me!” the participant characterized her mission service as fulfilling; “It’s a joy to meet the needs of God’s people and show them love.” The enduring root of the participants’ response to **RQ1** is a heart for the people of God, springing up early in life, bubbling over, and blessing those they serve: the world.

The participants in this study were stirred passionately by CCC’s Mission Model, from the leadership of their pastor in bringing mission work to the forefront of the church’s consciousness to generating a city-wide fervor for mission work with the Mission Blitz and providing opportunities to serve locally, state, country, and world-wide, these participants were pleasantly surprised and eagerly engaged in the work of Chosen City Missions. All these participants had been actively engaged in mission work before joining CCC’s Mission Model, they were excited anew at CCC’s approach to missions. It is this continuous refreshing of the Holy Spirit, this passion that propels CCC mission workers.

**Acts 1:8**

The importance of obedience to the Great Commission of Acts 1:8 is of primary concern to the participants in this study.

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

These participants, seasoned in mission work and infused with a passion for God’s people, understand the mandate of the Great Commission in Acts 1:8. With that understanding is the knowledge that mission work is a lifestyle, a way of life that necessitates the belief that the entire world is the mission field. CCC’s Mission Model encapsulates the truth, depth, and breadth of Acts 1:8 by creating a model to grow the workers for the Kingdom’s harvest. CCC’s use of Acts 1:8 as the mantle upon which it hangs its obedience is laudable; from the pulpit to the door, all are encouraged to engage in mission service. At CCC, mission work is our reasonable service to a faithful and loving God.

The participant is unequivocal in his opinion that mission service is not a one-and-done proposition; instead, a lifestyle. The participant believes mission service is rewarding. Still, she loves that it allows her to witness for Christ, “incorporating Him into those mission field conversations, helping them to see God differently from their sometimes limited and limiting understanding of Him.” She adds that “because obedience to the Word of God is the mantle upon which CCC has built its ministry, Acts 1:8 has significance and immediacy, and a robust life at CCC.” the participant speaks about the limitless value of operating by the power of the Holy Spirit on the mission fields: “When we do what we have been called to do, according to scripture, our paths will be made straight as we build bridges to communities and God’s people across the world. As a result, souls are saved, Christ-focused churches are planted, mission work is promoted, and God is exalted.”

**The Model**

Participation in CCC’s Mission Model confirmed for these participants the acceptance of the Model as a paradigm for use by any church and was one of the most repetitive factors in this discussion. The participants in this study believe CCC’s Mission Model is a paradigm for mission work in any church. Pragmatically, the participant says, “Going back to the fact that we have missions training as a class and we’re working the model successfully is a testament to the fact that it is basically a plug and play. Plug in the workers and follow the model. Churches can replicate this model and train their missionaries like we train our people when they come in as new partners. We teach them the basis of our vision, Acts 1:8, and how we accomplish it.” He adds, “This model can be taught on a grand scale, to nations, not just culturally. We don’t serve a cultural God. God is for everybody, and any church or organization can implement this model.” the participant agreed, “I believe CCC’s Mission Model can be replicated because it's a great model, with different opportunities and roles for everyone. No matter the age, the challenge, or ability, anyone can serve God’s purpose.” The participant agreed, she qualified her response: “In my opinion, it can be replicated or duplicated, but only by churches that are Kingdom-minded and committed to fulfilling the Great Commission.”

CCC’s Mission Model principles include leadership, training, finances, succession plans, and opportunity. These principles and Acts 1:8 are the underpinnings of the Model’s success and duplication in any church. Leadership advances this Model from the top down. Everyone is engaged, from the pastor to the pews. Mission service is prioritized and promoted to the congregation regularly and is fiscally budgeted. Training is provided to ensure that workers are equipped for the mission fields. There is a succession plan for engaging the youth and encouraging a lifestyle of missions early. Finally, opportunities are provided regularly to serve and participate in events and small groups that support congregational engagement. These principles and methods enable CCC’s Mission Model to be replicated in any church.

Discussion of Research Question Two

RQ2: How has active participation of African Americans in mission service affected the lived experiences of the communities (local, stateside, national, global and disaster relief) served by Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church?

The participants in this study believe that the impact to the communities served by CCC’s Mission Team is positive, vital, and scriptural, Acts 1:8. Participants expressed the belief that, mandated by Jesus Christ, we are to obey the Great Commission. As the good news of Jesus Christ is shared and we serve our sisters and brothers in the field, we become more like Him. In so doing, the Holy Spirit empowers us, and Christ is glorified. The impactful work of missions in communities across the globe is fundamental and it will not be abrogated; ordained and mandated by God. This impact does not merely occur between strangers. Mission fields are all around us. The participant said she invited her son’s ex-wife and grandchildren to live with her. Her former daughter-in-law struggled, and she “…could not sit idly by. I brought her and the children into my home, where I could help her save money and ensure that my grands attend church. Sometimes the call of God is not harkening us to go any further than our own families to extend the hand of Christ.” the participant shared a poignant recollection: “We…worked on a mission project in a detention center and ministered to the young ladies there, where I shared the story of my childhood. When I was finished, and we were mingling with the women, a young lady came up to me and grabbed and hugged me. She thanked me for sharing my story because she was going through the same thing. I love it out there in the streets! I’m for the downtrodden, the rejected.”

The participant provided a poignant example of a Caucasian church she worked with to implement a portion of the five-fold mission model to the congregation. She noted how the impact of this implementation changed the hearts and minds of members of the community and church, initiating growth in a church that seemed to be withering away.

The participant opined on the impact of service with CCC’s Mission Model, “It's effective across the board because it allows everybody to serve, no matter their age. The model is effective because it doesn't leave anybody out, especially the youth, as they’re important to the future of missions. My son joined me on a mission. There is usually something for everyone to do: seniors may prepare care packages, and youth and young people may perform more active or strenuous physical work. There is…. something to do for everyone in God’s kingdom.”

The participants affirmed the impact of working the mission fields with CCC: the opportunity to serve in all five areas (local, state, country, globe, disaster relief); training; opportunities to engage with the church in a myriad of activities and events; and a youth-driven succession plan. These participants are seasoned mission workers, knowledgeable about service on the mission fields. However, none of these participants had ever experienced the vigor of the Mission Blitz, the training opportunity, or the five-fold mission model CCC employs. The participants noted the impact their service had on the communities they served around the nation and internationally.

Discussion of Research Question Three

RQ3: What principles of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church’s Five-Fold Mission model can be used to create a working prototype targeting the lived experiences of African Americans to address their under-representation in mission service?

EBC and CCC’s Mission Model comprises five main principles for successful mission service:

**Leadership**

Leadership behavior aligns the collective direction of an organization to execute strategic plans and continually align and renew direction. CCC’s leadership promulgates obedience to Acts 1:8 and promotes the cause for missions with clarion calls from the pulpit. CCC leadership is hands-on and personal, modeling a servant lifestyle to the congregation, the community, the world. The participant made these cogent remarks, “Leadership drives the mission effort, as well as the underlying foundational message, and everybody must get the message to do the work. Leadership sets the tone and reinforces that mission work is not optional in this ministry. In this case, leadership was phenomenal. I was equipped for the challenge because CCC leadership gave me everything I needed to be successful.” The other participant agreed, “The EBC/CCC Mission Model’s coordination of teams at various sites around the city and the full-frontal attack and enthusiasm of the team members speaks volumes about the commitment of EBC/CCC’s leadership to the word of God.”

Participants were universally appreciative of leadership’s obedience to Acts 1:8 and commitment and heart for God’s people, which merged seamlessly with the hearts and commitment of the participants. The participant maintained, “I think the EBC mission ministry model is very effective. The organizational hierarchy’s foundation is Acts 1:8. Leadership itself believes in the requirement of mission work in the church as a full-scale ministry. That belief is supported by the leadership of CCC’s Pastor, who models the character of a missionary from the pulpit to the mission fields.” Finally, the participant noted, “I like how Pastor truly gets involved in missions. I remember a sermon he preached, saying you want to look like the people you serve in the fields. He reiterates from the pulpit, and posts on social media, and I’m sure he uses his personal time to foster knowledge about what missions is. He sets a great example for the church and community.”

**Training**

Mission service education and training is fundamental to participation in CCC’s Mission Model, promoting the successful integration of a full-service mission model into theological education. Addison posits there are recurring patterns in the strategy of movements found in the ministry of Jesus, his training of the disciples and the multiplying phenomenon of the early church. Jesus and his disciples were movement pioneers, and He is calling us to lead his people into a missionary movement. Movement pioneers connect with people, crossing boundaries to establish contact with people far from God and share the gospel, communicating the truth about God and salvation through Christ, training disciples, and teaching them to obey what Jesus has commanded, Acts 1:8. “The key to rapid growth of any movement is face-to-face recruitment within pre-existing social networks. The stronger the social network, the faster the movement spreads. For a movement to grow, it must not only reach new people, but it must also keep them and build them into a committed force for change.” (Addison, 2019, p. 54).

The participant agrees with Addison’s theory of training disciples. “Through CCC leadership, training is available for anyone interested in joining the missions team. Leadership also has a network of mission agencies that workers can access outside of CCC’s activities, allowing interested individuals to work with groups across the city, state, and world,” she opined. The participant added, “The initial training, preparing our new partners, is particularly valuable. Engaging new partners with the training component is a foundationally and doctrinally sound approach that is widely appreciated.” The participant believes “proper training is crucial to successful missions. On the mission fields, we encounter many different spirits, and we must know how to respond in various situations. Untrained and unseasoned mission workers can fall prey to the enemy if they’re not careful.”

The participants supported the belief that CCC’s Mission Model’s principle of training mission workers are integral to Bible-based, Acts 1:8, mission service. The participant asserted, “The continuous learning and the participant improvement model that CCC’s mission ministry uses is God-centric, continuously building up small teams, preparing them for mission work locally and globally, and repeating the process. These small groups foster deeper connections, more intimacy, with room for the Holy Spirit to move and work.”

**Multiplication**

The CCC Mission Model’s currency is its transformational mission training and mentoring, bridging the gap between the classroom and real-world experience. CCC’s model is designed to capture adults and youth and provide them with access, opportunity, and real-life experiences on the mission fields. In pursuit of youth, CCC is sowing seeds of selflessness, commitment, and Godliness into successive generations of mission workers. CCC’s youth experience mentorship, gain role models, develop critical thinking skills, engage in healthy friendships, and learn responsibility, service, and identity in Christ, equipped for every good work. The appreciation of this inclusive succession plan was unanimous.

The participant said, “It's effective across the board because it allows everybody to serve, regardless of age. The model is effective because it doesn't leave anybody out, especially the youth, as they’re important to the future of missions. My son joined me on a mission. There is usually something for everyone to do: seniors may prepare care packages, youth, and young people may perform more active or strenuous physical work. There is always something to do for everyone in God’s kingdom.” Participants are grateful for the opportunity to work with youth seeking to engender a passion for mission service. the participant revealed, “One of my scouts was on our mission trip to New Bern. That was the first time I had youth members on my team. We were able to help them process what they were seeing and provide guidance as they served.” The participants were united in their belief that it is paramount that the hearts and minds of youth are prepared for the mission lifestyle for successful succession.

**Opportunity**

The CCC Mission Model is one of obedience, inclusion, and access. There is always an opportunity to engage in robust ministry, whether meeting in small groups, working the Mission Blitz, or bible study. These opportunities to participate in ministry build up the body of Christ, and leadership’s modeling of Acts 1:8, the servant lifestyle, are powerful visuals for the congregation. Participants spoke of leadership’s selfless mission service as demonstrative of faithful obedience to Christ’s mandate.

The participants’ thoughtful contributions to the discussion noted the importance of looking beyond the physical needs and taking time to see and connect with the people they serve. There is power in connection, especially in a post pandemic world; it is important to connect with people and see them beyond their circumstances.

The participant’s impassioned assertions about CCC’s Mission Blitz spoke volumes: “That was one of the best things about joining Chosen City Church. I say that because I have a heart for serving the city. It was so exhilarating for me….! I was so excited about Mission Blitz, but at the same time, I was sad because it's only once a year. I wish we could do it monthly. The idea that we’re all coming together dressed alike like God’s own army words are hardly sufficient to describe the sense of assignment, duty, and thankfulness.” Other participants agreed, adding, “I would like CCC to put on the Mission Blitzes once a quarter. I love how the last blitz got everyone so excited and involved. That showed me that people are hungry to receive the services and saints are hungry to provide them.” the participant said, “The preparation for the Mission Blitz fired me up and energized me for service, which made a difference.”

The participant said, “At CCC, we are a church plant, and it is important to keep missional opportunities before the congregation to keep them involved and to make sure they know the importance of mission service.” The participant added, “Using little things to educate the congregation, like the mission skill pop, are great ways to expose people to mission service. The feedback I’ve heard has been encouraging, with many people seeking to serve again after the initial exposure and hopefully getting the youth involved.” the participant enthused, “As more people are educated about what mission work looks like by churches like Chosen City and EBC, there will be a surge of workers seeking to serve. People will be educated and given the opportunity to serve with any of the organizations and churches in the network, prophetically blanketing the need. The leadership at EBC and CCC have a vision for missions that speaks well for the church, for ….” where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18. Collaborating with God’s people and living a life that seeks to grow the Kingdom is a blessing. I love it! I can’t imagine any other life for myself.” Implementing these five principles into their mission model and providing opportunities to serve locally, state-side, nationally, globally, and in disaster relief enabled CCC to capture the most passionate mission workers in the field and retain and grow their model.

**Participant Impact**

The role of the missionary is to be the hands of feet of Jesus Christ, sharing the gospel's good news. Chosen City Church’s Mission Model is based on biblical foundation and the scripture of Acts 1:8. The execution of this model is accomplished in their five-fold mission service (locally, state-side, nationally, globally, and disaster relief) and leading principles for successful mission work to include leadership, training, multiplication, and the opportunity to serve. Following these principles associated with the five-fold mission model can be effectively implemented in any church.

The participant data collected in this study attest to the passion each possessed for mission service before their introduction to CCC’s Mission Model. The participants had a formidable service history, some dating back to youth, and all believe it is an integral part of who they are. The connection with CCC’s Mission Model introduced them to mission service in a new way: either in CCC’s five-fold approach or using its principles for successful mission work.

The desire to live out Acts 1:8 is of primary concern to the participants in this study. The passion felt by these participants fuels their desire to cross the mission fields for Christ. The participants’ passion for God’s people and their hearts to serve drive their mission involvement. CCC’s Mission Model excites them and gives them hope for greater congregational involvement. These factors enable the participants in this study to agree that CCC’s Mission model is duplicatable in any church.

Researcher Conclusions and Research Impact

The subjects of this case study consisted of African American missionaries, each possessing a unique range of lived experiences, spanning three to more than twenty years. Their ages encompassed a spectrum from thirty-five to sixty-five years. Shared among all participants was an unwavering and profound dedication to a missionary way of life, discovering purpose through selfless service to others. These individuals embraced the ethos of servant leadership, displaying an innate inclination to aid and support those in need. In their own words, each participant expressed a strong attraction to the observed congregations, primarily due to the opportunities they presented for serving the people of God.

The researcher holds hope that the presentation of the five-fold mission model established by Ebenezer Baptist Church serves as a blueprint for other African American churches to follow suit. The endeavor aimed to contextualize the African American Church's history and mission service to enrich the general understanding of this field. Particularly enlightening was the exploration of the motivations driving missionaries at EBC and CCC, uncovering a multifaceted response. This response extended beyond the obligation dictated by the Word of God and the Great Commission. To be effective, the reasons behind their service required a more specific understanding. Such clarity engenders transformative spiritual development and growth.

The researcher's intention was not to offer a prescriptive, step-by-step formula for achieving success through the five-fold mission model, but rather to introduce a practical approach to comprehensive mission engagement. A salient point is mission service encompasses broader dimensions than traditionally acknowledged. The cultural applicability of the five-fold mission model effectively addresses the African American Church's needs, bridging gaps, and rectifying underrepresentation across mission realms. This research seeks to provide a practical guide, aiding others in their effective execution of mission work, fostering personal development, nurturing leaders, and pastors and altering perceptions of mission service within the African American Church.

This researcher found herself deeply inspired and impacted by the congregations of EBC and CCC, inspiring a departure from conventional practices of merely monetary contributions. Instead, the congregations embraced an approach that placed boots on the ground, embodying the compassionate essence of Jesus. The impact of mission work was not confined to those who were assisted; it transformed the missionaries themselves through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Interview-derived data enabled the researcher to articulate both the "How" and "Why" of these congregations, with the five-fold mission model encapsulating pivotal elements of success. Effective integration of mission service into daily church activities necessitates leadership commitment, a role that leaders and pastors must embrace.

Mission service, for congregants at EBC and CCC, as well as contributing participants, constitutes a lifestyle founded upon principles of servant leadership, faith, and hope. The researcher, often viewed as a pioneer in introducing this new approach, aspires to contribute to society and the African American Church through this formal study. The primary objective remains steadfast: to lead others to God. Concurrently, there is a desire to holistically care for those being served. The researcher's greatest impact stems from the accomplishments of African American women who have revolutionized biblical reformation in the current era.

As an African American woman, a minister of the Gospel, a teacher, and a servant leader, the researcher is humbled by the opportunity to contribute a work of social significance that could resonate for generations. The researcher's intent aligns with the legacy of trailblazers such as Harriet Tubman. Though not traditionally classified as a conventional Christian missionary, her life and principles parallel the essence of mission work in various facets. Tubman's endeavors encompassed sacrifice, advocacy for marginalized communities, forging alliances to secure freedom, the pursuit of universal justice, empathy, and transcending boundaries.

Harriet Tubman's alignment with these mission work principles resonates with the researcher's innovative vision. As a minister, servant leader, teacher, and missionary, the researcher recognizes her responsibility extends beyond preaching; it necessitates showcasing the love of the Gospel through service. Purpose underscores this labor, encapsulated by the simple affirmation, "I Get To Serve." The privilege of this role is acknowledged with deep gratitude and reverence.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study provided insights from African American missionaries actively engaged in a mission ministry carefully orchestrated by congregational leaders with a genuine commitment to advancing the kingdom and mission endeavors. Initially confined to a single church case study, the research naturally expanded, as a result of a church plant, leading to the inclusion of missionaries from the newly formed Chosen City Church. This evolution presented a broader context and enriched the study's perspective. To elicit alternative viewpoints and supplement the data, the following recommendations for prospective research are proposed:

1. **Comparative Analysis:** Undertake a comprehensive comparison of the efforts undertaken by both Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church with other African American churches actively participating in mission service. This would provide valuable insights into the variations, best practices, and unique approaches employed by different churches.
2. **Prototype Documentation**: Develop a meticulously documented prototype of the five-fold mission model that can be effectively imparted to any congregation, transcending the confines of the African American church community. Investigate the implementation and progress of this model across diverse congregational contexts.
3. **Formation of an Outreach Organization**: Explore the feasibility of establishing a dedicated organization with a specific focus on assisting churches with limited or no involvement in mission service. This entity could facilitate partnerships between churches, highlighting the inherent value of engaging in mission work collectively. Proposed name, the Community Mission Church Alliance (CMCA), providing critical collaboration and support in fostering mission-focused initiatives.
4. **Longitudinal Research Project:** Devise a long-term research initiative designed to monitor the trajectory of the five-fold mission service model's evolution. Over the span of a decade, track the model's advancements, revisions, and additions, thereby capturing the dynamic nature of mission service strategies.

These recommendations aim to expand the scope and impact of the study, unveiling opportunities for cross-contextual analysis, broader implementation, collaborative outreach, and continued model refinement. By addressing these aspects in future research endeavors, a more comprehensive understanding of African American churches’ contributions to mission service can be cultivated, fostering growth, adaptability, and enduring positive change.

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IRB Letter 

**Appendix B**

**Participant Consent Forms**

**Colleen N. Damon – Duval Biography**

Colleen has worked in mission service and community involvement for the past twenty-five years, and her heart for Christ’s people and mission work has led her to her current mission service work with African American churches. Colleen is a doctoral candidate at Omega Graduate School working towards a PhD in philosophy, with a self-directed focus on missiology and cultural anthropology.

Colleen’s research includes serving as a participant observer over the course of several years, actively involved with mission teams in various mission organizations in the African American Church. Her dissertation studies the lived experiences of African American missionaries who actively serve in various areas of mission service. The dissertation frames these lived experiences as a phenomenon among mission work typically practiced in the African American church.

Colleen’s work addresses the lack of participation in areas of mission service within the African American Church. Her work has identified several areas of mission work; coining the term “five-fold mission model” based on the phenomenon observed while serving at a predominantly African American church, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC.

From a historical perspective, the African American church has been missing from international mission service for decades, due to various systemic practices that oppressed African American people. Her dissertation research looks at the impact of historical realities and the phenomenon of an African American Church that has broken the mold of decades of non-participation in mission service, known from a biblical perspective as the Great Commission. Her research investigates the viability of a five-fold mission model that can be documented and presented to the broader audience of the African American Church to increase participation in all areas of mission service for African Americans. Colleen has had the opportunity to present her academic interest and findings at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary for the past several years as a guest professor, teaching students about missions from the African American perspective.

Colleen has also been interviewed by a journalist from Christianity Today in the December 2021 issue entitled “How Black Missionaries are being written back into the story”.

**Data Collection Informed Consent Letter**

A Model for Active Participation in Mission Service for the African American Church: A Phenomenological Case Study

Dear Participant:

You are invited to take part in a research study: A model for active participation in mission service for the African American church: A Phenomenological case study.

The study will focus on lived experiences that lead to service in various aspects of missions. This topic will also delve into the practice of missionaries serving in mission service at Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church. The significance of this work will provide the African American Church with a framework to share a working model of a robust mission program. The aim of this study is to examine core lived experiences that have impacted the missionaries who serve on the mission team.

The researcher is inviting you to participate in this study. This form is a part of a process called “data collection” informed consent to allow you to understand this study before deciding if you want to participate. This study is being conducted by Colleen Damon-Duval, a doctoral candidate at Omega Graduate School.

**Project:** A Model for Active Participation in Mission Service for the African American Church: A Phenomenological Case Study

**Background information**: The purpose of this study is to explore, identify, and describe patterns in the lived experiences of missionaries who serve in the five-fold mission model used at Ebenezer Baptist Church and Chosen City Church.

**Data Collection Time Frame**: The Data collection for this research includes a formal interview process, the process commencing for all interviewees from June 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023. An invitation to participate email was sent to prospective participants on May 31, 2023. Upon a favorable receipt of the RSVP from participants, the following procedures will take place.

**Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Participate in an interview that will take approximately 1 hour and a half of your time and will be audio recorded.
2. The interview will take place at a designated site, a mutually agreed upon location, convenient to you, the participant. During this interview, you will be asked a series of questions. There is also an option to conduct this interview via a Zoom call. These questions are designed to allow you to share your experiences as a missionary serving at EBC or CCC.
3. The document of interview questions will be provided to you within two business days of the interview. The original audio of your interview can be made available to you after the interview is conducted. Any identifiable information (names, address, or personal information) will be deleted from the audio transcript.

**Here is a sample question:** What was your personal experience while serving with Ebenezer Baptist Church or Chosen City Church mission team?

**Voluntary nature of the study**: This study is voluntary. The researcher respects your decision whether you choose to participate in the study. A time and date will be discussed to schedule your interview, should you decide to participate in the study. You may change your mind later and you may stop at any time.

**Risk and benefits of being in the study**:

Participating in this type of research study could involve risks that are encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress or disturbance. Participation in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or well-being. The information gained from this study may help the researcher better understand the experiences of persons who actively serve as missionaries at EBC or CCC. Further benefits include gaining knowledge that can be useful to other churches, pastors, and leaders who would be interested in replicating the five-fold mission model in their congregation. This research will provide a model and roadmap that could be duplicated.

**Privacy:**

The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. The researcher will not include your full name or anything else that could identify you in study reports. Data will be kept secure by executing the protection of confidential data and utilizing storage methods to include a cloud storage program, USB storage devices, and hard copy manuscript of captured materials. Manuscripts will be converted into PDF files and stored in a data collection software system, backed up, password protected, and maintained on a locked password protected computer. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep for your personal records.

**Statement of consent:** I have read the above information, and I feel I understand the study well enough to decide about my voluntary participation. By signing below, I understand that I agree to the terms described above.

**Printed name of the participant**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of consent**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Participant’s signature**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's signature**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher’s Information**: Phone (C)

**Email**:

**Researchers Notes**: Demographic Information: (Optional)

**Scheduled Interview Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Interview**: \_\_\_\_ Zoom \_\_\_\_\_\_ In Person

**Male** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Age: Circle one (35 – 40 40 – 50 50 – 60 60+)

**Areas of Five-Fold Mission Ministry Served in**: (Circle all that apply)

1. Local (2) Stateside (3) National (4) International (5) Disaster Relief

**Participant Invitation for Research E-mail**

**Subject:** Recruitment invitation for EBC and CCC missionaries

Dear Participant**:**

As you are aware, I am working on my dissertation for the completion of my doctorate degree of philosophy, with a concentration in missiology and cultural anthropology. I would like to invite you to participate in my study entitled “A model for active participation in mission service for the African American church: A phenomenological case study”.

Thank you for taking the time to review this e-mail and considering participating in this research.

**Please respond and answer the following**:

1. How many years have you attended EBC or CCC?
2. How long have you served in missions at your respective congregation?
3. Are you willing to voluntarily participate in this research project (yes or no)?

Your participation in this research project will require an additional 1 1/2 hours of your time. The goal of this study is to add to the knowledge and insight of why the five-fold mission model at EBC & CCC can be a success and utilized in the broader African American church.

The success of this research has the potential to be significant for churches and church leadership in the African American Community, as it can provide them with a viable model for various areas of mission service for their congregations.

If you are interested in participating in this study and its contributions to the work of missions in the African American Church, please return this email with the questions addressed above. Again, thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this research to further the work of mission service.

**Next steps:** Upon receipt of your response via email, you will receive a follow up e-mail scheduling your interview.

**Recruitment E-mail Follow-up**

Dear Participants:

Thank you for your responses to the questions in the e-mail entitled participant research invitation. Based on your responses to the questions in that e-mail, I welcome you to participate in this study and move forward to the next step.

As the researcher, I will email you the consent information for this study. Please review this form for additional information and a more detailed description of the study. We can schedule a time for us to meet now or, if you prefer, you can contact me after you have reviewed the consent information, and we will schedule the time then.

My contact information will be enclosed in the consent form. Again, thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Colleen N. Damon-Duval

**Participant Letter of Instructions**

Dear Participant:

I would like to express my gratitude to you for agreeing to participate in my research study. This letter will provide all the instructions you will need to participate in the research. Prior to participating in this study, you will receive a formal participation packet, which includes this letter, a consent form, a biography about me, and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Please read the consent form carefully and if you agree to participate, please sign, and return the consent form to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope within one week. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me via phone, e-mail, or text.

If you do not receive your consent form within one week, I will contact you with a follow up phone call or e-mail. After receiving your consent form, I will call or e-mail you to set up a 60-to-90-minute interview in which you will answer open-ended interview questions. The location for this interview is at your discretion.

Your interview will be recorded, and you will be assigned an alias to be used throughout the study. Within a week following the completion of your interview, you will receive a completed transcript of your responses. Please review your responses on the transcript and make any necessary corrections. Please send the corrections if any, to me within 48 hours (about 2 days).

Sincerely,

Colleen N. Damon-Duval

**Interview Protocol**

Individual interviews will be conducted in person, by Zoom, telephone, or e-mail. Open-ended questions will be provided to allow the participant to create options for responding. The participants can voice their experiences and perspectives. The interviewer responds to what the participant has said, looking for clarity and detail.

**Interview checklist:**

Introduce yourself

Discuss the purpose of this study

Provide informed consent

Provide structure of the interview (audio recording, taking notes, and use of a pseudonym)

Ask if they have any questions

Test audio recording equipment

Smile make the participant feel comfortable

Interview number:

Date:

Name:

**Script:**

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Colleen- Duval. I am a doctoral student at Omega Graduate School conducting my research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree in philosophy with a self-study concentration of missiology and cultural anthropology.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this in-depth interview, which will take approximately one hour to an hour and a half. The interview will include ten questions regarding your experiences, insights, and perceptions about working in mission service at EBC or CCC.

I would like your permission to tape or record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know your responses are confidential.

Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and other missionaries have viewed the impact that mission service has on you, and the communities you serve. This interview will delve further into the topic by exploring any psychosocial behaviors you believe will impact future missionaries’ decision to serve as servant leaders on the mission fields.

The purpose of this study is to identify gaps in perceptions related to mission service in the African American church and provide valuable insight for future leaders who may want to implement a mission program in their church by adopting the five-fold mission service model used at EBC and CCC.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. I am the responsible investigator, specifying your participation in this research project: A model for active participation in mission service for the African American church: A phenomenological case study

You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agreed to commence this interview. You will receive one copy, and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses.

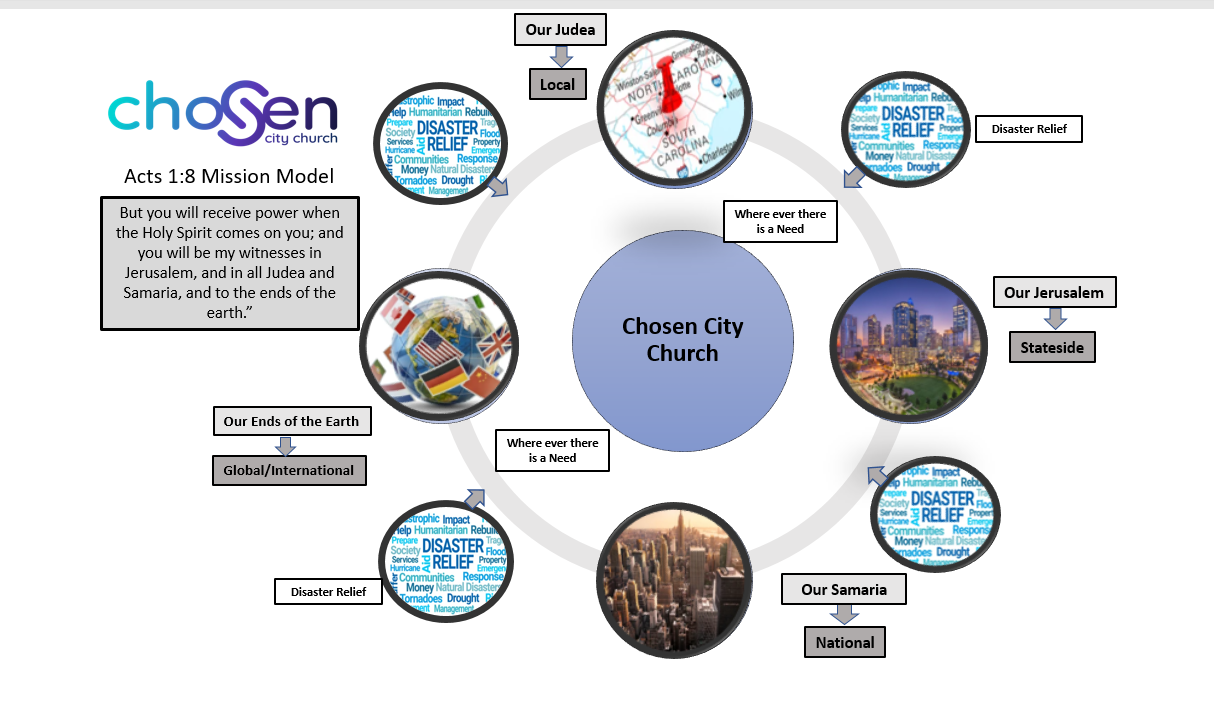
Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, or take a break, please let me know.

You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

Appendix

**Figure 7**

***Five-Fold Mission Model***



Created by Colleen Damon-Duval for Chosen City Church in Charlotte, NC, adapted from ideas presented by Ebenezer Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC.