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INTEGRAL MISSIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A MISSIONAL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT NEW ELLIS CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN
SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA

A PROJECT PROPOSAL
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
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BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
PAUL CHRISTOPHER GASH
JUNE 15, 2022

APPROVAL FORM

INTEGRAL MISSIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A MISSIONAL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT NEW ELLIS CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN
SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA

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To God be the glory for the great things God has done. With sincere gratitude, humility, and appreciation, I dedicate this work to the many people God has sent to sow seeds of wisdom, inspiration, and encouragement to me, throughout my life's journey.

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ABSTRACT

The Church is called to be passionate about leading the cause of being influential, inspirational, and impactful in the community that she is housed. God has commissioned all believers to embark the grand opportunity of effectively engaging the community through integral missions. The formation of this ministry project was born out of various studies that was researched that revealed a high degree of poverty that exists within the community where New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church is located. Additionally, during the development of this project, COVID-19 has plagued the world and caused an increase in mental health, emotional instability, financial constraints, and the lack of basic needs for many families. As the pastor of New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, I felt called to aid in the enhancement of the community's quality of life. Jesus mandated his disciples to declare, "repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47 NRSV)" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39 NRSV). To meet both biblical imperatives, this project sought to develop a strategic plan that meets the holistic human needs. In this project, integral missions refers to the church's commitment to help anyone bring his or her entire being under the reign and rule of God so that the person will experience abundant life, holistically, in Christ. Shalom. For New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church to be a light of hope as it strives to meet the holistic needs of those who live, work, play, and worship in the Holly Oak Park area, an efficient community engagement framework was formed, implemented, and evaluated. This doctoral project aimed to demonstrate that for the New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church to engage the community functionally and effectively, the path forward is through integral missions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My exposure to integral missions began with me growing up in a home that consisted of an alcoholic and substance abusive father, a brother who constantly face death daily due to his mental/physical disabilities, and a mother who worked tirelessly to maintain sustainable functionality in our family. Had it not been for the active community engagement that the local church demonstrated through their loving presence by empowering our family through integral missions, I am not sure how my life would have developed.

During my early childhood, there were times when my parents were unable to transport my brother to his hospital procedures. The church provided financial relief and transportation aid. Before becoming a business owner, a deacon and a leader in ministry, my father participated in the local church's support groups for those who struggled with drugs. My mother, local pastors, and local churches collaborated with politicians and community leaders to help establish life changing opportunities that addressed the holistic needs of citizens in the community. Throughout my life, I have witnessed the Church engage the community and holistically impact those it surrounds. Relevant and useful practices in ministry, through integral missions, must be a path that the church continues to take if the gospel of Jesus Christ is carried out effectively.

New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church seeks to lead people to embrace Christ, encourage collaboration, and empower the community. The desired outcome of New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church's ministry is to impact the city by aiding in the enhancement of people's quality of life. Churches have an extraordinary opportunity to be impactful

and inspirational. The United States Census Bureau highlights that in the City of Shelby, NC, the community that New Ellis Chapel resides in, has a poverty rate of 25.9%.¹ New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church recognizes that this is a great opportunity to do the Lord's work so that communities are uplifted and transformed.

This doctoral ministry project embodies the conviction that the community New Ellis Chapel serves may have opportunities to meet their needs spiritually, socially, physically, mentally, emotionally, and economically. As Jean-Paul Heldt writes,

We must look at any human problem in the four basic dimensions of our human existence—*physical, mental, spiritual, and social*. As we do so, we uncover different underlying causes of presenting problems, and then, of course, we need to apply the power of the gospel to all such causes and their effects.²

To address the underlying issues that Heldt identifies, New Ellis Chapel needs to implement the missional mindset of spiritual wholeness in God at its core.

Biblical narratives provide an example of spiritual wholeness in the Book of Exodus (chapters 1-3). God sees the Israelites being oppressed by the Egyptians. Confirming the Egyptians' atrocities toward the Israelites, God tells Moses: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians" (Ex. 3:7-8 NRSV). Sending Moses to lead and deliver the Israelites out of bondage displayed God's compassion in engaging an oppressed community and integrally redeeming them holistically.

¹ "Quickfacts City of Shelby," *United States Census Bureau*, accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/shelbycitynorthcarolina,US/PST045219>.

² Jean Paul Heldt, "Revisiting the Whole Gospel: Toward a Biblical Model of Holistic Mission in the 21st Century," *Missiology* 32 (2004): 157, cited in Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 318.

Similarly, in the Gospel of John, Jesus asked, “Do you want to be made well?” (John 5:6 NRSV). This is Jesus’ profound question to a man at the pool of Bethesda who had been ill for thirty-eight years. Jesus’ remarkable example provides inspiration to what New Ellis Chapel could implement consistently in its missional drive for Christ. Jesus engages the person who had been unwell for many years. His passion and concern for the whole man was extraordinary. Jesus understands that this man needs his life, empowered holistically so that he could live, work, play, and worship effectively. Today, New Ellis Chapel could follow Jesus’ example of integral missions, as demonstrated in John 5, along with God’s model in Exodus. Engaging the needy and the disadvantaged in society is critically important to accomplish the church’s goal to impact the community.

Therefore, New Ellis Chapel needed to have adequate processes, strategies, and organizational structure to engage the community appropriately. Practical ideas such as Vacation Bible School, soup kitchens, back to school events, job trainings, and healthcare seminars, are often presented from willing individuals who desire to take on these weighty tasks with the aim of combining word and deed.³ However, burnout or failure happens rapidly due to the lack of planning, preparation, and strategic processing. As a former athlete, it was my desire to win every game. Sometimes my team was successful while other times we were not. The games that were won were due to a large amount of preparation that was put in by the coaches and players. Even though all games lost were not from the lack of preparation, most could be attributed to someone skipping out on their homework. Like an athlete, New Ellis Chapel must do a great job preparing, planning, and strategizing so that effective community engagement practices take place.

³ For an extensive discussion, see Canadian Baptist Ministries, *Wordeed: An Integral Mission Primer* (Missisauga: Castle Quay Books, 2012).

In this ministry project, integral mission refers to the church's commitment to help anyone bring his or her entire being under the reign and rule of God so that the person will experience abundant life, holistically, in Christ. This project sought to develop an effective framework for community engagement that incorporates integral missions at New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church. Biblical and theological evidence involving community engagement was examined and taught so that the congregation could be prepared to fulfill its biblical mandate of integral mission. In addition to biblical teachings, New Ellis Chapel Church were trained in twenty-first century research tools for the church to identify community demands and develop a portfolio of local services so aid can potentially be provided to citizens.

Project Setting

New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church is a missional church that seeks to engage the community and provide holistic ministry to the neighborhood. Established in 1957 at a place called Holly Oak Park, New Ellis Chapel had intentions of providing an opportunity for integral missions to a new thriving, developing, young, and working-class community. As the founding members passed, and many who grew up in the church moved on, the community that New Ellis Chapel dwells in today is totally different from what it was at its original date of formation. There is a high rate of poverty and substandard housing surrounding the church's premises. The church is located on the southside of the city of Shelby in the County of Cleveland, a small rural community in North Carolina. The United States Census Bureau statistics states that there are 97,282

citizens that reside in Cleveland County, NC.⁴ The poverty rate in Cleveland County is 20.4%, and 29.8% consist of those who are eighteen years of age and below.⁵

I began my pastorate at New Ellis Chapel in August 2019. After teaching a Wednesday night Bible Study class, one of the members, whose parent was a founding member, came to me and said, “If New Ellis Chapel was to close down, the community in which it is placed would not miss it at all.” After hearing this heart wrenching comment, the idea of creating a framework of community engagement at New Ellis Chapel was born.

New Ellis Chapel has one hundred and fifty members on its roll. The church’s racial makeup is predominantly black. The age range consists between three and ninety-five. Most are retired and have transparently admitted that many are unfamiliar with twenty-first century techniques, processes, and methods on how to meet the needs of the community. This made New Ellis Chapel a prime place to implement the ministry project of developing a framework of integral missions, with a specific focus on community engagement. The hunger for community empowerment and development is a craving that members have. If community transformation will take place, New Ellis Chapel needs to recognize that Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6 NRSV). To provide an opportunity of empowerment, New Ellis Chapel understands that meeting the community where they are is the best path forward. In the words of Stephen Westerholm and Martin Westerholm, “While religion talks (vainly) of the path of humans to God,

⁴ “Quickfacts City of Shelby,” *United States Census Bureau*, accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/shelbycitynorthcarolina,US/PST045219>.

⁵ Ibid.

Christianity tells of God coming to us.”⁶ Since the Bible is the story of God revealing himself to humanity through Jesus Christ, New Ellis Chapel seeks to be a church that follows the example of God, that is, to go to the community and fulfill the mission of Jesus who commissioned the disciples: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NRSV). Before going to do integral missional service, New Ellis Chapel needed a framework on how to engage and connect with the community, which this doctoral project sought to develop.

Statement of the Problem

Has the local Christian Church lost her influence globally? As a local church, has New Ellis Chapel inspired the Holly Oak Park community through the movement of the gospel? Does New Ellis Chapel impact people in a way that community transformation takes place? With people on the move in mind, Elias Medeiros writes,

The local church is, doubtless, as a confessional (professing) community called to be light and salt among the nations by professing Jesus Christ, especially among the people on the move and the unengaged people groups.⁷

The Church is a body of believers that are called to minister to people who are on the move and unengaged.⁸ For too long, the Church has stayed in the four walls of the building and neglected the community that it resides in. The Church is called to be a

⁶ Martin Westerholm and Stephen Westerholm, *Reading Sacred Scripture: Voices from the History of Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 395.

⁷ Elias Medeiros, “Local Churches in Missional Diasporas,” In *Scattered and Gathered A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*, edited by Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunao Yamamori (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016), 186-187.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

light, ensuring that it does not put her light “under a basket (Matt. 5:15 NET)” by refusing to engage the needy.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, anxiety and depression increased from 36.4% in August 2020 to 41.5% in February 2021.⁹ There was a two percent increase from people who felt that their mental health needs were unmet. The largest reporting population were from people between the ages of eighteen-twenty-nine.¹⁰

Assumptions can be made as to what is causing a spike in people struggling with mental health disorder. It will be difficult to conjecture appropriately, why there has been an increase in mental health in individuals unless the people who are battling this condition are effectively engaged. Along with the rise of mental health disorder in the USA and a poverty rate of 25.9% concerning those who live in the same vicinity with New Ellis Chapel, the congregation needs to recognize that darkness permeates with in society; thus, the church is called to let her “light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16 NRSV).¹¹ For New Ellis Chapel to be a light of hope as it strive to meet the holistic needs of those who live, work, play, and worship in the Holly Oak Park area, an efficient community

⁹ Anjel Vahratian, Stephen J. Blumberg, Emily P. Terlizzi, and Jeannie S. Schiller. “*Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder and Use of Mental Health Care Among Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, August 2020–February 2021*,” Center for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed July 27, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7013e2.htm>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Quickfacts City of Shelby,” *United States Census Bureau*, accessed 20 June 20, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/shelbycitynorthcarolina,US/PST045219>.

engagement framework needed to be implemented. The question is, how can New Ellis Chapel effectively engage an unengaged community that surrounds it?

Project Goal

The goal of this ministry project was to establish an efficient framework for community engagement at New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church that was inclusive of integral missions. Jesus mandated his disciples to “that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations (Luke 24:47 NRSV)” and to live out the Great Commandment, which is, to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV).¹² To meet both biblical imperatives, New Ellis Chapel seeks to develop a strategic plan that meets the holistic human need.

As mentioned above, mental health disorder and poverty have increased. Understanding how to proclaim the good news to those who desire to have their holistic needs met is critically important. To tell homeless people that God loves them but not address their holistic human need is spiritually unethical. Christ’s followers are called to proclaim the “that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:47 NRSV). If the good news is appropriately proclaimed, addressing the whole person is essential. John Cheyne asserts that people must consider the importance of individuals being reconciled to God, their community, and their environment through Jesus Christ.¹³ Cheyne highlights the significance of people being

¹² John Cheyne, “Strategies for Humanitarian Ministries,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998), 515.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 516.

reunited to their original purpose in God, which is, “life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NRSV). He writes further:

Reconciliation must take into account the fact that people have been separated not only from the Father through sin; they have also been separated from one another, creating inequalities and barriers. They have, moreover, been separated from the perfect environment which God intended.¹⁴

The calling of New Ellis Chapel is to aid in the removal of barriers and play a part in reversing immoral, hurtful, and dreadful inequalities that have been created by the brokenness and disconnection of humanity. This means that, New Ellis Chapel needed to understand the social, cultural, political, and environmental concerns of the citizens that reside in the Holly Oak Park zone. To meet the desired results of integral missions through an effective framework of community engagement, four measurable goals were identified.

The first was to establish and teach a biblical teaching/preaching series concerning integral missions and community engagement. The objective was to provide a scriptural framework and platform for individuals to spiritually and theologically discern the importance that God places on community engagement.

Secondly, it was my intention to administer teachings on the significance of ways to obtain research information such as primary (focus groups/ surveys) and secondary data (cultural, social, economic) that are relevant to the Holly Oak Park zone. It was important for New Ellis Chapel to understand the necessity of astute awareness of the city’s socio-economic structures, socio-cultural realities, and social levels existing in the

¹⁴ Ibid.

city.¹⁵ This allowed the experimental group in this ministry project to understand the issues that exist in the community.

Thirdly, I did a SWOTS (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats, and Solutions) assessment with New Ellis Chapel experimental group to determine what path the church could take in engaging the community effectively. From this goal, New Ellis Chapel would know what she has to offer to the community so that she can successfully maximize her strengths, while attempting to develop a strategic plan on how to appropriately meet the holistic needs of the citizens.

Additionally, I conducted a session on how to research and obtain existing information pertaining to community resources that are geared toward addressing the holistic needs of the person. This goal would help provide an opportunity for success since believers need to be prepared always in providing an answer to those who are seeking or may ask the reason for their hope.¹⁶ Understanding what resources exist in the community, and who offers them, puts New Ellis Chapel in an advantageous place to be a valuable conduit for those who are searching for the fulfillment of their basic needs.

These four goals established a strategic communication plan concerning how to connect with people that live in the Holly Oak Park region. Meeting these goals could provide New Ellis Chapel a foundational start in addressing the holistic needs for the citizens who live in the community that surrounds the church. Cheyne states:

Any program dealing with human need, if it is to be successful, must be people-centered, rather than program or project-centered. A mother holding her starving

¹⁵ Harvie M. Conn, "Urban Mission," in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Missions*, edited by James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 328.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 519.

child may not be able to comprehend the message of the evangelist who proclaims, “God loves you,” but then fails to provide for the starving child. On the other hand, a mother watching a caring and loving nurse ministering to her baby throughout the night may not understand the motivating power which impels the nurse to do so, unless someone takes time to reveal the message of Christ inherent in the ministry.¹⁷

A realistic vision for New Ellis Chapel is to be people centered--knowing how to demonstrate Christ’s mission and model the message of Christian love.¹⁸ To effectively display the message of Christ, New Ellis Chapel sought to know how to engage the community and effectively understand how to implement holistic ministries that empower people.

Means of Evaluation

Two types of evaluative tools were utilized to measure the result of this project, which included *reflection* (cognitive) and *action* (participation). To develop the content of the ministry project, I identified and invited a committed group of fifteen individuals who served as the experimental group and five individuals who served as my control group. Both groups were diverse in age and gender.

Five in person teaching sessions were conducted with my experimental group that consisted of highlighting biblical evidence and the importance of “Community Engagement through Integral Mission.” In addition to the five teaching sessions, two practical sessions took place that included a community focus and Wellness Day.

Before conducting the five teaching sessions, the focus group, and Wellness Day with the experimental group, a ten-point Likert-type style pre-test was scheduled on a

¹⁷ Ibid., 517.

¹⁸ See Robert E. Coleman, *The Heart of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011).

different day and given to a control group. The goal of the pre-test was to evaluate each participants' knowledge of "Integral Mission and Community Engagement." After the completion of the pre-test, the results were collected for analysis, sorted, safely stored, and archived.

A ten-point Likert-type scales was employed as a visual guide for participants. The process measured the participants' level of understanding concerning handling research data/demographics, being equipped to engage the community, awareness of resources that exist inside the local county, comfortability of connecting with diverse cultures, and ways to effectively engage people while providing hope.

As the participants of the fifteen-member experimental group arrived for the first teaching session, they were presented with the same ten-point Likert-type style pre-test before the session began. To qualitatively enhance the experimental group's understanding of every session, each participant was encouraged to keep a self-reflection journal on how one sees God through the information learned and its relational connection to the material, "Community Engagement through Integral Missions."

Following the completion of the final session, the post-test was administered to the experimental group. On a different day, the same post-test was given to the control group. The information was gathered, evaluated, stored, and analyzed. The information evaluated from both groups measured the level of understanding pertaining to "Community Engagement through Integral Missions." The desired outcome I sought was that of a positive mean that displays the experimental group's increased understanding of the importance concerning biblical "Community Engagement through Integral Missions." Along with completing the post-test at the final session, each participant was able to

evaluate the teacher, techniques, procedures, content, materials, presentations, and the overall project. Materials were collected for proper analysis and included in the content of the final Project manuscript. I had envisioned that this project would provide a meaningful framework to New Ellis Chapel in its commitment to engage the community so that members can effectively, faithfully, and functionally impact the lives of those who are yearning for their loving presence and services in the neighborhood and beyond.

The *action* part of the doctoral project evaluated the participation of the respondents or the Project population.¹⁹ After each lesson, post-session assignments were given to participants that required practical exercises to apply and practice what they learned.

Under the research area, participants were given an assignment that required them to go, look up, and gather information (data) from websites and journals that consist of the specific social economics, demographics, and holistic health outcomes that were related to the Holly Oak Park community. Along with practicing how to research data about the community, participants were given an assignment to read about the benefits of focus groups and how to start the process of developing one.

In the area of *equipping*, participants were given an assignment that consist of each person being prepared with tools that promoted effective community engagement. Each participant was given a responsibility of developing his or her strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and solutions (SWOTS analysis) that concerned New Ellis Chapel. The goal was to discover one's areas of strengths, weaknesses,

¹⁹ For the pre-test and post survey questions for this action part of the doctoral Project, see Appendix C.

opportunities, threats, and solutions that the church possessed so that effective planning could be developed to help address issues that exist in the community.

In the area of *awareness*, participants were guided in developing sensitivity to community needs and learned about existing resources. Each participant was asked to research various services that were present in Cleveland County, NC that meet the need of the whole person. Each person in the group was responsible for gathering five to ten agencies that provided services to meet the holistic need of anyone in the community. Additionally, included in this assignment, participants were instructed to identify services that were not present in the local community but, may have existed in another region.

In the area of *connecting*, participants learned ways to engage with members of the community. Participants was given an assignment to locate a minimum of ten ways to connect with citizens. They were encouraged to identify and gather information about various meeting locations for people, social media platforms that people utilize, and cultural events that individuals participated in. The goal was to locate a variety of places where people could be engaged. A strong emphasis was placed on participants seeking to identify where people went to meet their holistic needs in the community.

The final segment of action was in the area of *empowerment*. The goal was to set into motion a process of instilling hope in the community resulting from the identified activities that participants would be doing as explained above. The measurement of increased hope in the community is a long-term outcome and will be measured over time. Based on the previous assignments concerning data and demographic collections, SWOTS analysis, development of a catalog of resources, and gathered information about appropriately locating where people are, participants were given an assignment to

identify a specific ministry project that the church could begin to develop as a potential instrument to meet a specific need in the community. To instill hope begins with solving problems. Participants were encouraged to create and host a Community Wellness Day that promoted the practice of empowerment.

The Wellness Day project event supported New Ellis Chapel's objectives as a church to engage the community by being a missional driven church that seeks to meet the holistic needs of those she is called to serve. The participants in the experimental group were encouraged to employ the tools taught from each session.

Concerning the research component, the experimental group was to utilize the data gathered from the websites taught in the session and develop five questions to be asked to a focus group. After developing questions, the participants were informed to locate and invite eight individuals from the community to a scheduled focus group. The experimental group was encouraged to speak with the Holly Oak Park director, citizens, and schools about identifying eight individuals from the Holly Oak Park community that can participate. Once citizens were identified, a one-hour session was conducted with the community focus group concerning things that the community desired, sought, and needed.

After conducting the focus group, the experimental group took the information, had two planning sessions to analyze it to identify a useful strategy, and did a community walk through to pass out flyers for the Community Wellness Day.

After identifying the strengths and opportunities that New Ellis Chapel has, the participants began to develop a quality Community Wellness Day. The participants were able to utilize the information learned in the awareness session. The participants

contacted local organizations that had resources that were beneficial to what had been identified by the focus group and primary data. The participants agreed to the utilization of the Holly Oak Park Center. The center is a central place that citizens recognize as a source of safety, comfort, and trust. During the formation of this project, New Ellis Chapel had a working partnership with the Holly Oak Park Center. Securing the location did not create any obstacles. After confirming the agencies that would attend the event, the experimental group hosted a Community Wellness Day.

Indicators

To ensure a sustainable process and efficient Community Wellness Day, four measurable indicators drove New Ellis Chapel's initiative, help meet the objective of community engagement, and ensured that the Community Wellness Day was meaningful:

- (1) Measure One--number of citizens that attend the event. A volunteer tallied each person that came through the door. Attendees were asked if they were willing to share their names and numbers so that they could be contacted for future events;
- (2) Measure Two--number of people who would attend a future event. This measure provided an opportunity to see who in the community was interested in the services that were offered. This data would aid the development of identifying those who seek to return for future events and bridge a pathway for meaningful follow up with those who desire it;
- (3) Measure Three--number of participants that sought information from each agency so that a determination could be made about what service were pursued the most. This information was designed to help the experimental group see what services was sought the most in the community. Based off the determination of tallied services, the church

could potentially develop weekly partnerships with the community and a local agency that is desired. This could lead to a likely satellite opportunity at the church for people in the community to utilize; (4) Measure Four--number of participants from the event that attend Sunday Worship at New Ellis Chapel. The goal here was to engage the community so that their life is meaningfully impacted. For New Ellis Chapel, meeting the physical needs and individuals' spiritual needs were critically important. Therefore, participants were encouraged to invite people to attend church. A long-term measure will be for participants to identify and document each Sunday those who may attend that were at the event. This would help show if the event connected the church to the people.

CHAPTER 2

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The information in these sessions focuses on the project formation, implementation, and evaluation concerning the work that was completed by the experimental group. Detailed information pertaining to the theoretical sessions taught, planning of the wellness day event, community focus group, and the Community Wellness Day is highlighted.

Project Formation

The formation of this project began with me intentionally seeking, recruiting, and forming an experimental group concerning members who were a part of New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church that served in various leadership ministries. The purpose of this project was to train fifteen ministry leaders for seven two-hour teaching sessions that focused on biblical and practical ways to do community engagement through integral missions in the twenty-first century. The leadership, serving as the experimental group, participated in sessions that consisted of (1) Research: The God that Knows (Ex. 3:7-10); (2) Equipping: Nehemiah Equipped then Built (Neh. 2); (3) Awareness: A Samaritan's Attitude (Luke 10:25-37); (4) Engaging: Connect For or Connect Four? (Acts 2, 3, 4, 9, 16, and 17), and (5) Hope: Is the Church a Joke or Hope? (Is. 61; Luke 4:18-19).

Each of the five-teaching sessions gave participants ample time to comfortably ask questions about the information, seek clarity about assignments, discuss the information shared during the training sessions, and follow up on assigned homework. After completing five teaching sessions that focused on cognitive development, the

experimental group was asked to participate in two additional training sessions that consisted of them practically exercising and applying the information that was taught during training.

Training session six consisted of the group hosting a community focus group so that they could prepare to do a community Wellness Day. Concerning the community focus group, the study required the experimental group to identify six persons to participate in a one-hour focus group. Since New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church had members that resided in the Holly Oak Park region, the experimental group was encouraged to identify six people to serve as a focus group from the congregation that lived in the Holly Oak Park region. The desired outcome of the information given by the community focus group was for the experimental group to obtain firsthand knowledge of what the citizens sought after, thought of, and felt about their community. After hosting a community focus group, the experimental group developed a community Wellness Day that was designed to engage the community through integral missions. Lastly, session seven consisted of the experimental group debriefing about their experience, the project, and completion of surveys/post-test instruments.

Project Implementation

After receiving a detailed invitational letter to participate with this ministry project in February, each participant was given three weeks to consent to participate. After receiving confirmation from the fifteen individuals that consisted of the experimental group, all agreed to meet weekly every Tuesday in March for five training sessions, a focus group, a Wellness Day, and a concluding debriefing session.

In addition to the experimental group, I sought fifteen individuals to make up my control group for pre and post testing purposes. The participants were given a detailed invitational letter and time to consent. Five individuals, out of fifteen, agreed to serve as my control group. Before beginning with the experimental group, I met with the individuals from the control group, and assigned them a numerical code for confidentiality and testing purposes. After given an assigned code to the participants, I explained the consent forms and asked if they would complete a pre-test survey for the project. All five filled out the pre-test and was asked to return on May 1, 2022, for an additional time to complete the same material. After each person completed the pre-test, the information was collected and stored in a confidential area ensuring each participant's information was protected.

At the beginning of the first session concerning the experimental group, each participant was assigned a numerical code for testing purposes which ensured that confidentiality was protected. From there, I went over the informed consent form and an overview of the ministry project expectations. I provided the group an opportunity to ask questions and complete the informed consent forms.

Upon there completion of the informed consent form, I administered the Ministry Project pre-test. Like the control group, once each person completed the pre-test, the information was collected and stored in a confidential area ensuring each participant's information was protected. After safely storing the information, I officially started training session one.

For the first five sessions, we met in the church's fellowship hall. The focus group was hosted in the church's sanctuary so that additional spacing was available. The

Wellness Day was hosted at the Holly Oak Park, which is a trusted location that the community utilizes. For the debriefing session, we returned to the church's fellowship hall.

I used a PowerPoint presentation on a Smart TV throughout the five sessions so that when the time came to show information that consisted of pictures and videos the quality of the presentation would be efficient. Every session began at 4 p.m. and lasted to 6 p.m., except for the community focus group, which was last to 6:30 p.m. The Community Wellness Day was from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Snacks were provided for the five training sessions and a catered meal was given to the group at the final session as a way of me expressing my gratitude to the group for their participation with the project. At the conclusion of the first session, the experimental group agreed to schedule the community focus group at the end of the fifth training session and the Community Wellness Day for the last Saturday in April.

Week One: Training Session One (March 1, 2022)

“The God That Knows”
Exodus 3:7-10

As our first training session started, everyone showed up on time and excited to participate. Meeting in the fellowship room in the back of the church, everyone was seated, and the presentation began. I welcomed everyone to the training session and thanked them for their willingness to participate. I instructed them about the opportunity to partake in the snacks that were provided for them to eat while the presentation took place. After my opening remarks, I prayed and began to explain the ministry project and why I felt it was needed in the community.

Before starting our first topic concerning research, I spent the first half of the session highlighting the purpose of the project, the goal of our gathering, and the desired outcome of our church concerning the information that would be taught. After giving an overview of the project, I explained what Integral Missions was and why it is the best path forward for New Ellis Chapel to engage the community effectively. I opened the floor up for any discussions and questions. When asked if the church at this present moment inspires or impacts the community, one participant stated that “We only benefit those inside of the building not outside of the church.” Another participant stated, “We stay within our circle at church instead of going out in the community.” Additional comments were: “There are two different communities in this region, which is our church and the Holly Oak Park;” and “We need to know the makeup of the community and be approachable.”

Using Exodus 3:7-10 as my biblical foundation for the first training session, our group dealt with the importance of research and how God intentionally sought to know the pain of the children of Israel. In this session, we learned how God reached out to the Hebrew community during times of slavery in Egypt. God’s message to Moses was crystal-clear: “I know their sufferings” (Ex. 3:7 NET). I highlighted the notion that God’s relationship with the Hebrew slaves epitomizes contemporary research: looking (*surveying*), learning (*researching material specific to Israel*), listening (*focus groups*), and lifting (*God’s expectation of the church*). In this workshop, biblical information was taught concerning the need to have focus groups, surveying, the need of relevant data, and how to begin to develop a plan of engaging the community so that empowerment takes place.

I went over the importance of knowing the secondary research that could be obtained from websites and various community agencies. In addition, we discuss the importance of primary research. From our discussion of primary research, we talked about why a community focus group would be enriching considering that in the past our church has had events for the community without first seeking their input.

At the conclusion of our session, the group was given an assignment to read over Exodus and reflect on how God “researched” the needs of the Israelites’ community. I encouraged them to journal practical ways that one could seek to identify the needs in the community. I asked them to go to various websites that included the US Census Bureau, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, CDC, and the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership. In addition, I asked that they contact the local schools and board of elections to request information pertaining to Shelby, NC. They were asked to look at the positive data as well as anything that concerned them about the city. Lastly, they were asked to begin to identify someone to invite to the community focus group. After given the instructions about the assignment and closing in prayer, we dismissed the session.

Week Two: Training Session Two (March 8, 2022)

“Nehemiah Equipped Then Built”
Nehemiah 2:9-20

Before beginning the training for the second session, I received a call from one individual who informed me that he was unable to show up for the training. The individual would eventually withdraw from the training making the first session his only

session he attended. The person called before the meeting to explain the situation. I informed the individual that I was grateful for their support up to this point and that he had my prayers.

Starting the meeting off, I welcomed everyone back and thanked them for showing up. We had four that arrived late while I was giving an overview about the day's agenda. I informed everyone that they could partake in the snacks that were provided. After giving my opening statement, I prayed and started the session.

I began with a review and asked questions about the assignment that was given from the previous session. There were only four individuals that completed the assigned work which included going online and viewing information about the data in Shelby, NC. Some stated that they forgot. Others stated that they were still unsure about where to find the information. One individual stated that "based off the information that I saw on the CDC website, I was able to see the vaccination rate for individuals in Cleveland County, NC, along with charts that had cases and deaths." After thanking the individual for sharing her research information, I highlighted the importance of data and how it plays a major role in the development of community engagement. I informed them that I was available at any time to answer questions or give instructions about any of the things we discussed.

We began session two with me reviewing information about integral missions and community engagement. Following the review of training session one, we opened session two. In this session we learned that before motivating the community to build the wall, Nehemiah adequately ensured that the people were prepared. I informed the group that Nehemiah gathered information and developed a strategy to ensure the completion of the

wall. I stated that “Nehemiah identified the strengths in the community (*the people*), weakness (*ruined city*), opportunities (*rebuilding of the wall*), threats (“*Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab*”) (Neh. 2:19 NRSV),” and a solution, which was rebuilding the wall. Additionally, I informed the group that to prepare for integral mission through community engagement, it is important for New Ellis Chapel to understand its reason for existence, calling, and purpose.

We moved to the part of our training session that prompted the group to develop a strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats, and solutions (SWOTS) model. I instructed that this would give an opportunity for our local church to see a visual of things they can utilize and implement. I explained that the SWOTS model offers insight into areas of weaknesses and paths that churches should avoid or correct.

I pulled out a dry erase board and wrote strengths on the left side of the board. I asked the group to identify some areas of strengths that exist in the church. Things such as “upgraded technology in the church, enthusiasm for growth, space in the building, commitment from loyal members for community work, open mindedness, partnerships with agencies in the community, and dedication to ministry” was stated by different members in the group.

From there, I wrote on the right side of the board the word weakness. I asked the group to identify things that we needed to improve in. Some said, “training in ministry.” Another stated “fear keeps us back.” One individual stated that “we do not have enough knowledge about the community or twenty first century practices.”

Next, I wrote on the board the word opportunities and asked the group to respond. Some said, “we see that we have a chance to grow numerically and spiritually at the

church.” Another individual stated that “we have land to put a family life center so that we can serve the community.” Some individuals stated that “we have a chance to train some new leaders in the church.” One individual stated, “we can do holistic ministries considering the unused space at the church since we desire to see the community impacted.”

After spending time discussing opportunities, we dialogued about threats that could happen if the church did not make any effort to spiritually serve. Comments such as, “We will remain glued to traditions, people will grow tired, and have a false sense of hope,” was made. One individual said that “the community may not accept the church anymore or there may be a loss sense of compassion.”

Lastly, I wrote on the board the word solutions and asked the group to come up with things they believed we can do to start the process of community engagement through integral missions. The group stated, “we need to spend more time in prayer, put a sign out at the church, go door to door with a flyer and information about the church, do more events at the Holly Oak Park, learn the community, and be more flexible.”

After completing the SWOTS exercise, I thanked them for their suggestions and explained the post session assignment. I informed them that the post session assignment consisted of each participant being responsible for developing his or her own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and solutions (SWOTS analysis) that concerned New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church. The goal was for them to discover one’s areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and solutions that the church possessed so that effective planning could take place to help address issues that may exist in the

community. I concluded in prayer and thanked everyone for coming. As they were leaving, I reminded everyone about identifying someone for the community focus group.

Week Three: Training Session Three (March 15, 2022)

“A Samaritan’s Attitude”
Luke 10:25-37

Session three began with me welcoming everyone back to the training. Except for the one individual that had to withdraw from the training, all arrived on time. I explained to the group that they could feel free at any time to get the snacks that were provided. Once I finished the explanation about snacks, I opened with prayer and began a short review about week two’s session concerning Nehemiah’s quest to prepare the community before building the wall. After reviewing the importance of the SWOTS analysis, I asked the group if anyone had a chance to do the assigned work that was given to them. The group said that they spent time in reflection concerning the things we discussed and how it was important to the development of our process.

After a brief time reviewing the previous weeks information, I transitioned to session three. I opened session three asking everyone to turn to the Gospel of Luke chapter 10:25. I gave a short overview of the context regarding the scripture. From there I gave the title of the training. I explained that this session would focus on learning about the importance of being aware of resources that exist within the community and how it gives New Ellis Chapel a pathway to provide holistic care to people. I asked if anyone in the room was familiar with many of the services that exist in the area. Some said that they had knowledge of a few of the services. Others shook their head no. I asked that if

someone from the community came to church and needed resources right away, would our church be able to adequately give them an answer that would help their need get met? One individual said, “at this point, no.” I informed the group that it is great that we can recognize people’s needs, in addition, our church should develop a resource booklet, guide, or catalog that has information pertaining available aid for any need that may exist in the neighborhood or community. I explained that having a resource-list of various agencies and community organizations that could assist in people’s quality of life is extremely important in gaining influence and developing trust. One individual stated that, “one of the members had already started a catalog and passed it out to some of the leaders in the church.” I asked if we could access it right now without calling the person who put it together. The answer was no. I informed the group that the act of giving people “hope” is crucial to community engagement. In addition to informing the group about giving hope, I mentioned that being aware of things that people needed helps to foster confidence and trust with those who are seeking aid. As noted earlier, the Samaritan was able to aid the half dead individual because of his ability to “bandage his wounds” (Luke 10:34 NRSV). The attitude of sensitivity demonstrated by the Samaritan led to him seeking a way to address a need while utilizing appropriate resources. Likewise, New Ellis Chapel’s awareness of various resources in the community could result in ministering to the needy in an appropriate way.

After concluding our discussion, I transitioned to the post session assignment. I asked the group to intentionally practice being sensitive to community needs and seek every opportunity to learn about existing resources. I asked each participant to research various services that are present in Cleveland County, NC that meet the need of the whole

person. I explained that the long-term goal is to develop an efficient catalog of agencies and organizations that are presently addressing needs. In the short term, each person in the group was asked to be responsible for gathering agencies that provide services to meet the holistic need of anyone in the community. Additionally, included in the assignment, participants were to identify services that are not present in the local community but may exist in another region. After giving the instructions, the group began to come up with different agencies that existed in Cleveland County, NC.

After spending about twenty minutes discussing the agencies, I asked them about inviting community organizations to the Wellness Day event on April 30. The group began to delegate who would call the different agencies. After the responsibilities were given to each person, I asked the group to read back through Luke 10:25-37. I informed them to reflect on various ways sensitivity is displayed and how it affects our present-day culture? After given the post-session assignment, I reminded everyone about their responsibility of inviting someone to the focus group. I concluded in prayer and told everyone that I would see them for session four in a week.

Week Four: Training Session Four (March 22, 2022)

“Connect For or Connect Four”
Acts 2; 3:1-10; 4:32-37; 9:10-19;16;17

Before everyone arrived, I set up a game called Connect Four. As the participants began to come in, I assigned them into a group. The chips for the Connect Four game were red and black, so I evenly split up the teams based off the colors of the chips.

I started the session by explaining the rules of Connect Four. Most said that they had played and remembered the rules. Having most of the group members familiar with the game made the ice breaker better and created a friendly battle. I explained that the rules were that the first team that could connect four chips in a row would win. The game lasted about twenty minutes concluding with a tie. There was much laughter and joy during the game. After allowing the group to have two tries at winning, I asked everyone to return to their seat so that we could discuss the game. I asked the group what they learned from the game. Comments such as, “connecting the chips together, blocking the other team, and having a good strategy,” was made. I asked the group if the church has a habit of playing Connect Four concerning the community. The group had a puzzled look on their face. After noticing the look on their face, I explained that like Connect Four, churches have a way of only focusing on their own team. One person asked me to explain. I informed the group that churches may see themselves as red chips and the community as black chips. Therefore, the church only focuses on connecting with those that have similar traits, cultural beliefs, and like desires while neglecting to connect with others. I explained that we develop strategies but often its only for those who are in our church. One individual said that “for years our church has seen a family that was a different race that lived up the street from the church. One of the members invited them and they came once but never return. No one did a follow up or connected back with them.” I informed the group that the comment that was made by one of the participants concerning the inconsistency of the members reaching out to the family that lived up the street from the church is a similar example that is related to many that live in our

community. Churches may not consistently connect. After the icebreaker and the discussion concerning engaging the community, we went into the lesson for the day.

In session four, I taught what it meant to be a missional church and how missional churches seek ways to develop relationships with people in the neighborhood and community. I gave some examples from the selected scriptures of how the early church in the book of Acts sought various ways of connecting with the community. After looking at the scriptures that pertained to Peter, the early church, Ananias, and Paul, I gave some examples to the group about how the church could connect with the community. The examples I presented included inviting someone to a meal, being involved in sport teams, attending local community events, building a network through social media platforms, or volunteering at the local schools.²⁰ I informed the group that to better connect with people requires intentional education about various cultural dynamics that exist amongst diverse groups. This includes looking at information concerning cultural activities, events, and celebrations that people participate in.

The post session assignment consisted of participants identifying ways to practice engaging with members of the community. Participants were given an assignment that required them to locate a minimum of ten ways to connect with citizens. I encouraged them to identify and gather information about various meeting locations for people, social media platforms that people utilize, and cultural events that individuals participate in. My goal was for them to be able to locate a variety of places where people can be engaged. I placed emphasis on participants seeking and identifying where people go to get their holistic needs met in the community.

²⁰ Medeiros, "Local Churches," 191.

Additionally, the group was asked to read back over the selected scriptures from Acts. I asked them to reflect on the questions involving what it meant to be a missional church in the twenty first century, the different ways the disciples connected with people, how often did the disciples engage people, and practical ways that the church can engage people daily.

After going over the post session assignment, we discussed the focus group information. The participants stated that they had more than six individuals that they would be reaching out to join the community focus group. I explained the structure of the focus group. I asked the group to nominate two individuals to ask questions while the rest would set, look, listen, and learned from the responses given. I gave ten prepared questions and informed the group that they could choose which questions they felt would work for the group. The group selected two individuals to lead the questions and answer segment of the focus group. Once the two individuals were selected to lead the focus group, we closed in prayer, and dismissed.

Week Five: Training Session Five (March 29, 2022)

“Is the Church A Joke or Hope”
Isaiah 61; Luke 4:18-19

Session five began with me welcoming everyone to the training. I informed everyone that they could feel free at any moment to partake in the snacks that were offered. All but two individuals arrived on time. We opened with prayer and started the session with an icebreaker. I uploaded a YouTube video and showed it to the group. As I hit play, the two additional members of the group arrived. I started the video over so that

all could see the clip at the same time. I felt this would make the discussion more beneficial.

The video showed an individual at a specific church dressed in an action figure hero costume, dancing in the middle of the isle while the choir was singing. The video was under a minute long. The group laughed and made comments like, “what in the world is going on?” “Is this for real?” “Why was that happening inside of the church?” Others in the group made comments like, “if that is the way they praise the Lord, then let him go for it.” After allowing the group to watch the video two times, I asked them “what would they do if someone came to the church similar to this individual, and began to do what was done?” Comments made consisted of people saying, “he should be escorted out,” “let him praise God”, and “tell someone to set him down.” I asked, “if you saw this at a church you visited would think if it was a joke?” The group did not respond at first. Then I asked, “do people in the community see the church as a joke?” Additionally, I asked, “like the person in the video that is dancing to possibly entertain, does the community see the church and laugh?” Comments made were, “yes, some people in the community see the church that way.” Others stated, “people could see the church in that manner.” After the discussion from the icebreaker, we went into training session five concerning building hope in the community through empowerment.

In training session five, we discussed how the church should serve as a vehicle of hope and an agent of transformation, thereby impacting the quality of life of people in society. I shared with the group that the end goal of community engagement is to provide hope to the hopeless. We looked at the prophet’s message in Isaiah 61 and Jesus’ missional framework in Luke 4. I explained that both featured messages of hope to those

who are “brokenhearted” (Is. 61:1 NET), “poor” (Luke 4:18 NRSV), and “captive” (Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18 NRSV). I informed the group that the same hope that inspired prophetic messages, should be the same hope that makes the church a catalyst for giving, dispensing, and building hope in the community. Members of the group discussed further opportunities of how the church could engage with the citizens so that the community could see the church’s presence, consistently. The group stated that they were ready to get to work.

After finishing the training session, the participants started to set into motion the planning process of the Wellness Day. I informed the group that the training sessions concerning the teaching process was complete and now it was about focusing on the development of the Wellness Day. I explained that a part of the practical part of the project was for the group to attempt to apply what was taught in the training. The group began to make assignments about following up with agencies that the group had agreed to call. The group set a day to meet so that they could began to plan for the Wellness Day. The group sat a date for 4pm on April 4 at New Ellis Chapel for them to reconvene to ensure that they were on the same page concerning the Wellness Day. Once the date was set, I shifted to the community focus group. The group stated that they were ready to move to the sanctuary to converse with the community focus group.

I asked, “how many people would make it today.” The group informed me that three of the six would make it. When asked about the three individuals that were not able to make it to the focus group, the response I received was that “one person did not respond about being a part of the group.” Another member of the group stated, “that they forgot to ask someone.” Lastly, one participant said that “the person they asked was

unable to make it.” I told them that “we will work with the three but having the community’s voice and input was critically important to the success of the Wellness Day.” After discussing the importance of the community being a part of the focus group, we took a break for thirty minutes and then transitioned to the community focus group that was hosted in New Ellis Chapel’s sanctuary.

Week Five: Training Session Six (March 29, 2022)

“Community Focus Group”

Before beginning the community focus group, I went over the informed consent information with each participant of the focus group. Once consent was given, I explained to the focus group the responsibilities of the project and directed them where to sit. The experimental group chose the sanctuary’s stage for the focus group due to the extra room it provided for everyone participating. Each participant of the focus group was handed their own microphone to use. Once I directed the focus group to their seats, I asked the two individuals from the experimental group to take their seats on stage with the focus group so that they could begin the questioning. Once the two individuals were seated, I opened in prayer and began the meeting.

The focus group freely responded to the questions. They continued to express their gratitude about the church’s willingness to seek the opportunity to be a part of the change. Out of the focus group discussion, information concerning knowing neighbors better, having things to do in the community, and utilizing the Holly Oak Park facilities was brought forth.

Concerning things that the focus group thought was a strength in the community was a low crime rate and the longevity of their neighbors remaining put in the neighborhood as it related to living in the Holly Oak Park.

Regarding things that they felt would be beneficial for the neighborhood, members of the focus group stressed the importance of having more things to do for the youth that lived in the region, help identifying assistance that could help families in the region, and age-related things for younger people. An additional concern that the focus group felt was important was addressing issues such as housing and having sidewalks for people to utilize. When asked about things that New Ellis Chapel could do, the focus group informed the experimental participants that developing things for the youth in the community so that they can feel a part of something meaningful, more activities that would help the community get to know one another and ensuring that safety and the beautification of the region was needed.

When asked about the role of the church, the focus group mentioned things like ensuring that people feel welcomed, addressing the needs of the community, not pushing religion on people, and making people feel loved was what the church was meant to do. In addition to the role of the church, the focus group mentioned information that consisted of the possibility of new people moving into the neighborhood, which meant that the church should choose to promote togetherness, be prepared to have something for young people, and assist individuals graduating with college or employment readiness.

As the time approached the one-hour mark, I stood up to conclude the session. I asked everyone to give a round of applause to our focus group members. The group expressed their gratitude. I informed the focus group about the Wellness Day. I asked if

they had any final questions or remarks. No one had any final comments. I closed in prayer and thanked them for their time.

Project Initiation

Experimental Group Planning Session One (April 4, 2022)

The experimental group met for the first-time to conduct a planning session in the fellowship hall in the back of the church at 4p.m. Out of the fourteen that finished the five training sessions, ten showed up for the meeting. One of the members informed the group that she had gathered some demographic information regarding the make up the youth in the community. The group was informed that based on the research she attained, the community has twenty-two boys and twenty-seven girls that attend the elementary school that serves the Holly Oak Park. Additionally, fifteen girls and thirteen boys attend the local middle school. Lastly, ten students that live in the Holly Oak Park attend the high school in the region.

The group agreed to have snow cones, face painting, various games, and activities for all age groups. The group identified one person to be responsible for the games. It was agreed that the group would serve pizza and water for food concerning the event. One member agreed to be responsible for the food. The group stated that they would donate the meal. Additionally, other members of the group volunteered to call vendors to confirm their presence at the Wellness Day. After completing a list of things that would take place, the group agreed to meet again on April 18 at 4 p.m. for the second planning session. The group agreed to recruit volunteers from the church to walk the community to hand out information and help with the event. The group confirmed that they would

canvas the community with flyers and door hangers on April 23 at 10a.m. The group concluded the meeting.

Experimental Group Planning Session Two (April 18, 2022)

The second group planning session consisted of six of the fourteen members showing up for the meeting. The group confirmed that eighteen vendors were invited for the event. Games, food, and door prizes were discussed. The group agreed to give a way four ten-dollar gift cards that would be donated as gifts by a member of the group.

After confirming the games and the vendors, the group discussed the community walk through on April 23. One member created a flyer and a door post. One group member sent the flyer to the church media director so that the flyer could be announced in church and posted on Facebook. The group made assignments concerning who would take on the various streets that surrounded the church. The group recruited additional members from the church to help canvas the streets. The meeting concluded and the six members left.

Experimental Group Community Walk-Through (April 23, 2022)

The group met at New Ellis Chapel at 10 a.m. Seven of the fourteen experimental group members showed up to do the walk through of the community. Along with the participants of the experimental group, three additional church members were recruited to go along with the group. The group carpooled to various street locations. Upon arriving at the different homes, the participants knocked on doors and passed out flyers. For those who were not home, door knockers with the information about the church and the event

were left. The group canvased for three hours and returned to the church. Once all returned to the church, the group dismissed.

Project Application

Week Six: Training Session Seven (April 30, 2022)

“Community Wellness Day Event”

The Community Wellness Day began with the experimental group arriving at 11:30 a.m to start setting up for the event. The group met vendors (community agencies) at the Holly Oak Park at 12:30 p.m. The event started at 1 p.m., so thirty minutes prior to opening the doors to citizens, the experimental group help each vendor set up tables. The vendors had flyers and displays on their tables that provided the community with information about their organization. The experimental group had an area for basketball, corn hole, pool, bouncy houses, face painting, and an exercise station for those who wanted to participate with learning how to work-out. There was a table set up by the church that had gift bags and information about New Ellis Chapel.

At 1 p.m., the doors opened to the community. At first, the crowd was slow. As time progressed, people began to come in and fellowship. When individuals from the community would arrive at the event, members from the experimental group were posted outside to greet them. As the citizen moved to the inside, two members from the experimental group was there to welcome them with a bag and give instructions about the day. There were two individuals working the section that were for the vendors. The rest of the group was stationed at the various activities that were placed at the park. Citizens were able to participate with the activities or at the station of their choosing at any time.

The most popular station for the youth was the bouncy houses and basketball. Many of the adults participated in the exercise session that was led by one of the experimental group members.

Amongst the experimental group, twelve of the fourteen participated in the event. In addition to the members from the group, the experimental participants recruited seven additional volunteers from the church to assist with the day's venture.

Out of the eighteen vendors that were invited to the event, ten showed up. Amongst the vendors that were represented, information that regarded mentoring, social services, credit counseling, behavioral health, afterschool care for children, community college, and healthcare was offered to the community.

Fifty individuals from the community showed up to the event throughout the entire time frame. The demographic breakdown was twenty-three youth ages 0-18, nine young adults between the ages of 30-50, and eighteen individuals that were ages 50 and older.

The agency that people sought the most, based on the data that was gathered, was behavioral healthcare, afterschool care, and mentoring. The experimental group asked each agency to tally the number of participants that came by their table and sought information. Other vendors could have had higher numbers of participants, but some vendors had to leave early.

The event concluded at 5 p.m. The experimental group stayed, cleaned up the facility, and returned the remaining things to the church.

Project Evaluation

Week Seven: Post Project Training Debriefing Session (May 12, 2022)

The post project training debriefing session was scheduled two weeks after the Community Wellness Day due to allowing the experimental group to recover physically, mentally, and spiritually. Considering that most of the experimental group members serve in various leadership positions of the church, it was agreed that each participant needed a few days to rest and recover from the work they completed over the last two months.

The session started at 4:30 p.m. and ended at 6:30 p.m. To thank the group for their hard work and dedication to the project, I had a meal catered in. All fourteen participants arrived on time. I opened the meeting by expressing my gratitude for their time and effort. I explained to the group that the agenda for the day was for the group to complete the post-test information, eat, and debrief about the entire process. After expressing my appreciation to the group and given an overview of the session's agenda, I opened with prayer.

After praying for the meal and the session, each participant was provided with a pen and given their assigned numerical folder that had the post-test, post Wellness Day survey, participant's evaluation survey, and post-workshop survey. I informed the group that the goal was for them to be honest about their experience. The participants were given forty-five minutes to complete the assessment tools. Once everyone was finished, the participants fixed their food, returned to their seats to eat, and fellowshiped over the meal.

After eating and fellowshiping for thirty minutes, we spent the remainder of the time debriefing about the projects journey. I opened the floor up for anyone to make

comments or asked questions concerning the training sessions, focus group, post-sessions assignments, and the Wellness Day.

Concerning the training sessions, the group felt that the teaching was meaningful and informative. One individual expressed her gratitude for the information that was presented and felt that it was useful. The group affirmed her statement.

Much of the time was spent discussing the positives about the Wellness Day and things that should have been done, differently and additionally, that could have improved the experience. The group was excited about doing future events that were like the Wellness Day. One member mentioned that they felt that the group was not given enough time to make contacts with community agencies. Along with not having enough time to make contacts, some in the group stated that more time was needed to plan. An additional comment concerning the Wellness Day was that the turnout was not what was expected. The group felt that more would have attended the Wellness Day if the church would have ensured that the event was not on the same day as other events that were happening in the region. Two additional group members confirmed their support of the statement and felt that in the future, knowing the events like when high school proms and other churches are having events, would help the effectiveness of planning for another Wellness Day. One group member stated that they were excited to see teenagers come through the doors but felt that more activities needed to be included for their age group since the only thing that was geared toward the teens was basketball.

One participant highlighted that the event was beneficial due to people in the community coming out and that the group felt prepared to do additional events. Along with this comment, one individual pointed out that the church should start out with

smaller events, gain short term wins, and then launch out into something bigger. One member stated, “that additional follow up needs to take place with the community agencies to see what their thoughts were concerning the event.” One member stated that she had gone around during the event and spoken with each vendor and the information that was gathered at the time was positive and encouraging. An additional group member mentioned that the community walk through was amazing but felt that the group went out too soon. Due to going out too soon in the community, the group member felt that the citizens could have forgotten about the event. An additional member of the group agreed, recommended that the church needs to be more consistent in the community so that trust is built which may lead to people coming out. An additional member felt that the church needed to get signs to advertise about events. To go along with the group member’s thoughts about the community walk through, an additional member stated, “that because of the walk through, one of the couples that they engaged that day came to the church the following Sunday.”

As we concluded the discussion, all but one of the fourteen participants from the experimental group stated that they were committed to doing an event like the Wellness Day in the future. The group felt that the event displayed the church in a positive light to the community and that there was encouraging room to build upon.

After providing everyone an opportunity to share, I expressed my appreciation for the church, group’s time, and willingness to journey with me throughout the project process. After making my remarks, I closed in prayer, and concluded the debriefing session.

Literature Review

Mobilizing a congregation to engage the community using a wholistic missional framework is challenging but achievable. Although the entire world suffers from the crippling effects of COVID-19, integral missions provide a clear path forward for many people who may be feeling a sense of hopelessness and despair. To accomplish the set goal of engagement, the following relevant resources could be utilized to develop this doctoral project.

The multi-authored book, *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies* edited by John Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson, gives dynamic insight on missions and the role of the church.²¹ In chapter 11, John Terry provides a survey of the early church and identifies its impact on the community.²² In addition to missions in the Early Church, chapter 31 provides sound information on strategies for humanitarian ministries and principles concerning holistic ministry, which are relevant to this project.²³

In *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Missions*, Harvie M. Conn contributes a chapter on “Urban Mission” that focuses on “Special Challenges in Mission” (section five).²⁴ Conn presents a model for existing churches to be agents of transformation. He

²¹ John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justin Anderson, eds., *Missiology*, in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Tennessee: Broad and Holman Publishers, 1998).

²² John Mark Terry, “The History of Missions in the Early Church,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, eds. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Tennessee: Broad and Holman Publishers, 1998), 166.

²³ Cheyne, “Strategies,” 516.

²⁴ James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, eds., *Toward the 21st Century of Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993).

identifies insights on various areas of community transformation that includes the importance of churches having a good understanding of the socioeconomics in within its spheres of influence, cultural dynamics in the community, social levels, church identity, and being a compassionate church that has a message of hope.²⁵

David Bosch acknowledges the paradigm changes in missions through the years as the Church continues to develop her missional theological framework, as evidences in his book, *Transforming Mission Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.²⁶ Bosch highlights contributions of the some early church fathers to the church's role in the community; he also alludes to the many challenges that the contemporary church faces concerning the unchurched and unreached people across the world.²⁷ In chapter 6, "Paradigm Changes in Missiology," two of the seven issues that Bosch identifies are specifically relevant to this project and its development. He argues that the Body of Christ must be willing to deal with unjust structures of oppression, realize that people live in a shrinking globe with limited resources, and understand that people are mutually interdependent.²⁸

In their book, *Reading Sacred Scriptures Voices from History of Biblical Interpretation*, Martin Westerholm and Stephen Westerholm provide insights on many early church fathers' theological views concerning Scripture interpretation and how it

²⁵ Harvey Conn, "Urban Mission," in *Toward the 21st Century of Christian Mission*, ed. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 328.

²⁶ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

influences the Christian community.²⁹ Many church fathers embraced the notion of community empowerment through holistic missions. For example, Augustine's concern for the impoverished, and the importance of ministering to the whole person due to individuals being holistically hungry, provides a road map for churches to follow today regarding community engagement.³⁰

Concerning families and society redemption, Arthur F. Glasser's, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in The Bible*, offers sound theological framework for missions and how God's redeemed people are called to be light and servants in the community.³¹ Glasser notes that God is concerned about families, nations, people and the oppressed, while opposing many issues that plague the world, such as oppression, poverty, and *isms*.³²

In Terry Dalrymple's book, *Beyond Poverty Multiplying Sustainable Community Development*, the author cites specific issues concerning people worldwide plagued with things such as food insecurity, lack of education, and issues of employment.³³ In chapter 4, "Changing Together," Dalrymple offers insights concerning the alleviation of poverty and how Christian service can create healthy communities through the process of restoration that leads to harmony with God and God's creation.³⁴ To begin the process of

²⁹ Martin Westerholm and Stephen Westerholm, *Reading Sacred Scripture: Voices from the History of Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 25.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

³¹ Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Terry Dalrymple, *Beyond Poverty Multiplying Sustainable Community Development* (Pasadena: William Carey Publishing, 2021).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

restoration, the Church must not “neglect the stranger within the gates.”³⁵ Believers need to welcome and meet people where they are and display her distinguish mark of God by demonstrating a spirit of service, openness, while living out the Bible’s vision of shalom.³⁶

To the point concerning the importance of integral missions and how holistic ministry is implemented in the twenty-first century, Christopher Wright’s books, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* and *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* provide relevant insights and information. In *The Mission of God*, Wright sheds light on God’s model of restoration.³⁷ He specifically identifies narratives on inspired prophetic messages like Isaiah 35 and 61, and how they provide sphere of hope that is inclusive of personal, social, physical, economic, political, international, and spiritual factors.³⁸ These passages highlight Wright’s perspective on holistic ministry and how it flows from applying the whole Bible on matters of socio- economic justice and compassion for the needy.³⁹ Also, Wright calls for both ethical and redemptive living.⁴⁰ He details a holistic model from the book of Exodus and how the political, economic, social, and spiritual dimensions are inclusive in

³⁵ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁷ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.)

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

God's great act of redeeming Israel.⁴¹ This motif shows biblical support of God's motive in rescuing Israel out of bondage. God engaged the Israelites with the intent of providing for the whole community ensuring that their holistic needs were met and the whole person was redeemed.⁴²

Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology, edited by Tetsunao Yamamori and Sadiri Joy Tira, provides a guide for local churches that are seeking to engage people on the move and unengaged communities through effective partnerships with various community agencies and parachurches.⁴³ In chapter 10, "Local Churches in Missional Diasporas," Medeiros gives various solutions on how to reach people who are on the move by encouraging local churches to understand regional demographics and ensuring that leaders are adequately trained to engage the community.⁴⁴

The Symphony of Mission: Playing Your Part in God's Work in The World, by Michael W. Gohen and Jim Mullins, is a resourceful book that gives relevant information pertaining to the work that the Church should do so that God's mission is carried out in the world.⁴⁵ Two chapters offer insightful thoughts that would help develop this ministry project. Chapters 5 and 8, "Service: Displaying the Love of Christ by Washing the Feet

⁴¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.), 101.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴³ Medeiros, "Local Churches," 185-194.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 190-191.

⁴⁵ Michael W. Gohen and Jim Mullins, *The Symphony of Mission: Playing Your Part in God's Work in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

of the World” and “Performing: Participating in God’s Symphony,” outline instructions on how Christians must understand the importance of their role pertaining to engaging people in the world and how to spiritually serve effectively.⁴⁶

In *Lead the Way: Principles and Practices in Community and Civic Engagement*, Forrest Toms gives a framework and process concerning community engagement.⁴⁷ He outlines various theories, methods, and why community engagement is important.⁴⁸ These topics are relevant to this ministry project as it seeks to provide a contemporary explanation of what community engagement should be with the church leading the initiative. It is important to understand what community engagement involves from a marketplace perspective. Therefore, seeking to utilize quality research methods and processes that maybe applicable to the overall development of this work will be useful for fusing the concepts of integral missions. In chapter 8, “Spiritual Capital and Engagement,” the author provides insights into the church being a vehicle of empowerment for local communities.⁴⁹

Relevant website information and articles from Lausanne Movement will be also consulted in the development and implementation of this project.⁵⁰ The Lausanne

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Forest D. Toms and Sylvia Willie Burgess, *Lead the Way: Principles and Practices in Community and Civic Engagement* (San Diego: Cognella Academic Publishing, 2013).

⁴⁸ Forrest D. Toms and Zakiya L. Toms, “Community Engagement: A Multifaceted Framework and Process,” in *Lead the Way: Principles and Practices in Community and Civic Engagement*, ed. Forrest D. Toms and Sylvia Willie Brown (San Diego: Cognella Academic Publishing, 2014), 7.

⁴⁹ Sylvia Willie Burgess, Calvin Ellison, and Johnny Scott, “Spiritual Capital and Engagement,” in *Lead the Way: Principles and Practices in Community and Civic Engagement* (San Diego: Cognella Academic Publishing, 2013), 115.

⁵⁰ “Integral Mission,” *Lausanne Movement*, accessed July 21, 2021, <https://lausanne.org/content/integral-mission-an-infographic>.

Movement provides current information for local churches applicable to integral missions and community engagement.⁵¹ The Lausanne Global Network has dedicated sections for holistic ministry and how churches can utilize integral missions from the concept of word and deed.⁵²

Additionally, Rene Padilla's, *What is Integral Mission?* seeks to integrate word and deed as equally important endeavors in Christian community services.⁵³ In chapter 6, "Christian Witness: Word and Deed," Padilla stresses the significance of talking and living the love of God through service by stating, "Kerygma cannot be separate from diakonia or from koinonia."⁵⁴ Thus, churches need to utilize a healthy balance of proclamation (*word*) and demonstration (*deed*) in the community it desires to engage.⁵⁵

The process of implementing holistic ministry is crucial to the effectiveness and success of any local church engaging the community. Believers are called to "bring glory to God in every area of life."⁵⁶ Anna Ho's *Integrating Physical and Spiritual Framework for Transformation* highlights the "Whole Gospel" (chapter 4).⁵⁷ Applying the gospel to every sphere of an individual's living is a every believer's goal. The power of the gospel can inform, reform, and transform.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ C. Rene Padilla, *What is Integral Mission?* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2021).

⁵⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Anna Ho, *Integrating Physical and Spiritual Framework for Transformation: Book 3* (Monee, IL: Reconciled World, 2019) 17.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The preliminary list of literature reviewed in this section was used as *foundational* resources to meet the desired outcome of New Ellis Chapel. Additional sources will be consulted as the ministry project develops, being part of the goals to embrace Holly Oak Park community with God's love, while intentionally establishing a relational bridge so that God's word is proclaimed, and the community's holistic needs are met through integral missions. Christ's followers are commissioned to engage, empower, and equip the community. New Ellis Chapel fulfills this missional calling by learning how to appropriately engage the citizens that reside within its sphere of influence, with the intent of aiding in their holistic development.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

From its foundation, community engagement has been utilized to empower, guide, direct, and collaboratively provide an opportunity for the enhancement of people's quality of life. Many definitions and explanations have served its purpose pertaining to engaging people in their social location so that hope and fulfilled needs are produced. To start with, the following working definition on *community engagement* by the Center for Disease Control Agency for Toxic Substances Abuse and Disease Registry is in order:

The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Donna Jo McCloskey, Mary Anne McDonald, Jennifer Cook, Suzanne Heurtin Roberts, Stephen Updegrove, Dana Sampson, Shelia Gutter, and Milton Eder, "What is Community Engagement?" Center for Disease and Control Prevention, accessed September 2, 2021, https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pce_what.html.

Likewise, community engagement involves partnerships that help mobilize resources, transform relationships amongst partners, influence various systems, and change the practices in the community.⁵⁹

The Bible features community engagement through the lens of proclaiming the word and demonstrating deeds, as it pertains to the good news of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in Christ.⁶⁰ The good news of the gospel is experienced when people are liberated and empowered to live out God's original design which is life in all its fullness.⁶¹ Community engagement is about the mission of the church and its responsibility to engage people to liberate and empower wholeness, with spiritual wholeness at its core.⁶² The Gospel of Mark portrays Jesus modeling community engagement through three public ministry applications--teaching, preaching, and healing. Jesus also fed the hungry and welcomed and engaged anyone who was socially ignored.⁶³ Although these definitions highlight practical and dynamic ways of engaging people in the community, from the beginning of time, God established a means for holistically connecting with the lost, hurting, confused, needy, and hopeless.

⁵⁹ Toms and Toms, "Community Engagement," 12.

⁶⁰ Padilla, *What is Integral Mission*, 34.

⁶¹ Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 27.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁶³ Ronald J. Sider, "What if We Defined the Gospel the Way Jesus Did?" In *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, ed. Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), 25.

Old Testament Examples of Integral Missions

The book of Genesis portrays God connecting and engaging with humanity: “Now they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:8-9 NASB). The Bible depicts how Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s instructions. Out of shame and fear, both decided to hide. Scripture states that Adam and Eve “heard the sound of the Lord God walking” (Gen. 3:8 NASB). Genesis 3 shows God’s intentionality of engaging this small community of two. God is portrayed as “walking through” the community. The intimacy that God has with humanity is like that of a father and child.⁶⁴ God seems to be asking Adam, “What have you been up to now?”⁶⁵ God is concretely present, while actively engaging and seeking after Adam and Eve. Because God’s intentions are restorative, he did not ignore the presence of the couple despite disobedience. In fact, God asked a question, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9 NRSV).

As New Ellis Chapel considers its motivation for missional community engagement, she could glean insights from the way God relates to Adam and Eve. Like the first couple, the community members may be ashamed of their present condition, afraid of what may happen next in their lives, and despaired about future opportunities. Yet, once believers show willingness to engage the community, they can seek the lost,

⁶⁴ E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

reach out to the hopeless, and engage needy people through integral missions-- communities that need holistic empowerment. Following God's example of engaging Adam and Eve after disobeying divine instructions, believers need to embrace the responsibility of addressing the wholistic needs of the community.⁶⁶ As David Bosch writes,

The church exists only as an organic and integral part of the human community. As soon as it tries to view its own life as meaningful in independence from the total human community it betrays the major purpose of its existence.⁶⁷

The *rationale* of this ministry project is to develop a framework of community engagement that involves integral missions. This calls for New Ellis Chapel to prioritize the Christ's mandate to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19 NRSV), and understand her purpose of spiritually inspiring, influencing, and impacting the community to the glory of God. Through contextual, genuine, and creative methods, church members could ensure that God's work, through the body of Christ, will be completed in God's world.⁶⁸ To fulfill her calling, an appropriate model and understanding of engaging the community requires implementation. New Ellis Chapel serves as a strategic local vessel for developing a community engagement structure that implements Christ's commission.

⁶⁶ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 54.

⁶⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 388.

⁶⁸ Medeiros, "Local Church," 186.

Community Engagement in Exodus

The book of Exodus is a connecting factor of God's prominence, presence, and power to God's people, Israel. Throughout the book, God provides supernatural proof to the children of Israel that he is sovereign and supreme over all creation. As God almighty and omnipotent, he relates to people who were oppressed economically, socially miserable, politically enslaved, culturally doomed, and spiritually discouraged.⁶⁹ God intentionally looks upon Israel's "misery" (Ex. 3:7 NRSV) and listens to "their cry" (Ex. 3:7 NRSV).

God "feels" the pain of the Israelites and sustains them in their afflictions as an operative agent.⁷⁰ God chooses to become vulnerable and wounded in the cohesion of human woundedness.⁷¹ God declares, "I know their sufferings" (Ex. 3:8 NRSV), which implies God's personal interest in addressing the needs of Israel. Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence Fretheim, and David Petersen write,

God's seeing and hearing are not generalized expressions of omniscience, but focused divine regard for oppression and suffering. Divine response is attuned to and mobilized by human cries of pain. Perhaps the most remarkable self-disclosure in this verse is the phrase 'I know their sufferings.' The Hebrew verb used here (yada` 'to know') indicates something broader than cognitive knowledge. It indicates a participation in the experience of that which is known. Thus, God indicates a divine choice to enter into and experience Israel's suffering.⁷²

⁶⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 268-269.

⁷⁰ William Johnstone, "Exodus 1-19," in *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2014), 76.

⁷¹ Bruce C. Birch et al, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 106.

⁷² *Ibid.*

God empathizes with the suffering people and gives Moses a plan of action. God calls Moses as an agent of change who would lift or “bring” the Israelites “out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:10 NRSV).” Divine compassion is not limited to looking at Israel’s misery and listening to their cry for help. God knows that action needs to happen. To change the dynamics of Israel’s future, intimate engagement was set into motion. Arthur Glasser states,

It was by this liberating deed that Yahweh revealed himself as the One who takes up the cause of the afflicted and the oppressed, a revelation that was to have a major influence on the way Israel thought about God. It significantly shaped their worldview and their self-understanding.⁷³

When considering the approach that many churches take, the two elements of looking at the misery of the people and hearing their cry for help, are essential in community engagement. Although these are critical to community engagement, additional work to effect transformation is necessary.

New Ellis Chapel can follow God’s example of showing empathy to community members in need, that is, looking at their pain and listening to their cry for help. It is important for the congregation to reach out to people in the community who are possibly integrally afflicted and oppressed. Gleaning from the way God relates to those who are suffering and afflicted, New Ellis Chapel needs to be intentional in impacting people’s lives by way of holistic ministries.

Nehemiah’s Missional Community Engagement

Nehemiah highlights the essence of what it means for God’s servants to effectively engage people and embrace a missional mindset to transform a community

⁷³ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 75.

from despair to hope. The sustainability of any community depends on several factors: sound economy, safe neighborhoods, nourishing environment for kids, an active loving, worshipping society, and concrete servant leaders. The book of Nehemiah takes place in the post-exilic period that offers narratives and genealogies of those who are Yahwist who are now called, “Jews,” living in the fifth or sixth century.⁷⁴

Nehemiah was a contemporary of Ezra the priest. Along with the book of Ezra, Nehemiah gives insights concerning the realignment of religious traditions taking place in the early Persian Period.⁷⁵ Many Jews were given permission to return home by the Persian government. When the returnees arrived in their homeland, they were heartbroken to see the land in shambles and destruction, resulting from King Nebuchadnezzar’s earlier invasion.⁷⁶ Collectively, the Jewish citizens began to rebuild their community with the intention of reforming community vibrancy and identity.⁷⁷ Ezra led the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 458 B.C.E; Nehemiah arrived on the scene in 444 B.C.E.⁷⁸ Ezra focused on the teaching and proclamation of the Scripture (*word*), while Nehemiah implemented a plan that is geared toward addressing the needs of the community (*deed*).

⁷⁴ Birch et al, *Theological Introduction to The Old Testament*, 438.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 363.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 369.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Nehemiah, a successful man of action, served under the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes I.⁷⁹ After hearing of the destruction in Judah, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and encountered those “who had escaped from captivity” (Neh. 1:3 NRSV), people who were vulnerable due to the destruction of the community wall. Nehemiah “wept, and mourned for days, fasting, and praying before the God of heaven” (Neh. 1:4 NRSV).

Driven by the pain of the people, Nehemiah sought an audience with King Artaxerxes I, who gave the prophet the opportunity to return to Jerusalem to maintain social and political order.⁸⁰ There was evidence pointing to a potential internal conflict taking place within the community.⁸¹ The restoration of the city and rebuilding of the wall would require collective work from the estimated 625 people residents.⁸² Despite the challenges of internal conflict and outside opposition from “Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab” (Neh. 2:19 NRSV), Nehemiah decided to return to the city, surveyed the land, engaged the people, empowered the citizens, and rebuilt the wall. The prophet was compelled to move toward the community and visited various sites in Jerusalem that were destroyed, burned down, and ruined. He grasped God’s mission and without hesitation, immersed himself into the heart of a devastated and distressed community. Nehemiah understood that the “hand of my God”

⁷⁹ David Noel Freeman and Robert North, “Nehemiah,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1992), 1069.

⁸⁰ Matt Waters, *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550-330 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 163.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Paul L. Redditt, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2014), 213.

(Neh. 2:18 NRSV) would ultimately give him “success” (Neh. 2:20 NRSV). Nehemiah testifies,

I went out by night by the Valley Gate past the Dragon’s Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King’s Pool; but there was no place for the animal I was riding to continue. So, I went up by way of the valley by night and inspected the wall. Then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. (Neh. 2:14-15 NRSV).

Nehemiah’s example provides a framework to New Ellis Chapel regarding awareness of community needs, that is, to go toward the crisis, establish hope, proclaim restoration, and be a catalyst for transformation. Bosch echoes this act of reaching out: “Mission is the symbol of the Church moving toward the world.”⁸³ Although though the potentials of internal and external challenges may exist within local communities, opposition should not prevent the church’s missional engagement. Following Nehemiah’s lead, New Ellis Chapel needs to be driven by the pain of the community regardless of the destruction, conflict, or strife. Opportunities for restoring and rebuilding abound through holistic ministry, as the congregation feels the burden of the those whose lives are broken, discouraged, and depleted.

Integral Missions in Isaiah

There are many elements that causes a community to mourn and lament. In dark times, God promises light and encouragement. After surviving captivity and bondage, Israel began to holistically revive as a community. During the time of restoration and renewal, God’s people returned to Jerusalem and began to rebuild. Isaiah 61 provides

⁸³ David J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 17.

substantial proof of God's concern for those who dwell in the community of Jerusalem who survived the devastation and hardships. The second temple prophet emphasized God's intentions on restoration and vindication of Zion.⁸⁴ The prophet proclaimed a message of hope that intentionally addresses the holistic needs of a person. Isaiah envisioned the restoration of the city after seeing its share of ruins.⁸⁵ The prophets declared, "They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations" (Is. 61:4 NRSV).

The descriptions, "building up" and repairing "ruined cities," display God's message of encouragement for those who felt "oppressed," "mourn," "brokenhearted," and shame. God's commitment to rebuilding and restoring the community to "everlasting joy" (Is. 61:7 NRSV) provides a platform for people to hope. As Wright observes,

The reign of YHWH, when it would finally come, would mean justice for the oppressed and the overthrow of the wicked. It would mean satisfying and fulfilling life for human families, safety for children, and fulfillment for the elderly, without danger from enemies, and all of this within a renewed creation free from harm and threat.⁸⁶

Wright aptly stresses that God is concerned about the needs of people, which, in today's parlance, would include healthcare, economic stability, safety, senior care, and empowerment of those who feel oppressed.⁸⁷ These are relevant issues in the twenty-first

⁸⁴ Birch et al, *Theological Introduction to The Old Testament*, 445.

⁸⁵John D. W. Watts, "Isaiah 34-66," in *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 25* (Columbia: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 304.

⁸⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 309.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

century, echoing similar situations during the prophet Isaiah's time. New Ellis Chapel needs to address the needs that God has shown concern for, including engaging the community that longs for holistic care and loving services. Since God cares, then the congregation should care. Identifying with the needs of the community could promote compassion, humility, and motivation to empower others in God's name. Bosch states:

God uses us to make justice and praise spring up before all the nations. God raising up people who become ministers to others of the same justice they have experienced from God. God's justice, then, is his saving activity on behalf of his people. Human justice is the effort we make to respond to God's goodness by carrying out his will.⁸⁸

New Testament Examples of Integral Missions

The Integral Missional Framework of Jesus

After spending forty days in an unbearable environment that forced him to battle hunger, homelessness, inadequate healthcare, and an adversary that intentionally attempted to oppress him, Jesus journeys out of the wilderness and heads directly toward Nazareth (Luke 4). He enters the synagogue and pronounces his mission statement that is inclusive of integral mission through community engagement. Jesus clearly declares,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19 NRSV).

Jesus gives his audience a glimpse of the future and his purpose. Like an architect who provides a blueprint for a building project, Jesus articulates a schematic design concerning what he would do to empower a community in despair and instill hope to those who are hopeless. Jesus models the behavior and attitude that the disciples would

⁸⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 74.

eventually demonstrate. He outlines a ministry that transcends a faith community. Jesus understood that to bring good news to the poor, he had to intentionally seek those who were in this condition.

In addition to proclaiming the Good News to the poor, Jesus recognizes that his calling includes releasing the captives, helping the blind see, and letting the oppressed go free. There are two words that highlight the intentions of Jesus' mission. The first is the word "captives." The appearance of this word is only utilized in Luke and nowhere else in the New Testament.⁸⁹ The second is the Greek word *aphesis*, which means to "release."⁹⁰ This is a powerful phrase, considering that it is Jesus' intentions to release people who felt enslaved by various sins and situations. "Release," is similar to the words, "set free" (NET), used in Isaiah 58:6, when a call for the oppressed were to be release from their oppression.⁹¹ During the early years of the Persian rule, high religious piety existed while horrible social conditions such as unemployment, bad harvest, drought, inflation, and social unrest occurred.⁹² The prophet Isaiah gave a challenge that still resonates today:

Is not this the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin (Is. 58:6-7 NRSV)?

⁸⁹ R. Alan Culpepper, "Luke-John," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. IX* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 105.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹² Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Isaiah 56-66," in *The Anchor Bible, Vol. 19b* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 2003), 178.

The horrific economic and political oppression that dominated during Isaiah's day compelled the prophet to motivate God's people to seek God's face to discern how they could best address the devastating conditions of the community.⁹³ In addition to sincere worship, God desires that resident would experience community restoration, healing, and empowerment. Like those who were to be released from the oppressive hand during the early Persian period, Jesus continued the quest of advocating for the holistic release of individuals bound by various forms of oppression; these would include economic (the poor), political (condemned), physical (the lame), and spiritual (demonic) oppressions.⁹⁴

Reflecting on Isaiah 58 and 61, Jesus declares the ushering in of the reign of God, what it means for his own mission, and how believers are to "seek first the kingdom of God and his justice."⁹⁵ Jesus' mission is to empower people, something that his disciples would soon learn and implement as they begin to engage people in need. Jesus is the essence of the fulfillment concerning the reign of God, which embodies God engaging humanity to holistically liberate, reconcile, and restore. Jesus portrays God's reign as inclusive of providing relief for the impoverished, families who need an enhanced quality of life, safety for children, elderly welfare sustainability, and emphasis on moral values.⁹⁶ He stresses the importance of this multidimensional ministry; hence, it is necessary for New Ellis Chapel to embrace it as its core missions, based on Jesus's ministry framework.

⁹³ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 274.

⁹⁴ Culpepper, *Luke-John*, 106.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Jesus on Missional Community Engagement

While Jesus speaks to his disciples, a lawyer boldly stands up to test him with a question concerning how to obtain eternal life. His questions led Jesus to outline a transformational example of community engagement. Jesus's response and pointed: "What is written in the law?" (Luke 10:26) Attempting to prove his intelligence, the lawyer quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 18:5, alluding to the command to love God with all one has and to love one's neighbor as well. Although Jesus affirms his answer, the lawyer attempts to "justify himself" by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10: 29) This question opens the door for Jesus to explain his perspective of what it means for believers to live out the love and will of God.

Then Jesus shares a beautiful parable about a man who was "going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side" (Luke 10:30-32 NRSV). The priest walked casually by the half dead man due to, potentially, traveling home from ending his time at the Jerusalem temple and fearing any type of contamination.⁹⁷ Then a Levite, who had responsibilities of various services in the temple, continued down his journey while avoiding the bloody gentleman as well.⁹⁸ Both individuals, who were thought to be

⁹⁷ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Gospel According to Luke," in *The Anchor Bible, Vol. 28A* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1985), 883.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

connected to God and studied the Scripture, paid no attention to the person who needed help and was barely living.

Jesus builds this story by identifying a Samaritan, while traveling, notices a bruised man, stops, and aids him. Not only did the Samaritan stop to aid this man, but he also had compassion on the person, lifted him up, and carried him to a place of stability while providing for his holistic care. People in the Jewish community would have looked down upon this Samaritan.⁹⁹ Jesus places the Samaritan in the role of a saint. This unwanted and unwelcomed Samaritan demonstrates the actions of what it means to live out love through services and sacrifice. His action of engaging this man highlights the essence of community engagement through integral missions.

The Samaritan exemplifies an attitude with willingness to engage someone hurting (*going to aid the injured person*), moving out of his comfort zone (*engaging a Jewish man*), sacrificing his assets (*sharing of his wine*), offering his time (*caring for a wounded man*), risking his life (*helping a Jewish man on a dangerous Jericho Road*), and providing adequate resources (*offering expensive oil, money for a room, and board*).¹⁰⁰ Concluding the story, Jesus asks as to who demonstrates the appropriate behavior. The response was “the one who showed mercy” (Luke 10: 37 NRSV). Then Jesus gives the verdict, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37 NRSV).

Jesus poses the challenge, to “go” and “do,” to a diverse crowd of individuals who witnessed his interaction with a lawyer. Interestingly, Jesus makes a connection between obtaining eternal life and the identify of one’s neighbor. This story provides a model for

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Goheen and Mullins, *The Symphony of Mission*, 104.

Christian conduct, especially in engaging people in need.¹⁰¹ At times, some of God’s people may pass by those who were barely living due to financial constraints, homelessness, depression, and social disconnection.

As the story applies to New Ellis Chapel, believers are called to implement daily the spiritual attitude and behavior of the Samaritan.¹⁰² This means that the congregation start noticing its surrounding and seek to aid those who have been caught by the robbers of poverty, mental health disorders, economic instability, emotional distress, and unstable housing. This would require invigorating the community through integral missions—ministering to people, no matter their social status, with the intent of empowering them through holistic care.

Furthermore, New Ellis Chapel needs to look for ways to appropriately engage people in the community to bandage up their holistic wounds--spiritually, socially, economically, culturally, and mentally. It is crucial for the congregation to adhere to Jesus’ invitation to “go” and “do” the things of God, with a spirit of compassion for the transformation of the community. In a word, New Ellis Chapel needs to see herself as a movable treasure ready to reach out to the community and the nations for blessing and redemption.¹⁰³

The Early Church Community Engagement through Integral Missions

The book of Acts begins with Jesus giving final instructions to his disciples concerning their task to engage the community once the Holy Spirit had come upon them.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² For further discussion, see Robert D. Pierson, *Need-Based Evangelism: Becoming a Good Samaritan Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006).

¹⁰³ Medeiros, “*Local Churches*,” 190.

The goal was for the believers to announce the reign of God, holistically, to anyone so that all who believed would have and experience a meaningful life in Christ.

Freshly told, that they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NET), and the work of community engagement rapidly followed. Acts 2 highlights Peter’s preaching to the Jews, including those from various parts of the world. After he finishes proclaiming the word, the disciples engage the community by “selling their property and possessions and distributing the proceeds to everyone, as anyone had need” (Acts 2:45 NET). Moreover, it was a daily practice in the community of “breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart” (Acts 2:46 NASB). The disciples had a close connection with the temple and intimate relationships with the people who dwelled in the community, allowing for God to grow it holistically.¹⁰⁴

The disciples were able to gain influence and develop a bond with the people due to their sincere ministry activity, impacting the community by distributing to those who were in need. As believers continued to grow in their knowledge of God, they demonstrated passion for the work of ministry within their networks and those from the community.¹⁰⁵ The Holy Spirit used the early church to proclaim God’s word in different places. Also, the Holy Spirit moves followers of Christ to provide for those who were in need. Glasser writes:

¹⁰⁴ Johannes Munck, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Anchor Bible, Vol. 31* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), 23.

¹⁰⁵ For further discussion, see David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman, *Creating Communities of the Kingdom: New Testament Models of Church Planting* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988).

All sensed his call to participate in the new social reality that the Holy Spirit was sending forth into the world. Their sense of spiritual identity with one another enabled them to affirm their communal relationship “in Christ” by loving service “to anyone as he had need.”¹⁰⁶

Peter and John’s encounter with a needy person (Acts 3) took place after the early church’s drive for community engagement (Acts 2). Both were heading to the temple for prayer. Before entering in, they encounter “a man lame from birth was being carried up, who was placed at the temple gate called ‘the Beautiful Gate’ every day so he could beg for money from those going into the temple courts” (Acts 3:2 NET). Luke is silent about the length of time this man has been begging, but it clear that this is a regular or daily practice.

To add to the existing misery, this person was positioned at the doors of the temple. It paints a heartbreaking picture of many who went to the temple, daily, seeing the individual on the ground. To Peter and John, engaging the lame man now is equally important as praying in the temple; this was also an act of worship. Peter “looks” at the man, focusing on the individual’s brokenness and his need for healing.¹⁰⁷ After observing his condition, Peter commands the man to look straight at him, as he pays attention to the wholistic need of the person. After engaging the individual, and being intimately present, Peter shares the gospel while addressing the need. From this act of sharing the word, connecting, and encouraging the man to stand, healing takes place. The healing provides an opportunity for the man to walk, be empowered to praise God, thereby becoming a

¹⁰⁶ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 265.

¹⁰⁷ Robert W. Wall, “Acts: Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 Corinthians,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. X* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 88.

witness. For Peter and John, their act of community engagement provides a platform to speak to the community about Christ.¹⁰⁸

In such case, Peter and John give a meaningful example to the disciples regarding practical ways to engage people, no matter who they are and where they are. Once the early church engages actively, the process of healing begins, which provides an opportunity for the Gospel to be heard by the residents of the community. Like Peter and John, the Body of Christ must be intentional about empowering the community by proclaiming the whole gospel to the whole person.¹⁰⁹

The early church demonstrates how meeting the needs of the community is a critical factor for spiritual growth and impacting people's lives. Acts 4 exemplifies the constant momentum of the early church's success with community transformation. The early church grows numerically, so does its witness through integral missions. Despite the challenges of dealing with opposition from "rulers, elders, and scribes" (Acts 4:4 NRSV), the disciples "gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33 NRSV). In addition to the apostles' preaching, healing, and empowerment (Acts 3), the fourth chapter of the Book of Acts features community engagement as a visible act that happened regularly. No one was in need because tangible giving of things such as land, houses, and fields were sold to address community necessities.

Today, many people may feel lame from birth due to the ills of life that potentially originated from generational poverty, oppression, underemployment, and discrimination. New Ellis Chapel could respond to these needs by developing a

¹⁰⁸ Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Ho, *Integrating*, 17.

meaningful ministry that is both sustainable and transformational. Engaging the citizens, grasping an awareness of the needs that exist, being willing to serve despite challenges, willingly sharing, and holistically empowering those who are hard pressed, provide a structure that could completely change the trajectory of the New Ellis Chapel community.

Ananias in Authentic Missional Action

Acts 9:10-19 shows a clear picture of Ananias' attitude of true discipleship that is often unheard of and unrecognizable among many churches. His nurturing lifestyle, as shown by engaging Saul (Paul) could serve as a model to help many individuals who are holistically lost today. Like Saul, who later became Paul, several people living in the community that surround churches are extremely intelligent, gifted, and yearning for a better way. Paul needs a loving touch, life-giving support, and a fresh image of light that would give him the appropriate spiritual sight in his dominion of darkness. Ananias provides such brightness. Ananias is not as popular as other prominent characters in the Bible; however, his prolific impact certainly serves as a model for believers in community engagement.

Ananias, whose name means, "Yahweh is gracious," lives up to his character.¹¹⁰ A Jewish Christian living in Damascus, Ananias is a faithful observer of the law. He is devout in his belief and is known to be a disciple.¹¹¹ The commendation as a disciple is critical to Ananias commission to go and carry out his missional duty. Compared to

¹¹⁰ J. Bradley Chance, "Acts," in *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2007), 148.

¹¹¹ Robert F. O'Toole, "Ananias," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1992), 224.

disciples like Peter and John, the Bible vaguely describes Ananias. The word disciple means “to learn.”¹¹² The reference to Ananias as a disciple denotes that he is a follower of Jesus, astute in his teachings, and chosen to be a reliable witness.¹¹³ Apparently, Ananias faithfully walks with God, which demonstrates his strong witness. His missional mindset to go and engage the needy and the disadvantaged depicts a genuine mark of a disciple in the early church.

After God calls upon Ananias in Acts 9, he responds back saying, “Here I am, Lord” (Acts 9:10 NET). Ananias’s obedience connects him to many great biblical characters who responded in faith without any future awareness pertaining to their assignment of impacting their community. In Genesis 22:1, Abraham was called by God, and before being asked to sacrifice his son he responded saying, “Here I am” (NRSV). As a young man serving in the Temple, the prophet Samuel hears the voice of God, and before receiving his great assignment he says, “Here I am” (1 Samuel 3:4 NRSV). God called Abraham and Samuel, and both were given an enormous challenge to perform specific tasks. Ananias stands in their company. Abraham, Samuel, and Ananias had experienced various journeys that prepared them to be used mightily of God to serve holistically those who were lost, broken, and blind. Ananias’ transparency with God reflects the narrative in Acts 9:13-14, hearing evil things about Paul who holds authority “to bind all who invoke” (Acts 9:14 NRSV) the name of the Lord. True discipleship requires a commitment to a life that breaks with the past and gives way to a new future.¹¹⁴

¹¹² David R. Bauer, “Disciple, Discipleship,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 128.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 131.

¹¹⁴ Dennis Martin and Hans Weder, “Disciple, Discipleship,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1992), 209.

Since Paul had a damaging past that Ananias did not share culturally, socially, and spiritually, his reluctance could have propelled him to remain within the four walls of his comfort zone. Regardless of the hesitation, God still sends Ananias. God enlightens Ananias, telling him that Paul is an instrument chosen to spread the Lord's name before the Gentiles, kings, and the people of Israel. Ananias accepts the missional calling and participates in God's plan. Ananias' willingness to be obedient to God's invitation demonstrates true steps ordered by the Lord. His willingness to break from any misunderstandings and errant stereotypes pertaining to Paul gives way for a new future for him and the early church. Paul eventually turns around and becomes one of the greatest followers of Christ in the early church. Ananias' willingness to step out of bounds of traditional thinking and grasp hold of the true essence of grace paves the way for Paul's ministry. His willingness to engage Paul tremendously impacts the entire world and the future of the Body of Christ. His act of community engagement was revolutionary.

Realizing that both are interwoven through Christ, Ananias embraces Saul by touching his shoulder and calling him brother.¹¹⁵ After scales fell from Saul's eyes, Ananias baptized him. Through this pivotal ministry, Ananias sets into motion Jesus' mandate to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). By engaging Paul, Ananias demonstrates the missional activity of "going" with the intent of inspiring hope, impacting lives through integral ministries, and creating opportunities to help others find their ways spiritually.

¹¹⁵Chance, *Acts*, 150.

Ananias had heard of Saul's (Paul) reputation, but soon realized that he and Paul were interconnected in Christ's love. This model of relationship is crucial to New Ellis Chapel, as it connects with the community for loving services. In a sense, the church and community are intertwined because they both share the realities of human existence. If the community hurts, the church feels its pain. If the church stagnates, then the community experiences decay. Because of their interconnectivity, believers need to strive to remove judgmental thoughts and attitudes toward the community. The congregation needs to develop a theology of hospitality rather than hostility towards those who are facing crisis and despair. For New Ellis Chapel to grow, it needs to seek the holistic welfare and wellbeing of the congregation and the needs of the community as well.

New Ellis Chapel could learn from Ananias' life and ministry. As Saul struggled with his spiritual journey because of his past acts of persecuting the followers of Christ, Ananias came to lead him Christ's way of love and forgiveness. Paul's previous life represents many in the 21st century that are economically oppressed, politically discouraged, socially hopeless, and spiritually damaged. These people await a touch of love and kindness from Christ's followers, so they could be whole again in their lives. In this sense, believers are called to relinquish arrogance, selfishness, and laziness, and put on their missional garment of humility. Members at New Ellis Chapel, following Ananias's example, could seek to immerse themselves in the community to remove holistic pain and selflessly bring love to others through integral missions. Because the community is God's, as the "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those live in it" (Ps. 24:1 NRSV), it is paramount for New Ellis Chapel to pursue every innovative opportunity to identify various ways to reach out to the lost in the community.

Paul's Passion for Engaging People

Paul's passion for the well-being of people (Acts 20:35), concern for the poor (1 Tim. 6:18, Rom. 15:25-29, Gal. 2:10), and zeal for community engagement is highlighted in his various mission trips. If one angle of community engagement is the ability to work collaboratively with and through groups with the intent of addressing well-being, Paul's approach to ministry demonstrates this definition.¹¹⁶

Paul's motivation to engage people was sincere and authentic. His genuine approach to people is seen in Acts 16. At a makeshift synagogue in an informal setting, Paul engages a Gentile woman named Lydia in Philippi, at the city river due to the possibility that a temple in the city did not exist.¹¹⁷ Because of his engaging act and dialogue with Lydia, "The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (Acts 16:14 NRSV). This happened because Paul spent "several days" in the community engaging people.

After meeting with Lydia, Paul journeyed on, attempting to seek others for the gospel. While ministering in the community and liberating an enslaved girl from an abusive occupation, a disruption takes place in the city causing Paul and Silas to be blamed for the chaos. Therefore, both were thrown in jail. While in prison, Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed to the point that a violent earthquake struck. The historian's description of what happened was graphic: "The foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about

¹¹⁶ Toms and Toms, "Community Engagement," 7.

¹¹⁷ Wall, *Acts*, 231.

to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped” (Acts 16:26-27 NRSV). Paul instructed everyone to remain inside the prison. After witnessing the prison doors open from this act of God, the jailer asked, “What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30 NRSV) Then, Paul and Silas engaged the jailer with the gospel, after which the latter’s household also heard the gospel.

In the book of Acts, Luke recounts Paul’s journeys featuring teaching in different temples and speaking to diverse crowds in many cities. In Acts 17, “Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So, he argued in the synagogue with both Jews and devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there” (Acts 17:16-17 NRSV). Paul shows concern over idols that are rampant in the city (17:16). One could simply imagine the apostle walking down the street of Athens, viewing various statues. He then makes his way to the synagogue to “argue” with the Jews and then moves toward the marketplace. Paul’s argumentative style was not uncommon during this cultural setting since he consistently engaged ordinary people in the marketplace, as well as had honest exchanges with his scholastic peers.¹¹⁸ Understanding that Socrates engaged ordinary people in philosophical debates, the author Luke strategically utilizes the word “argue” to present Paul in the same light as Socrates in the text.¹¹⁹ Paul does not discriminate who he approaches. He bears witness to anyone regardless of their nationality, gender, or

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 244.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

background.¹²⁰ His passion for engaging the people led him to welcome and dialogue with anyone who was open to hear about the good news of Christ.

This missional act of engaging people in the marketplace daily is a regular routine for Paul. However, he does not stop at the synagogue; he recognizes that there needs to be constant interactions with those at the temple and the citizens of the community. Paul is intentional about reaching out to those in the community, including people who do not share with his theology. Despite their differing views, Paul respects them and assures “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13 NRSV).

New Ellis Chapel could follow Paul’s example as members engage people from all walks of life. It is important for the church to develop a missional attitude that would allow believers to engage people regardless of their occupational status, racial makeup, religious beliefs, or cultural background. Like Paul, the congregation can integrate ministries that would cater to the needs of both believers and seekers. In addition to fellowship, worship, and teaching, New Ellis Chapel needs to prioritize community engagement, while spreading the gospel.

Historical Examples of Community Engagement

During the time of intense persecution and extensive harassment, the Christian movement expanded as believers proclaimed the message of divine love, inviting everyone to follow and have a personal relationship with the risen Christ.¹²¹ As time

¹²⁰ Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 356.

¹²¹ Terry, “The History of Mission in the Early Church,” 167-168.

progressed, the growth of the Body of Christ developed in the third century because of the relentless presentation of a message of a simple gospel that offered social justice and assurance of power over evil forces that have been plaguing the community.¹²²

Various leaders in the Christian movement, such as bishops and missionaries, demonstrated great spiritual examples of evangelism and discipleship in the community. Church members engaged the community by spreading the message of Christ in homes, marketplaces, and street corners.¹²³

Augustine, for example, brought fresh and continued holistic dynamic to those he served, emphasizing ministry to the whole person without separating the community from the church. Augustine knew how to engage the community; he understood the value of humanity through the lens of God. Bosch observes, “Augustine insisted that the church was not a refuge from the world but existed for the sake of a world that was hurting.”¹²⁴ In addition to the church engaging those in the world that were hurting, Augustine believed that the same individuals who participated in pagan holidays and community events were drunkards, gamblers, and adulterers. Accordingly, they were the same people who pressed their way inside of the church for Christian festivals.¹²⁵ Augustine viewed humanity from a holistic perspective. In a sense, he understood that moving toward the

¹²² Ibid., 170.

¹²³ Ibid., 172.

¹²⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 218.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

community is intentional, sought by embracing the missional attitude of feeling the community needs.¹²⁶

As time progressed, the church continued its practice of engaging the community with the message of hope and compassion; Christians were able to win others through acts of social services. Adolf Harnack lists the following various missional activities that Christians participated in:

Alms in general, support of teachers and officials, support of widows and orphans, support of the sick and infirm, the care of prisoners and convicts in the mines, the burial of paupers, providing disaster relief, furnishing employment, and extending hospitality.¹²⁷

Testifying to the success of the church's spiritual social services pertaining to community engagement was the emperor, Julian the Apostate, who complained about the advancement of the Christian message of love through services rendered to strangers and those who were in need.¹²⁸ The church demonstrates that integral missions through community engagement is a consistent behavior that strengthen society and provides holistic opportunities of empowerment. The proclamation of the gospel, evangelism, and meeting the needs of the community through acts of social services interlock without separation. In other words, the believers understand people and their need of holistic empowerment; they also desire and seek to meet the need of the whole person. In Augustine's words,

The Church is hungry, Christ's body is hungry. This person who is spread worldwide, whose head is on high and who limbs are here below-this whole person is hungry. We should hear his voice, her voice, in all the psalms, jubilating

¹²⁶ Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 163.

¹²⁷ Terry, "The History of Mission in the Early Church," 173.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

or groaning, rejoicing in hope, or sighing with love in fulfillment; we should hear it as something already well known to us, a voice most familiar because it is our own.¹²⁹

The church continued its growth during the post-Nicene period. As monasticism became a popular force within the Christian faith, the missional act of community engagement remained constant. Common people in the community respected and revered the monks because they sought to heal the sick, help the poor, and defend the oppressed against abusive public officials.¹³⁰ By the 1500s, Augustinian monks were already evangelizing communities, while meeting the holistic needs of the people; they built hospitals, schools, and educational institutions. As a result, many followed Christ and were baptized.¹³¹

In contemporary times, World Vision International (WVI) exemplifies integral missions because it seeks to serve the oppressed and the poor in the community, while bearing the good news of Jesus. The organization has embraced the biblical mandate of seeking mercy, humility, and justice.¹³² To deliver community transformation, WVI facilitates witness through word and deed.¹³³ The organization's leadership desires to assist the whole person provides an opportunity for empowerment and holistic liberation.

Another organization known for its practice of integral missions is Compassion International (CI), which engages families and children in the community living in

¹²⁹ Westerholm and Westerholm, *Reading Sacred Scriptures*, 153-154.

¹³⁰ Terry, "The History of Mission in the Early Church," 181.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹³² "Mission and Values," *World Vision*, accessed October 21, 2021, www.worldvision.org/about-us/mission-statement.

¹³³ See Richard Stearns, *The Hole in Our Gospel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

impoverished environments.¹³⁴ Everette Swanson felt a burning desire to aid homeless children in Korea while ministering to American soldiers during the Korean War.¹³⁵ He understood that the preaching of God's Word needed to be compassionately matched with spiritual deeds of providing care for the marginalized, the economically depressed, and the spiritually needy. Choosing to engage the needy in the community led to millions of children's lives being completely revitalized and transformed.¹³⁶

Another global organization that incorporates wholistic missions as a core value is the Lausanne Movement, which offers significant and relevant resources on impacting society. Through its global network, the organization provides relevant resources for community engagement in terms of love, justice, grace, and empowerment.¹³⁷ The network intentionally seeks to spiritually influence every sphere of God's creation, spanning from marketplace ministries, education, politics, and economics, to churches.¹³⁸ Inspired by Billy Graham, the network works collectively as a catalyst for connectivity in facilitating global aid and empowerment of people through integral missions regardless of ethnicity.¹³⁹

In retrospect, throughout history and in contemporary times, the Body of Christ consistently lived out its calling to be a light and salt of the earth through integral

¹³⁴ "Who We Are," *Compassion International*, accessed October 21, 2021, www.compassion.com/about/what-is-compassion.htm.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ "The Lausanne Movement's Unique Calling," *Lausanne Movement*, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://lausanne.org/about-the-movement>.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

missions. Compelled, moved, and driven by passion to engage the community, the church functions as a transformational participant in the reign of God, while living out the discipling mandate (Matthew 28:19-20). As the Body of Christ pursues community engagement in response to Christ's Central Commission, it creates holistic healthy communities through the process of restoration that leads to peace with God, God's creation, and one's neighbor.¹⁴⁰ This restoration process includes welcoming the stranger at the gates of the community.¹⁴¹

Major Components of Community Engagement

To be missional embodies the notion of joining Jesus on a mission, learning, and adapting to the surrounding culture, while remaining biblically sound.¹⁴² Additionally, being missional involves living and doing missionary work in one's community.¹⁴³ To be missional is to holistically engage those who believers encounter with the intent of leading them to lordship of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁴ This project consisted of five theological components that promoted community engagement through integral missions.

¹⁴⁰ Dalrymple, *Beyond Poverty*, 31.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2016), 21.

¹⁴³ For practical resources, see Steve Sjonren, *101 Ways to Reach Your Community* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001); Robert Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, revised and updated (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018).

¹⁴⁴ "Integral Mission," *Lausanne Movement*, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://lausanne.wpengine.com/networks/issues/integral-mission>.

Research

God reached out to the Hebrew community during times of slavery in Egypt. God's message to Moses was crystal-clear: "I know their sufferings" (Ex. 3:7 NET). In a sense, God's relationship with the Hebrew slaves epitomizes contemporary research: looking (*surveying*), learning (*researching material specific to Israel*), and listening (*focus groups*). For believers to engage the community, they need to employ basic aspects of research like gathering information through primary (focus groups/ surveys) and secondary sources (cultural, social, economic, and political data) within their spheres of influence.¹⁴⁵ Effective research provides efficient community engagement and facilitates the attainment of the articulated spiritual goal, which is to proclaim a holistic "message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19 NRSV).¹⁴⁶ This process begins by understanding the essential components pertaining to the data that make up people groups in the community.¹⁴⁷

Equipping

As noted earlier, before motivating the community to build the wall, Nehemiah adequately ensured that the people were prepared. Nehemiah gathered information and developed a strategy to ensure the completion of the wall. The prophet identified the strength in the community (*the people*), weakness (*ruined city*), opportunities (*rebuilding of the wall*), and the threats ("Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official,

¹⁴⁵ Cheyne, "Strategies for Humanitarian Ministries," 522.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 520.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

and Geshem the Arab”) (Neh. 2:19 NRSV). As applied today, Elias Medeiros asserts, “The time is always now to work on the preparation of the previous, present, and next generation-elderly, young-adults, youth, adolescents, and children.”¹⁴⁸ To prepare for integral mission through community engagement, it is important for New Ellis Chapel to understand its reason for existence, calling, and purpose. Thus, developing a strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats, and Solutions (SWOTS) model provides an opportunity for local churches to see a visual of things they can utilize and implement. It also offers insight into areas of weaknesses and paths that churches should avoid or correct.

Awareness

Awareness of resources that exist within the community gives New Ellis Chapel a pathway to provide holistic care to people. To become aware of people’s needs, the church could develop a resource booklet, guide, and catalog that has information pertaining available aid for any need that may exist in the neighborhood or community. Having a resource-list of various agencies and community organizations that could assist in people’s quality of life is extremely important in gaining influence and developing trust. The act of giving people “hope” is crucial to community engagement. Being aware of things that people need helps to foster confidence. As noted earlier, the Good Samaritan was able to aid the half dead individual because of his ability to “bandage his wounds” (Luke 10:34 NRSV) and sensitivity to address a need with appropriate resources. Likewise, New Ellis Chapel’s awareness of various resources in the community could result in ministering to the needy in an appropriate way.

¹⁴⁸ Medeiros, “Local Churches,” 191.

Connecting

A missional church seeks ways to develop relationships with people in the neighborhood and community. Church members could invite someone to a meal, involve themselves in sport teams, attend local community events, build a network through social media platforms, or volunteer at the local schools.¹⁴⁹ To better connect with people requires intentional education about various cultural dynamics that exist amongst diverse groups. This includes looking at information concerning cultural activities, events, and celebrations that people participate in.

As members at New Ellis Chapel celebrate worship and prayer, engaging and challenging the surrounding community with all its needs becomes necessary.¹⁵⁰ Looking for ways to identify common ground with people so that intimate relationships are built with those the congregation seeks to serve, provides an opportunity for community connection.¹⁵¹

Hope

As a vehicle of hope, New Ellis Chapel also functions as an agent of transformation, thereby impacting the quality of life of people in society.¹⁵² The end goal of community engagement is to provide hope to the hopeless. It was noted earlier that the prophet Isaiah's message (Is. 61) and Jesus' missions framework (Luke 4) feature a

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 193.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Johnstone observes, "Before sending Moses, God participates with the Israelites in their pain. God chooses to connect with the people by immersing into their world to lift them out" (*Exodus 1-19*, 76).

¹⁵² Burgess, "Spiritual Capital and Engagement," 115.

message of hope to those who are “brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61:1 NET), “poor” (Luke 4:18 NRSV), and “captive” (Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18 NRSV). The same hope that inspired prophetic messages,¹⁵³ should be the same hope that makes the church as a catalyst for giving, dispensing, and building hope in the community.

Chapter three gives insights concerning biblical and theological information that spiritually guided the objective of this work pertaining to community engagement through integral missions. Four Old Testament passages were used as scriptural evidence concerning God’s missional mandate regarding called servants to engage the community with the intent of meeting the holistic need of humanity. Each scriptural passage displayed God’s desire of community transformation, which involved the engaging of humanity.

Concerning the New Testament, seven biblical passages were sought to develop additional confirmation of God mandating the Church to engage the community through holistic ministries.

Additionally, a historical overview of the Christian Church from its early development to contemporary times were presented concerning how community engagement through integral missions was implemented in the daily practices of believers and the continued importance of this work in present-day culture. Five theological components that involved research, equipping, awareness, connecting, and hope were applied in this project to achieve the goal of community engagement through integral missions.

¹⁵³ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 301.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The critical evaluation component of this ministry project includes quantitative information concerning the measurement of growth in the experimental group's knowledge about community engagement through integral missions and their ability to practically apply the information they received through the trainings. The quantitative data analysis consisted of a twelve-question ministry project Pre/Post-Test, five-point (*theory*) and ten question ten-point (*practical*) Likert self-assessments.¹⁵⁴ The instruments measured the participants' knowledge concerning the project's subject matter regarding the group's cognitive (*reflection*) development and their ability (*action*) to utilize the information. Also, there was an eleven question ten-point Post Wellness Day Likert self-assessment that measured the effectiveness of the Community Wellness Day.¹⁵⁵ Lastly, there were both a ten-question post Participant and Workshop Evaluation, five-point Likert self-assessments that measured the experience the group had, the effectiveness of the material taught, and the impact the environment had on the group's training.¹⁵⁶

I utilized numerical values regarding the instruments that were used to score each of the items. The ministry project pre/post theory assessment included information that focused on awareness of different cultures, God engaging people, community

¹⁵⁴ See Appendices A and B.

¹⁵⁵ See Appendix C.

¹⁵⁶ See Appendices D and E.

engagement, awareness of resources in the community, and being prepared to assist community members who are in need.

Concerning the ministry project pre/post practical assessment, these instruments were designed to gather data pertaining to the participants' ability to obtain research, develop focus groups, create a SWOTS analysis, one's ability to identify existing resources, use social media platforms, and develop a ministry project based off the needs of the community. The ministry project pre/post practical assessment measured the growth of each participant's ability to apply what was learned in the training sessions.

The post Community Wellness Day assessment included questions that focused on the participants' expectations being met, citizen turn out, the quality of the facility, their experience with the event, safety concerns, and if the training prepared them to do the Wellness Day. In addition to the post Wellness Day assessment, the participants' evaluation survey included questions that pertained to the instructor being prepared for the class, mastery of the material, if the topics was interesting, time utilization, and if each participant felt respected at each session.

Lastly, the post workshop evaluation survey focused on the participants' perspective concerning the quality of the facility that the trainings took place in, their comfort level, if any distraction took place, if they understood the information, their desire to learn more about the subject, and if the sessions were a positive experience.

Along with the experimental group, this project sought to create a control group for assessment purposes and to measure the impact of the training that the experimental group received from their seven-week project experience. The goal was to have a participant group of fifteen for the control group. I was unable to meet my goal of fifteen,

having only five individuals able to participate. Considering the limited number of individuals willing to participate in the control group, the data was inclusive, and therefore would not give any sound information that would have displayed an impact on the evaluation of this material.

Data Analysis
Results From the Reliability of Pre-Test Theory and Practical Items (Cronbach Alpha)

A Cronbach Alpha was performed concerning the validity and reliability of the pre/post-test theory and pre/post-test practical items that sought to obtain the awareness of the participants' knowledge and their ability to apply the information concerning community engagement.¹⁵⁷ The data revealed that all assessments were reliable instruments, concluding that the data gathered from this project displays dependable results.

Figure 1: Reliability Pre-Test Theory Items (Cronbach Alpha)
Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | Mean | Sd |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Point estimate | 0.791 | 24.200 | 5.335 |
| 95% CI lower bound | 0.595 | 21.500 | 3.906 |
| 95% CI upper bound | 0.906 | 26.900 | 8.413 |

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

| Item | Item-rest correlation |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pre-Theory 1 Speak | 0.740 |
| Pre-Theory 2 Scripture | 0.181 |
| Pre-Theory 3 Engagement | 0.103 |

¹⁵⁷ See Appendices A and B.

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | Mean | Sd |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Pre-Theory 4 Missions | 0.712 | | |
| Pre-Theory 5 Resources | 0.507 | | |
| Pre-Theory 6 Diverse | 0.536 | | |
| Pre-Theory 7 Needs | -0.030 | | |
| Pre-Theory 8 SES | 0.726 | | |
| Pre-Theory 9 Help | 0.498 | | |
| Pre-Theory 10 Prepared | 0.448 | | |

The pre-test theory assessment sought to gather the participants' cognitive awareness pertaining to their self-perception of community engagement before going through the five-week training sessions. According to Figure 1, the reliability of the pre-test theory assessment measurement displayed a .791 Cronbach Alpha, with a mean of 24.200 and standard deviation of 5.335.

Based on the results, the validity of this instrument's ability to measure the participants' awareness before their participation in the training is dependable and acceptable. Since the assessment is a reliable instrument, I was able to effectively measure the participants' self-perception concerning their awareness of community engagement. The instrument's dependability was an important factor due to its consistency in communicating trustworthy data. The Cronbach Alpha score helped me to concretely analyze the data that participants communicated through their pre-test theory survey.

Figure 2: Reliability Post-Test Theory Items (Cronbach Alpha)**Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | mean | Sd |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Point estimate | 0.712 | 18.600 | 6.566 |
| 95% CI lower bound | 0.406 | 15.277 | 4.807 |
| 95% CI upper bound | 0.878 | 21.923 | 10.355 |

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

| Item | Item-rest correlation |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Post Theory 1 Speak | 0.069 |
| Post Theory 2 Scripture | 0.092 |
| Post Theory 3 Engagement | -0.128 |
| Post Theory 4 Missions | 0.588 |
| Post Theory 5 Resources | 0.234 |
| Post Theory 6 Diverse | 0.437 |
| Post Theory 7 Needs | 0.395 |
| Post Theory 8 SES | 0.607 |
| Post Theory 9 Help | 0.681 |
| Post Theory 10 Prepared | 0.717 |

The post-test theory assessment sought to determine if there was a substantial difference between cognitive development pertaining to the participants' understanding of community engagement after having gone through the five-week training sessions.¹⁵⁸ According to Figure 2, the reliability of the post-test theory assessment measurement displayed a .712 Cronbach Alpha, with a mean of 18.600 and standard deviation of 6.566. Based on the results, the reliability of this instrument's ability to measure the impact on this training is highly dependable and acceptable.

¹⁵⁸ See Appendix A.

Since the post-test theory Cronbach Alpha score was trustworthy, it afforded me the ability to correctly interpret the data that was given on the post-test theory assessment. I was able to gather reliable information concerning the participants' thoughts about the five-week theory training on community engagement concerning my group's awareness. Having a dependable post-test theory ensured that the analyzed data was correct and trustworthy. The trustworthiness of the test helped me to confidently measure my group's self-perception of their awareness pertaining to community engagement after they received the information that was taught.

Figure 3: Reliability Pre-Test Practical Items (Cronbach Alpha)

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | mean | sd |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Point estimate | 0.836 | 46.333 | 15.624 |
| 95% CI lower bound | 0.670 | 38.427 | 11.438 |
| 95% CI upper bound | 0.929 | 54.240 | 24.640 |

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

| Item | Item-rest correlation |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pre-Practical 1 Obtain | 0.714 |
| Pre-Practical 2 Focus | 0.703 |
| Pre-Practical 3 SWOTS | -0.147 |
| Pre-Practical 4 Explain | 0.086 |
| Pre-Practical 5 Research | 0.526 |
| Pre-Practical 6 Catalog | 0.640 |
| Pre-Practical 7 Locations | 0.701 |
| Pre-Practical 8 Needs | 0.606 |
| Pre-Practical 9 Media | 0.790 |
| Pre-Practical 10 Ranked | 0.554 |

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

| Item | Item-rest correlation |
|------|-----------------------|
|------|-----------------------|

The pre-test practical assessment sought to gather the participants' ability to apply what they learned concerning community engagement before going through the five-week training sessions.¹⁵⁹ According to Figure 3, the data displayed a .836 reliability measurement Cronbach Alpha, along with a mean of 46.333 and a standard deviation of 15.624. This information concludes that the pre-test practical instrument was a reliable assessment for data purposes, and the dependability of this assessments results concerning its ability to measure the impact of this training is highly acceptable.

The dependability of the pre-test practical assessment scored high ensuring that this assessment had great reliability and consistency. The acceptability of this test was important in analyzing the data before the group went through the training due to the fact that most of the participants sharing in the first session their ambiguities about doing community engagement. This reliability analysis provided me trustworthy data so that I could use it for measurement purposes after the participants had gone through the five-week training session.

Figure 4: Reliability Post-Test Practical Items (Cronbach Alpha)
Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | mean | sd |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Point estimate | 0.945 | 63.800 | 24.199 |
| 95% CI lower bound | 0.887 | 51.554 | 17.717 |

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix B.

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

| Estimate | Cronbach's α | mean | sd |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 95% CI upper bound | 0.977 | 76.046 | 38.164 |

Frequentist Individual Item Reliability Statistics

| Item | Item-rest correlation |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Post Practical 1 Obtain | 0.757 |
| Post Practical 2 Focus | 0.928 |
| Post Practical 3 SWOTS | 0.906 |
| Post Practical 4 Explain | 0.770 |
| Post Practical 5 Research | 0.780 |
| Post Practical 6 Catalog | 0.808 |
| Post Practical 7 Locations | 0.554 |
| Post Practical 8 Needs | 0.772 |
| Post Practical 9 Media | 0.658 |
| Post Practical 10 Ranked | 0.904 |

The post-test practical assessment sought to establish if there was a significant difference between the participants' ability to practically apply the information that they learned during the training sessions.¹⁶⁰ The same Cronbach Alpha test that was used for the pre/post-test theory and pre-test practical was conducted for the post-test practical assessment instrument. According to Figure 3, the data displayed a .945 reliability measurement Cronbach Alpha, along with a mean of 63.800 and a standard deviation of

¹⁶⁰ See Appendix B.

24.199. This information concludes that the post-test practical instrument was a reliable assessment, valid for data purposes, and that the dependability of this assessments results concerning its ability to measure the impact of this training is highly acceptable.

Having a high post-test practical Cronbach Alpha score was beneficial to this project because it displayed accurate reliability about the concluding results pertaining to the action part of this study. The reliability and acceptability of this instrument was helpful in that the post-test practical assessment reflected trustworthy data concerning my group doing community engagement through integral missions. Before starting the training sessions, many of the participants shared that the church had not been trained to do community engagement. Having a reliable test to measure the five-week training regarding the action part of this project was important as it accurately revealed the participants' self-perceptions concerning whether the training worked or not.

Results From the Pre-Test verse Post-Test Theory Paired Sample T-Test Results

To determine whether there was a significant difference between pre and post-test theory survey scores, a Paired Samples T-Test was performed to determine if the five-week training sessions that the participants went through concerning their self-perception and awareness of community engagement made a meaningful difference or not. This test allowed me to measure the growth or regression in the participants.

Pre-v. Post Theory Paired Samples T-Test

Figure 5: Paired Samples T-Test

| Measure 1 | Measure 2 | t | df | p | Mean Difference | SE Difference | Cohen's d |
|------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
|------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|

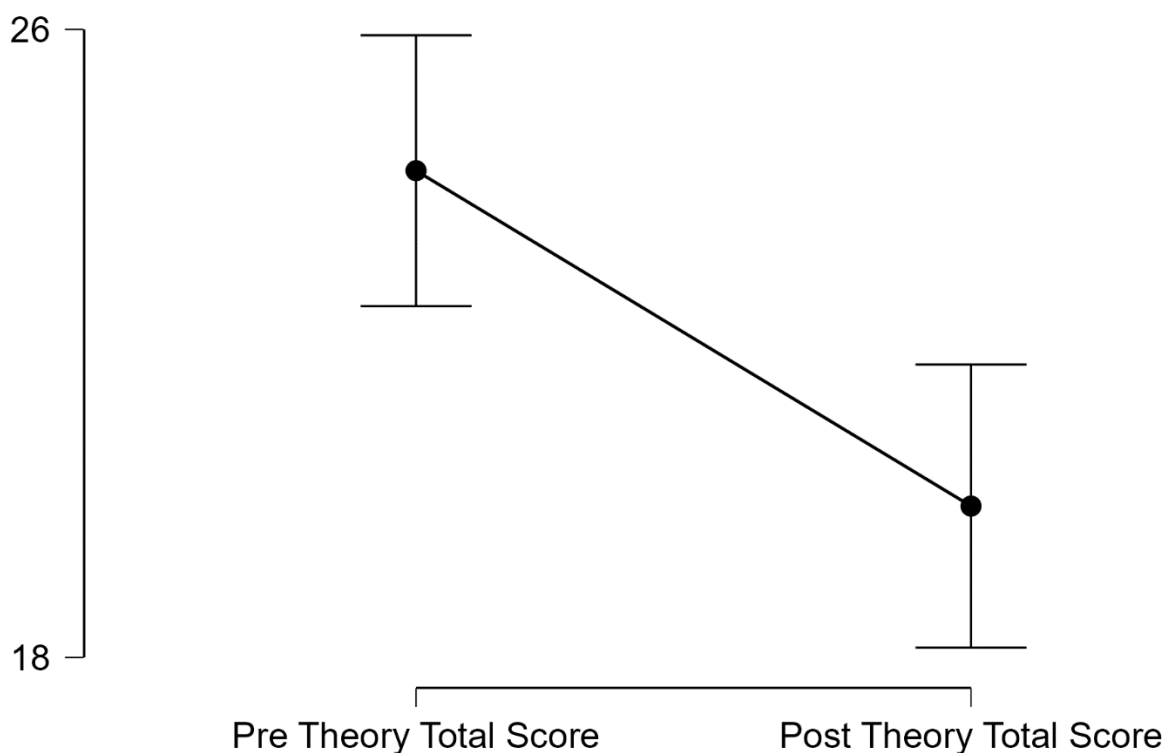
| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Pre-Theory Total Score | - | Post Theory Total Score | 3.753 | 13 | 0.002 | 4.429 | 1.180 | 1.003 |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|

Descriptive Pre and Post-Test Theory

| | N | Mean | SD | SE |
|-------------------------|----|--------|-------|-------|
| Pre-Theory Total Score | 15 | 24.200 | 5.335 | 1.377 |
| Post Theory Total Score | 14 | 19.929 | 4.233 | 1.131 |

Error Bar Plots

Pre-Theory Total Score - Post Theory Total Score



According to Figure 5, the results indicated a significant difference ($t=-3.753$, degrees of freedom = 13, p is less than .002). Since the p -value was below .005, the data revealed that real impact took place. Additionally, the data indicates that the effect of the training concerning the participants' self-perception of community engagement had a

large impact on the participant's knowledge since the Cohen's D was-1.003. The Cohen's D measured the size of the impact, which was large since the data revealed it was above .008

The Paired Sample T-Test data results allowed me the ability to determine if there was significant impact on my group because of the training, and if the training improved their cognitive awareness of community engagement from pre-test to post-test theory. The results helped me gain insight concerning if the conducted group training regarding their cognitive awareness worked or not. If the results indicated a decrease from pre-test to post-test, then I would need to identify what went wrong with the training and improve the areas of weakness. If the results indicated a positive effect, then my goal concerning the training theoretical enhancement of community engagement would have been met.

According to Figure 5, if this study was conducted 100 times, the information shows that there is a 95% confident chance that the true population mean falls between 22 and 26 for the pre-test (see Figure 5) and 18 to 23 for the post-test (see Figure 5). The mean pre-test data displayed 24.200 (see Figure 5) and 19.929 for the mean post-test (see Figure 5).

The data displays that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-test theory scores. Based on the data that is displayed by the mean, the information shows that the experimental group's theoretical training score decreased from pre-test to post-test. Although there is not concrete data to explain why there was a decrease in the cognitive assessment of the training, there are various hypothesis that could be concluded based off the evidence that the data presents.

One possibility is that the teaching and training from each session was not as effective as I thought. Although this could be a possibility, the data concerning the post learning environment assessment displays that all participants felt that the information taught was meaningful, concluding that they thought that the material taught at the training was beneficial and informative.

An additional logic could be that people had one perspective of community engagement through integral missions before the training began, but after receiving the cognitive teaching, they recognized that they were not as aware of what it entailed. The gaining of the cognitive knowledge could have affected what the participants thought they knew before receiving the training.

Results From the Pre-Test verse Post-Test Practical Paired Sample T-Test Results

A Paired Samples T-Test was performed for the pre-test and post-test practical survey to see if there was a significant difference between pre and post-test practical survey scores. The goal was to determine if the five-week training sessions that the participants went through made a difference by affecting their ability to apply the information that they learned concerning community engagement. The results from the Paired Sample T-Test would indicate growth or a decrease in the group's ability to do community engagement due to the training.

Pre-v. Post Practical Paired Samples T-Test

Figure 6: Paired Samples T-Test

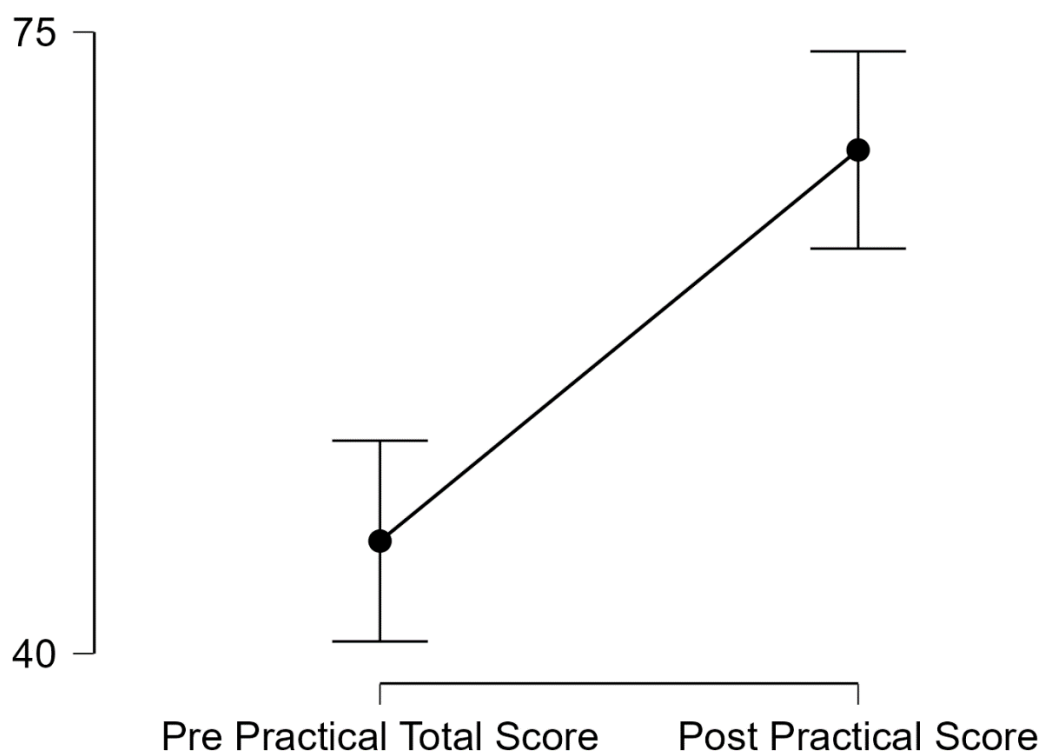
| Measure 1 | Measure 2 | T | Df | P | Mean Difference | SE Difference | Cohen's d |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|----|--------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Pre-Practical Total Score | - Post Practical Total Score | -6.444 | 13 | < .001 | -23.429 | 3.635 | -1.722 |

Figure 6: Paired Samples T-Test

| Measure 1 | Measure 2 | T | Df | P | Mean Difference | SE Difference | Cohen's d |
|-----------|-----------|---|----|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
|-----------|-----------|---|----|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------|

Descriptive Pre and Post-Test Practical

| | N | Mean | SD | SE |
|----------------------------|----|--------|--------|-------|
| Pre-Practical Total Score | 15 | 46.333 | 15.624 | 4.034 |
| Post Practical Total Score | 14 | 68.357 | 17.181 | 4.592 |



According to Figure 6, the results indicated a significant difference ($t=-6.444$, degrees of freedom = 13, p is less than .001). Since the p -value was lower than .005, the data reflected that the training had a real effect on the participants. Additionally, the data showed that the effect of the training concerning the practical application was large since the Cohen's D score was -1.722.

Both p-value and Cohen's D scores confirmed that significant impact was made from pre-test to post-test due to the five-week training sessions. Since the data revealed that a significant effect took place concerning the practical application of community engagement, I was able to analyze factors as to why impact was made whether the results were good or bad.

According to Figure 6, if this study was conducted 100 times, the information shows that there is a 95% confident chance that the true population mean falls between 42 and 48 for the pre-test and 65 to 75 for the post-test. The data displays that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-test practical assessment scores indicating an increase in the experimental group's ability to apply the knowledge of their training concerning community engagement through integral missions. Based on the data, the mean pre-test score was 46.333 (see Figure 6).

The mean post-test score was 68.357 (see Figure 6), which indicates that there was a positive shift that took place with the experimental group and their ability to practically apply what was learned in the training sessions. The results determined that having gone through the training, the experimental group's ability to apply the information that they received increased tremendously.

One possibility regarding the increase of my group's scores is that the group had not ever participated as a church in a strategic planning session concerning how to connect with citizens in the neighborhood. Also, there had not been an effective method developed to engage the citizens that surrounded the church.

Additionally, the training offered information and strategies that pertained to developing a SWOTS analysis and efficient ways to connect with the people, holistically,

that resided in the community that the church is housed. Since these topics were taught in the training, the data displayed that the participants' scores concerning things like completing a SWOTS analysis, knowing how and where to obtain reliable research data from websites, and researching existing needs in the community increased from pre-test to post-test.

The post-test practical results helped me to identify some possibilities concerning the outcomes from the post-test theory assessment. The decrease in the theoretical assessment results could display that my group thought that community engagement was limited in action. Therefore, not knowing anything about other cultures, inconsistently seeking ways to aid people constantly, being uninformed of the socioeconomics in one's neighborhood, and being unaware of the needs that exist in the community are things that highlighted my group's room for cognitive growth.

Although the post-test theory results decreased from pre-test to post-test, a positive shift from pre-test to post-test practical showed that the training accomplished its goal, which was to appropriately develop a framework in community engagement through integral missions with twenty-first century methods. Evidence of the practical growth of community engagement and the accomplishment of the goal was displayed in my groups ability to appropriately do a Community Wellness Day. The Community Wellness Day required the group to apply everything that was taught in the five-training sessions, which was research, understanding what the church could and could not do (SWOTS analysis), contact community agencies, and connect with people.

Results From the Post Wellness Descriptive Statistics

A post Wellness Day survey was conducted to determine the quality, value, and the impact of the Community Wellness Day event.¹⁶¹ The descriptive statistic data is used help me see what the experimental group thought about the Community Wellness Day. The data would help me to identify the strengths and weakness concerning the experience. Additionally, the information from this survey would allow me the opportunity to develop a summary as to next steps in the future concerning potential Wellness Day events.

Figure 7: Descriptive Statistics

| | Post Wellness Total Score |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | 15 |
| Missing | 0 |
| Mean | 45.067 |
| Std. Deviation | 12.544 |
| Minimum | 0.000 |
| Maximum | 50.000 |

¹⁶¹ See Appendix C.

Post Wellness Descriptive Statistics

Frequency Tables

Frequencies for Post Wellness Total Score

| Post Wellness Total Score | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 6.667 | 6.667 | 6.667 |
| 46 | 2 | 13.333 | 13.333 | 20.000 |
| 47 | 2 | 13.333 | 13.333 | 33.333 |
| 48 | 4 | 26.667 | 26.667 | 60.000 |
| 49 | 2 | 13.333 | 13.333 | 73.333 |
| 50 | 4 | 26.667 | 26.667 | 100.000 |
| Missing | 0 | 0.000 | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.000 | | |

According to Figure 7, the Post Wellness Day survey results suggested mixed reviews concerning what participants felt about the Wellness Day. The mixed reviews amongst the group were significant and informative. The data indicated a standard deviation of 12.544 (see Figure 7) and a mean score of 45.067 (see Figure 7), which reflects that the data from the group varied.

On questions pertaining to the participants receiving the appropriate training, their participation with the Wellness Day, quality of the facility, and feeling safe at the event scored high. The high scoring of these questions was positive because it displayed that the group acknowledged they were trained appropriately and thought that future events would be beneficial for the community.

Concerning questions regarding the citizen turn-out and if the Community Wellness Day met the group's expectations, the data indicated low scores amongst most of the participants. A reason for the group scoring citizen turn-out low on the survey could have been that most of the citizens that attended the event were from New Ellis

Chapel Baptist Church and other parts of the county. Additionally, a reason for the group giving a low score to the survey question about the Wellness Day meeting their expectation could have been that many of the residents from the Holly Oak Park neighborhood did not attend. The group could have been disappointed since the event was designed to engage the citizens living in the Holly Oak Park region.

The questions involving the wellness day achieving its goal, the participants' willingness to participate in future wellness days, and the value of the agencies that were present, received various scores. There is no concrete conclusion as to why these three questions received both low and high scores amongst the participants in the group. It could have been that some members were excited to start with the Community Wellness Day and build upon it with other events in the future. Other members of the group could have potentially discovered that doing the Wellness Day revealed to them that it was not something that they were passionate about or that the event was not effective. Since there were mixed reviews concerning the value of the agencies, some of the members of the group could have thought that additional agencies should have been involved. Although the data had mixed reviews concerning the overall experience of the Wellness Day, the statistical information gathered revealed that the experimental group felt as if the Wellness Day event was valuable, useful, and should be implemented in the future.

Results From the Post Participation and Workshop Evaluation

Two survey instruments sought to obtain the experimental groups' determination pertaining to their experience with this project. The first instrument utilized was the post

participant evaluation assessment.¹⁶² This assessment gathered data concerning the groups' learning experience. The second instrument was the post workshop evaluation assessment.¹⁶³ This survey instrument measured the overall learning environment and the quality of the information taught.

Descriptive Statistics for Post Participant Evaluation and Post Workshop Evaluation Total Scores

Figure 8: Descriptive Statistics

| | Post Participant Eval Total Score | Post WSEval Total Score |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Valid | 15 | 15 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 46.600 | 45.067 |
| Std. Deviation | 12.894 | 12.544 |
| Minimum | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Maximum | 50.000 | 50.000 |

The results indicate that the participants of the experimental group felt that the learning experience was meaningful and useful. According to Figure 8, the data concerning the post participant evaluation indicates a standard deviation of 12.894 and a mean score of 46.600. The data reflects a valid score of 86.667, suggesting that the participants felt as if their participation in this project was positive. The data reflects that the participants thought that I was well prepared, had a good understanding of the material, the information was interesting, and their experience as participants was great.

¹⁶² See Appendix D.

¹⁶³ See Appendix E.

Although most of the participants revealed that their participation with this project was excellent, the data reflected that someone in the group felt that I did an average job with maintaining the integrity of the Baptist Doctrine. Additionally, the post workshop evaluation score displayed a 12.544 standard deviation and a mean of 45.067 indicating that the participants thought that the workshop was positive and beneficial.

Even though the data indicated that the participants thought that the project experience was positive, the participants highlighted that additional time would have been useful due to the large amount of information that was taught throughout the five-week training sessions. The concern for additional time regarding the group was highlighted on the assessment as low scores by some of the members of the group. Along with not having enough time, the data reflected that some participants thought that after having taken part in this training, they did not have a better understanding of integral missions and how it helped their understanding of ministry. The data revealed high scores on questions pertaining to space that was utilized for the training, the enhancement of the participants learning experience, their comfort level in the workshop, and not being distracted by others.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

Doing community work is extremely tough and burdensome. One must embrace the burning desire and welcome the missional calling to engage the community through integral missions. Needs are everywhere. Therefore, to ignore people and their positions in life works against the Church's biblical mandate, which is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39 NRSV) and to "take up their cross" (Matthew 16:24 NRSV).

Concerning the notion of taking up one's cross, it is the responsibility of the followers of Christ to live with hope, while accepting the challenge of making the community better. When one looks at the turmoil, suffering, and devastation that resides in the same sphere of most local churches, believers can no longer afford to actively ignore the biblical mandate of letting her "light shine before others" (Matthew 5:16 NRSV).

Throughout the journey of this ministry project, at times, I have been spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally depleted. There were many times I felt like quitting and giving up due to feeling fatigue. The weariness I experienced caused me to have a greater appreciation for the followers of Christ in past generations who endured moments of exhaustion but remained faithful. I learned that service, meeting needs, and attempting to empower a despaired community are not flashy jobs that provides an opportunity for a person to set in his or her office with their feet propped on a desk. Community engagement through integral missions requires a willingness to be immersed holistically in the community and to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15 NET).

One weakness that was discovered in this project was that the participants felt that they did not have enough time to effectively process the training concerning the theoretical material. The usefulness of time is critically important. The lack of processing time could have been a reason why the groups' theoretical mean score was decreased after participating in the five-week training sessions. Factors that could have contributed to the group not having time to process could have been due to the substantial content of the material into each session with less time to explain what to do for regarding the post-

session homework assignments. The abundance amount of information shared could have caused some confusion and overwhelmed the participants.

Additionally, I adhered to the advice of the experimental group who highlighted that to do community engagement through integral missions, one must be committed and ensure that ample planning time is available to make a significant impact on the community. Their feedback regarding the sufficiency of time is a spiritual truth that merges with this entire work. It takes time, patience, sacrifice, hard work, love, and the Spirit of God to do community engagement through integral missions if true community empowerment happens.

Concerning the training sessions that were taught, an additional obvious weakness was that I tried to do a lot in a small amount of time. This was evident with the Community Wellness Day event, since I felt that the group ran out of time trying to plan for the day. I set a goal of each person identifying five to ten agencies to invite to the Wellness Day event. Considering that this was the first time the church had done something like this, I should have started with smaller numbers and not set the expectation high. The data revealed on the post-wellness survey that a low score was given to citizen turn-out. I should have placed more emphasis on the group engaging the citizens rather than identifying a lot of agencies to participate.

I learned that taking the long-term view to community engagement is much better than attempting to place a large amount of information on people at one time. Although I believe the information that was researched and trained was meaningful, the amount of time that I taught it to the experimental group was extremely crunched. Additional time was needed to train individuals on how to do things such as research, host focus groups,

understand why a SWOTS (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats, and Solutions) model is, how to be sensitive to people who are in need, what true spiritual connection is to the community, and how can the one giving hope remain hopeful when community engagement appears unsuccessful starting out.

One major strength of this project was that the experimental group was able to connect with citizens in the neighborhood by doing a community walk-through. This community walk-through was meaningful, because some of the members from the community ended up coming to church. The visitors credited their visitation to church due to the experimental group who willingly went to their door while conducting the community walk-through.

Along with the community walk through, another strength was the increased ability of the experimental group's capability to practically do community engagement. Before the completion of this training, there was much dialogue at the beginning of this project about the ambiguity of many in the group ability to process and implement the information that would be taught to them. After going through the training, the experimental group planned, directed, implemented, and guided the Community Wellness Day. The statistical results indicated an increase in the groups' confidence and ability to practically apply the information they learned.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this ministry project was to create a transformational framework of community engagement at New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church that was inclusive of integral missions. This ministry project embraced the belief that integral mission implies that the church is committed to help anyone bring his or her entire being under the reign and rule of God so that the person will experience abundant life, holistically, in Christ. The desired outcome of New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church's ministry is to impact the city by empowering and enhancing people's quality of life. This doctoral ministry project welcomed the calling to engage the community, through integral missions, so that opportunities were established to meet people needs spiritually, socially, physically, mentally, emotionally, and economically.

Adequate spiritual methods, strategies, and processes were sought, researched, and practiced so that community engagement was appropriately implemented throughout this ministry journey. Biblical and theological evidence involving community engagement was examined and taught so that the congregants were trained to fulfill its biblical mandate of integral missions.

In addition to biblical teachings, New Ellis Chapel Church was trained in twenty-first century research tools so that the church could identify community demands and develop a portfolio of local services so aid can potentially be provided to citizens who maybe in need.

As New Ellis Chapel continues to be a light of hope as it strives to meet the holistic needs of those who live, work, play, and worship in the Holly Oak Park area, an

efficient community engagement framework was developed and implemented. The question continues to be, how can New Ellis Chapel or any local church effectively engage an unengaged community that surrounds it? To answer this relevant question that many ponder around the world, New Ellis Chapel, along with any local church, must seek to continually fulfill her missional calling by consistently engaging citizens, through integral missions, that reside within its sphere of influence, with the intent of aiding in their holistic development.

Chapter Summaries

The project consisted of seven sessions with five cognitive trainings that focused on biblical insight concerning community engagement through integral missions. Two additional sessions consisted of practical application of the cognitive information that was taught, which involved a community focus group and Wellness Day.

Chapter one introduced New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church and her quest to lead people to embrace Christ, encourage collaboration, and empower the community. This chapter highlighted the problem that this project sought to address: Has the local Christian Church lost her influence globally? As a local church, has New Ellis Chapel inspired the Holly Oak Park community through the movement of the gospel? Does New Ellis Chapel impact people in a way that community transformation takes place?

Chapter two gave a descriptive overview of each session's experiences, moments, and thoughts. The five cognitive training sessions consisted of (1) Research: The God that Knows (Ex. 3:7-10); (2) Equipping: Nehemiah Equipped then Built (Neh. 2); (3) Awareness: A Samaritan's Attitude (Luke 10:25-37); (4) Engaging: Connect for or Connect Four? (Acts 2, 3, 4, 9, 16, and 17); and (5) Hope: Is the Church a Joke or Hope?

(Is. 61; Luke 4:18-19). Also, chapter two included the information about the community focus group, three planning sessions that led up to the community Wellness Day, information about the Community Wellness Day, and a final session that consisted of the group qualitatively debriefing about their experience with the project.

Chapter three highlighted biblical and theological information that was researched and spiritually inspired the direction of this work regarding community engagement through integral missions. Four Old Testament passages were used as biblical evidence concerning God's missional mandate regarding called servants to engage the community with the intent of meeting the holistic need of humanity. Genesis 3, Exodus 3, Nehemiah 2, and Isaiah 61 all displayed God's desire of community transformation, which involved the engaging of humanity. Regarding the New Testament, seven biblical passages were sought to develop additional confirmation of God mandating the Church to engage the community through holistic ministries. The gospel of Luke 4; 10, along with the book of Acts 2;3;4;9;16; and 17 provides biblical examples concerning Jesus, the early church, Ananias seeking out Paul, and Paul seeking to connect with people by meeting the needs of the citizens.

Chapter three also presented a historical overview of the Christian Church regarding how community engagement was implemented in the daily practices of believers from its early formation, contemporary examples of how community engagement through integral missions are active in this present society, and five theological components that were used to develop this project.

Chapter four presented the data analysis of this project. The Ministry Project Pre/Post Theory and Practical Test were used to measure the impact that five training

sessions had on this project. The Post-Wellness Day measured the effectiveness of the Community Wellness Day. The Participant's evaluation survey measured the individuals learning experience. Lastly, the Post Workshop evaluation measured the quality of the environment that the training took place in and the impact that each session had on the group educationally.

Concerning the theory (cognitive development) of this project, the post-test indicated a decrease in the experimental group's theoretical training score from pre-test to post-test. There is not a specific explanation that clarifies why there was a decrease in the theory assessment of the training. A possibility concerning the decrease could be that the cognitive training was not as effective. Although this could be a probability, the data concerning the post learning environment assessment displayed that all participants felt that the information taught was significant and that the training material was beneficial. An additional thought concerning why there was a decrease in the theory assessment could be that the experimental group's perspective of community engagement through integral missions changed after receiving the theoretical teaching. There is a possibility that the group recognized that they were not as aware of what community engagement through integral missions involved after they received the training.

A closer analysis showed a positive shift concerning the Ministry Project Post-Practical Test assessment. The data indicated that the training had a profound impact on how the participants were able to apply the information they received throughout the five training sessions.

The Post-Wellness Day survey indicated that the event was beneficial and useful. Participants sensed that the training they received was helpful with their ability to engage

the community through integral missions, which included researching community data, understanding what New Ellis had to offer to the community, inviting community agencies to the event, advertising the event by connecting with the citizens through social media and community walk throughs, and setting up the Holly Oak Park for the event.

Lastly, the data displayed that the participants' learning experience and workshop was positive and impactful. Based on the overall results, this ministry project was beneficial and accomplished the goal of community engagement through integral missions. Although the data indicated that there were areas of improvement that need to take place, the collective experience of this project was effective and meaningful.

Personal and Professional Growth

As a follower of Christ, the voyage that God creates is sometimes unexplained in the beginning. As an individual chooses to embrace the path forward, meaningful moments of inspiration are given as one reflects on the journey taken.

Professionally, as a doctoral researcher, I was compelled to develop a biblical twenty-first century framework of community engagement through integral missions so that anyone who desires to live a meaningful quality of life will have an opportunity to experience holistic transformation and reconciliation. Every text of the scripture I read, resource I sought, and seminar I participated in offered relevant insight into this work. Considering that needs are incessantly present in this world, additional information will need to be gathered so that continued community engagement is effective and practical. This project has provided me a strong foundation to build upon and grow.

Practically, as the missional leader of New Ellis Chapel, this project provided an opportunity for me to continue the missional calling of community engagement so that individuals, families, and neighborhoods are empowered. This framework allowed me to work in my passion while equipping others who have accepted the calling to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you (Matt. 28:19-20 NRSV).”

Personally, I have gained spiritual endurance through this study as it conditioned me to spend early mornings and late nights researching God’s Word for spiritual truths that could be taught to God’s people in an impactful way. Although the journey of implementing this project caused many days of fatigue, I learned how to consistently welcome the strength of God by embracing the scripture that states, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9 NRSV).”

In a final analysis, true transformation first takes place within an individual. This Doctor of Ministry Project has caused me to holistically develop as a leader, pastor, Christian, husband, and father. It is my responsibility to embrace the challenge of consistently implementing the research that was completed, while intentionally seeking opportunities to do community engagement through integral missions throughout the world so that my light will, “shine before others (Matt. 5: 16 NRSV),” so that God may get the glory.

APPENDIX A

Ministry Project Pre/Post Survey
Identification Number 01

Number _____

Date _____

1. I speak with and/or seek out knowledge of other cultures.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

2. When reading Scripture, I see God engaging People.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

3. Community Engagement is an important concept in the Bible.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

4. I am prepared to engage the community through Integral Missions.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

5. I am aware of Community Resources that exist in my local community.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

6. I am comfortable connecting with diverse cultures.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

7. I am aware of the needs that exist in my community.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

8. I am aware of the socio-economic levels in my community.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

9. I constantly seek ways to help people in the community.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

10. I am adequately prepared to help people in the community.
 1. Always
 2. Most times
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely
 5. Never

11. In your own words, define Community Engagement.

12. In your own words, define Integral Missions.

APPENDIX B

Ministry Project Pre/Post Practical Assessment Survey
Identification Number 01

Number _____

Date _____

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to obtaining research data about the community may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

2. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to put together a focus group may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

3. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my capability to *develop* a SWOTS analysis may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

4. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to *explain* a SWOTS analysis may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

5. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to research existing resources in the community may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

6. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to develop a catalog of existing resources in the community may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

7. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to recognize meeting locations of people in the community may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | Highest | | | | | |

8. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to identify existing needs in the community may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | Highest | | | | | |

9. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to identify social media platforms the community utilize may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | Highest | | | | | |

10. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my ability to identify a ministry project based on the community needs may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | Highest | | | | | |

APPENDIX C

Ministry Project Post Wellness Day Assessment Survey
Identification Number 01

Number _____

Date _____

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my experience with the wellness day may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

2. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my expectations about the wellness day were met may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

3. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the training I received prepared me for the wellness day may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

4. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my participation in the wellness day may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

5. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the value of agencies that participated with the wellness day may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

6. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the citizen turnout to participate in the wellness day may be ranked as _____.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

7. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the quality of the facility and location may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

8. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), my willingness to participate in future wellness days may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

9. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the wellness day achieved its goal of engaging citizens through integral missions may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

10. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), additional wellness days will be useful of meeting community needs may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

11. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), the risk of harm was associated with this event may be ranked as_____.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lowest | | | | | | | | | | Highest |

APPENDIX D

Participant's Evaluation

Chris Gash, Instructor

Please circle session evaluating: 1 2 3 4 5

Please rank according to your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction using the following scale:

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Average 4 = Good 5 = Excellent

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Instructor is well prepared for class session. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Instructor has a mastery of material. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Instructor stimulated interest in topic. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Instructor spoke clearly and audibly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Instructor used class time effectively. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Instructor answered questions completely and clearly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Instructor maintained integrity to biblical teaching. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Instructor maintained integrity to Baptist doctrine. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Instructor treated students respectfully. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Class design was conducive to my learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX E

Post Workshop Evaluation

Chris Gash, Instructor

Please circle session evaluating: 1 2 3 4 5

Please rank according to your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction using the following scale:

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Average 4 = Good 5 = Excellent

Evaluation of The Environment

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The space provided a good environment to learn about this subject | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I was comfortable to share during the workshop. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. It was awkward during the session discussion. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I was distracted by others in the room. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Overall, the environment enhanced my learning experience | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Evaluation of the Learning Session

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 6. I understood the subject of the workshop. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I want to learn more about this subject. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I understand how this subject helps me to understand ministry. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I have a better understanding of integral missions because of this subject. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. This session was a positive experience. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX F

Community Focus Group Questions

- 1.) How do you feel about the community and why?
- 2.) Describe for us some strengths that exist in the community?
- 3.) In your opinion, describe for us what you believe will aid in the development of the community?
- 4.) Can you explain to us any concerns or problems that may exist in the community?
- 5.) What ministry opportunities exist in the community?
- 6.) In your opinion, where do you see the community in 5 years?
- 7.) Tell us what you believe the role of the church plays in the community?
- 8.) What is it that would incline others to come and live in the community?
- 9.) Is there something that would cause people to leave the community and why?
- 10.) What is your favorite part about the Holly Oak Park community and why?
- 11.) Do you know of any services that exist in the community that may benefit the citizens and why?

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