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Cultivating the Practice of Neighborliness: A Missional Practice of Living in a Perichoretic Relationship with Neighbors

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CULTIVATING THE PRACTICE OF NEIGHBORLINESS:

A MISSIONAL PRACTICE OF LIVING IN A PERICHORETIC RELATIONSHIP

WITH NEIGHBORS

By

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ABSTRACT

Cultivating the Practice of Neighborliness: A Missional Practice of Living in a

Perichoretic Relationship with Neighbors

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This Participatory Action Research study, utilizing a sequential explanatory
mixed methods design, investigates the hostile relationship between the church and its
Liberian context. The research design created a spirit of collaboration between the PAR
team, local church, and the neighbors, and assisted us to outline interventions which
positively affected the relationship between the church and her neighbors.

The results indicate that to deal with this adaptive challenge and enhance
interpersonal relationship with neighbors, the church had to provide adaptive leadership,
break boundaries, participate in incarnational ministries, and cultivate several missional
practices to affect neighborliness and bring about a cultural change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Let me extend thanks and appreciation to those who contributed towards my schooling. Without them this congregational mission and leadership journey would not have been possible. The Lord has been gracious to me during this entire journey and he has made it possible for my dreams and aspirations to come true. Psalm 100:1-4 urged us to give thanks to the Lord and praise his name.

> [1]Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. [2]Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. [3]Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. [4]Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.[1]

I am very appreciative to the Luther Seminary family for the immense financial contribution made towards my schooling, and how they made it possible for me to obtain this level of education, which has prepared me for ministry. I am also thankful to International Student and Scholar Affairs and Graduate Theological Education of Luther Seminary for the financial aid or scholarship offered me, and for providing me the opportunity to zoom into the cohort sessions at the time I could not be present at Luther Seminary in person. Mrs. Marie Hayes and Ms. Chenar Howard have been instrumental during the entire study.

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[1] This scripture and all other scriptural quotations are from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Axial Code
ATR	African Traditional Religion
ECOMOG	Economic Community of Military Guard
FC	Focused Code
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IRB	Institutional Review Board
JFC	Jordan Fellowship Church
LISGIS	Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services
NIV	New International Version
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview and Statement of the Problem

Since a local church is the hands and feet of Jesus in the neighborhood in which it

is located, its major task is to cultivate ways of attending closely to the stories, cries, and

the needs of those in our township and neighborhood. The way to do this is to first

identify our contextual realities and subsequently engage them, especially our neighbors

who may be hostile towards us. My foundational premise is that, "in a missional

ecclesiology, the Church is not a building or an institution but a community of

witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and

participate in Christ's work."[1] This implies that we are to live in a *perichoretic*

relationship with our neighbors, even those that may be hostile towards us. It is obvious

that we cannot fulfill *missio Dei* in this context with resentment and hatred between us

and our neighbors. Consistent hostility breeds grudges and animosity amongst people

who are involved and often results in poor communication relationships. Consequently, if

a church is involved in this dilemma, with neighbors that may be hostile towards them, it

becomes impossible for the church to relate in any way to their hostile neighbors, or even

in the future convert them to Christianity, if they had not been Christians.

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[1] Paul Hooker, "What Is Missional Ecclesiology? Abstract," (August 2009): 1, accessed August 15, 2018, https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/missional-ecclesiology09.pdf.

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Therefore, I delved into this social science study because of the prolonged hostility or hatred that some people have had against our local church and the church's inability to engage and build relationship with her neighborhood and township. On the other hand, we have not discovered the reasons for their hatred, envy, and hostile behavior against our community. Notwithstanding this hostility, the church was making some headway in ministering to some of those people who fell within this group, but was not successful in making significant progress in solving some of the problems that may have been responsible for this hostility. I have now discovered that some of the solutions we have implemented in the past were technical in nature and the remedies were short-lived.

I am projecting an argument that the way to accomplish this adaptive change that will enhance interpersonal relationship with neighbors is to provide leadership that will cultivate missional practices of neighborliness and other missional practices that will help make our faith community a missional church. This kind of leadership is one in which a Spirit-led leader can work with the members of a congregation by combining texts, contexts, community, and strategy/action toward solving the problem collaboratively. This is achieved when a Christian congregation integrates these four dimensions into a shared, dynamic, and interactive process, where a decision or strategic action will be communally discerned, biblically and theologically framed, and theoretically informed.[2] Since this problem is adaptive in nature, I am now aware that this will entail creating deep cultural changes within our faith community that will assist in bridging gaps between us and our hostile neighbors who may be people of diverse social, geographical,

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[2] Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 2007), 105-06.

and religious faith or background, Americo-Liberians, or any other context. How this can be cultivated will be the crux of this thesis.

By cultivating missional practices during this research, we were leading missionally as we sought to build bridges and accommodate diversities. We did so in light of establishing relationships which enabled us to coexist in our diverse context with people who may be having different religious, denominational, political, and cultural orientations or perspectives. This is true because an "increased religious bridging leads to greater warmth toward people who are not religious,"[3] or share the same denominational tenets with people in our community.

In addition, our local church has been at a distance from our context emotionally and socially. We anticipated that engaging it and carrying out communal discernment would help us to foster neighborliness and assist us to become contextually sensitive and further assist us to participate in the triune God's dynamic relationship to our changing and growing context. As our context has been changing for the past fifteen years, so must our leadership change or become dynamic to enable us to accommodate our neighbors that are hostile to us. To do this, we had to engage our context and become incarnational by demonstrating the presence of the triune God in concrete situations and context. This engagement of our context absolutely paved the way for reconciliation and assisted us to demonstrate our love for our hostile neighbors and the missional call the Lord has placed upon our lives.

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[3] Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 532.

Furthermore, good neighborliness is a general principle of coexistence which can be seen in the triune community. Since the Trinity is a perfect diverse neighborhood of the triune God, which exists in unity, can we learn from this concept and apply the principles to our neighborhood which is hostile towards us. How did Jesus address his hostile accusers, even on the cross? This Participatory Action Research integrated with mixed methods approach involved a local church, who for the purpose of this thesis shall be anonymously known as the Jordan Fellowship Church (JFC) of Graystone, Solapee, Montserrado County, republic of Liberia. A detailed description of the JFC is provided in chapter two of this thesis. This local church, with the determination of achieving the goal of this thesis, actively participated in an adaptive change situation. This adaptive change was facilitated by several interventions with the goal to create good neighborliness with their hostile neighbors and beyond.

Research Question and Variables

In view of the above, this Doctor of Ministry thesis, *Cultivating the Practice of Neighborliness: A Missional Practice of Living in a Perichoretic Relationship with Neighbors*, is intended to answer the question, *How might Participatory Action Research interventions cultivate neighborliness of the Jordan Fellowship Church with their neighbors?* The general intent for this research was to assist the community and its neighbors to discover the reasons for existing problems between them, if any, and to develop interventions that would build *perichoretic* relationship amongst them.

Therefore, this research brought into conversation the independent variables through the process of Participatory Action Research interventions with the dependent variables and the intervening variables. In this study, I outlined various interventions,

like the preaching of the word, Bible studies, dwelling in the word, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Ministries (Zoegoe Ministry), seminars, social or sporting fellowships with various groups of our neighborhood, scholarship schemes, community service and regular visit to the *ataye* shop (tea shop), and how these interventions which are my independent variable could have bearing on the dependent variable of neighborliness (sociability, friendliness). In addition, I also showed how the intervening variables, which were the mediating variables, were significant, and how they affected this study by standing in between the various interventions and neighborliness. In this case, this research highlighted how various aspects of demography (the Americo-Liberian, Islamic, and traditional society and tribal factors, gender, and age), and non-demographic variables (attitude and behavior) stand between the various interventions and neighborliness in a causal link and how they mediate the effect of the various interventions.

Reasons for the Study

There are several reasons why I have decided to explore this question. First, this research question is important to me because the issues which are associated with this question address how I as a leader must adapt to impact my local church and neighborhood. If this community must change to foster a neighborly relationship or become missional, it must begin with me. I am at my growing edge and I anticipate adaptive change in my life and behavior. After spending three years at Luther Seminary, everything inside me is pointing to a new blossoming direction in my leadership career. I am at some of my growing edges. One of them is the direction of my research question, which is an adaptive challenge for me to be able to adequately engage my neighbors in forming a relationship which will develop a neighborly atmosphere in our engagements.

I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is ahead of me and will facilitate the process. I have served as the founding pastor of this ministry for the past thirty-two years, so I find myself being the right person to partner with my faith community and neighbors in this Participatory Action Research.

Second, this research question is relevant to the faith community in which I find myself serving. With the adaptive challenge facing our local church, it is expedient that we begin engaging our neighbors by reaching out to them in love and helping to meet their felt needs. I am of the opinion that taking this route will open the corridor for us to build interpersonal relationships with our neighbors. This research is an opportunity to connect with our context and partner with the triune God in this neighborhood, as we participate in *missio Dei*. Our local church is the hands and feet of Jesus in this township, so our major task is to cultivate ways of attending closely to the stories, cries, and the needs of those in our township and neighborhood.[4] The way to do this is to first identify our contextual realities and subsequently engage our neighbors. Therefore, the answer to this research question will assist in establishing a *perichoretic* relationship with our neighbors.

Why should we, as a community, anticipate engaging our contextual realities? According to Margaret Wheatley, "In a quantum world, everything depends on context, on the unique relationships available in the moment."[5] One cannot effectively interact with people until you understand their context and where they may be coming from.

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[4] Deanna A. Thompson, *The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016), 82.

[5] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2006), 191.

Relationships are not the same everywhere. They differ from context to context and moment to moment. This implies that solutions developed in one context may vary from another. Another important reason for contextual engagement is that, in quantum logic, it is impossible to expect any plan or idea to be real or make sense to people if they do not have the opportunity to personally interact with it or have their say in it.[6] If we are going to partner with our context in fulfilling *missio Dei*, we must not talk them into it, but rather, engage their context adequately by making the process participatory and tapping into their gifts. The whole idea is centered on partnership. During this process, we learned from our context the corresponding factors surrounding the neighborhood and how we could serve along those contextual lines and fulfill *missio Dei* together. Furthermore, I discovered that it was an opportunity for us to bring into conversation our formal learning with the contextual realities of our neighborhood at the time, as we explored avenues to answer this research question. This process familiarized us with the cultural, socio-political, and economic contexts of the church and neighborhood, enabling us to serve and lead in this unique context, and assist us in maintaining incarnational attentiveness.

Finally, the larger church stands to benefit from the answers that emerged from this research. Other communities and ministries which are experiencing similar hostile attitudes from their neighbors can learn from the process we employed and adapt it to their own context, if the circumstances and research match theirs.

Hence, this thesis is divided into seven main chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis, stating the reasons why this study was important to me, and the specific research

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[6] Ibid., 68.

question I answered in this study. Chapter two provides the historical background of the

JFC context and delineates the historical highlights of its neighborhood and the historical

overview of the JF Church. To engage this conversation in a way that there will be a

balance in our perspectives, this thesis has been designed with three major lenses which

are introduced below: the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses. These lenses were

used to view this study and answer the research question and to ascertain that the entire

research is theoretically, biblically, and theologically framed and grounded. Chapters

three and four delve into these lenses in greater detail.

Theoretical Lenses

Chapter three covers the theoretical lenses. Adaptive change theory and the social

practice theory of hospitality were the two theoretical lenses I used to engage this study.

Gleaning from *Leadership on the Line* by Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, adaptive

change theory requires cultural changes on the part of those people who are having the

problems and are seeking the change.[7] The way of life, attitudes, values, and behavior are

all aspects of the culture of the JFC community that has been affected by the change

process, which adaptive leadership calls for, if we are to build good relationship with our

neighbors. Notwithstanding, this adaptive change theory can also be experienced by

neighbors we are anticipating building great relationship with. In addition, this chapter

also sees the social practice of hospitality as another theoretical lens, which engages our

neighbors in a way that this practice enhances neighborliness between our community

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[7] Ronald A. Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 28.

and neighbors. In this study, hospitality is being viewed as the dynamic practice of giving to and receiving warm kindness from our neighbors. This social practice of hospitality builds interpersonal relationship in our neighborhood, as we sought to engage hostile neighbors within our broader context.

Biblical and Theological Lenses

In the decision-making process of a local church, theory alone does not suffice. The decision must have biblical and theological support. Therefore, chapter four underscores the biblical and theological lenses and the literature that support them. These lenses offer spiritual, scriptural, and theological insight as support for this research, and specifically assisted me in analyzing the question I am answering in this research.

Two biblical lenses are highlighted: namely, neighborliness in Luke's gospel (Luke 10:30-35) and boundary breaking (John 4:4-26). The gospel according to Luke presents an interesting story of Jesus and the rich man on one hand and the Good Samaritan, the Levite, the priest, and the wounded man on the other hand. In this passage Jesus redefines a neighbor to be anyone who stands in need of help or is a victim of life's challenges, irrespective of religious affiliation, geographical boundaries, or social class. So, neighborliness (the noun form of neighborly) is for a person or a group of people to demonstrate the characteristics of a good neighbor, especially being accommodating or supportive or being helpful, friendly, or kind to another person. Alan J. Roxburgh, in his book, *Joining God in the Neighborhood*, "articulates what might be involved in

rethinking Christian life in an unthinkable world"[8] and provided ways we can join God in the neighborhood in what He is doing in these places.

Clearly, the story of the Good Samaritan served as an example of neighborliness during difficult circumstances and also contains the example of several possible interventions, which were intended to impact or influence the result of the study. As a result of the neighborliness we sought to achieve, Trinitarian love became a major factor or player in helping us answer our research question. Love is divine and it is inherent in the triune community of God.

In order to become neighborly, this chapter states that boundary breaking, the final biblical lens, cultivates the space for our community to develop new approaches in looking at things or developing a new cutting edge, with the intention of crossing traditional borders or land marks or other sociological and psychological boundaries. In this study, *The Missional Church in Perspective* by Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile was one of the key sources which I drew from to support this lens and subsequently assisted our community to become neighborly.[9] Craig Van Gelder's point that the church should be an open system because the *ecclesia* is both forming and reforming, contributed immensely to this conversation.[10] This concept clearly lays the premise for boundary breaking to occur. The similarities between our context and the Samaritan's context made this lens suitable and informed this study. That is, there were

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[8]Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 16.

[9] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 128.

[10] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 144.

differences and hostility that divided the Jews and the Samaritans, even though they were living within the same geographic location, while our context has similar problems.

Chapter four concludes with two theological lenses, divine *perichoresis* and incarnational ministry. These two lenses helped frame this study theologically. Their relational and *kenotic* characteristics engaged the dependent variable of neighborliness, as is shown in the methodology and the results of this study.

Divine *perichoresis*, which is relational in attribute, as it pertains to the triune God's mutual interdependence, engages this study in a way that the triune God's *perichoretic* relationship is a typology or example of what should be the relationship amongst God, our community, and neighbors respectively. In this section of the paper, relational ontology, where "no person can be thought of by himself or herself apart from other persons,"[11] and the African-Malawian cultural philosophy of *umunthu* (personhood) and *perichoresis* have similar meaning: "A person is a person through other persons."[12] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, Harvey C. Kwiyani, and Margaret Wheatley are a few of the voices which hold the view of the relationality and the interconnectedness of the universe. The insight which I drew from these sources about relationship, as portrayed by the doctrine of the divine *perichoresis*, is the fulcrum upon which this study is hinged. It contributes to us achieving our goal of being neighborly in our contexts, since we anticipate building a *perichoretic* relationship with our neighbors.

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[11] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (Chicago, IL: Harper One, 1991), 298.

[12] Harvey C. Kwiyani, "Umunthu and the Spirituality of Leadership: Leadership Lessons from Malawi" *Journal of Religious Leadership*, vol. 12, no.2 (Fall 2013): 42.

The final theological lens is incarnational ministry. Incarnational ministry is when a person or a community immerses in a culture or a diverse neighborhood of people for the purpose of ministering to their physical and spiritual needs. For this to be realized, *perichoresis* must first be the catalyst to speed up the process of incarnation. The idea we are establishing is that the community of believers is the hands and feet of Jesus in our neighborhood, so it is called to incarnate into our neighborhood or world to fulfill *missio Dei.* The incarnation is adaptive in nature, since it is a change process which must occur in the mind and culture of the community, in order to facilitate the incarnation of the any community into its neighborhood. Van Gelder and Zscheile consider this to be "the way of the cross."[13] The concept of the incarnation works well in this study because the JFC community, in order to establish a communal relationship with its neighbors, must humble and empty herself of her pride and dignity and be willing to take the way of the cross by valuing their neighbors above them.

Research Methodology

Chapter five of this thesis is research methodology. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was chosen as the methodology to facilitate this research. PAR is "a form of action research in which professional social researchers operate as full collaborators with members of organizations in studying and transforming those organizations."[14] This research methodology focusses on doing research with the people being studied, rather than for the people being studied. This is why the local church and the neighborhood

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[13] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 4.

[14] Davydd J. Greenwood, William F. Whyte, and Ira Harkavy, "Participatory Action Research as a Process and a Goal," *Human Relations* (February 1993), 42 (2): 175-192, accessed February 10, 2019. https://participaction.wordpress .com/ whatpar /defining-par/

being studied joined me in this collaborative and participatory study. It is for the purpose of organizational transformation, which will result in building *perichoretic* relationship with our neighbors. I chose this methodology because it enhances the missional conversation and it focusses on building teamwork, relationships, and tolerating multiple perspectives and diversities. The inclusion of my neighbors also lent to this study.

To adequately carry out this study, explanatory sequential mixed method was selected as my research design. This design is a subset of mixed method design. Mixed methods is an "approach to enquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, interpreting the two forms of data, and using distinct design that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks."[15] In this project, we were studying a local church and its neighborhood. This design brought into conversation these two groups, along with their sub-groups, specifically the Americo-Liberians, Muslims, and the Via ethnic group. My data were drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative instruments and the focus groups protocols. The data from these instruments gave us an understanding of how the independent variables affected the dependent variable of neighborliness. I conducted a field testing of these instruments to a sample of church members and neighbors respectively. My nonprobability sample was drawn from among the various auxiliaries of the church and persons from our neighborhood. I took into consideration the various aspects of demographic elements. I conducted inferential statistical tests including independent t-tests for those responding to the baseline and end line surveys.

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[15] John W. Creswell, *Research Design*: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th edition (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 4.

In addition, several interventions were held to determine whether these interventions would bring about a change or a positive shift in our relationships with our neighbors. They included the following: sermon series on neighborliness (Luke10:30-35) and breaking boundaries (John 4:2-4), Bible studies, dwelling in the word, ministering to internally displaced persons (Zoegoe Ministry), seminars and workshops, social/sporting fellowships, scholarship program for neighbors' children whose parents or guardians were considered the less fortunate (Muslim children, hostile neighbors' children, etc.), and community service, as our way of rendering free service in our neighborhood.

During the research period, the quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed by my PAR team. The quantitative data and analysis were completed first, and were followed up with the qualitative data collection and analysis by the PAR team. Two members of the PAR team reported the number of respondents who did and did not participate and provided a descriptive analysis for all dependent and independent variables in the research.

This thesis contains several key terms which are important for my reading audience. They form an integral part of this study, and as such definitions are provided below.

Other Matters

Definition of Key Terms

Americo-Liberians or Congau people in Liberian English are a Liberian ethnic group of African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Liberated African descent. Americo-

Liberians trace their ancestry to free-born and formerly enslaved African Americans who immigrated in the 19th century to become the founders of the state of Liberia.[16]

Boundary Breaking: In this thesis, boundary breaking is the process of being different, setting a new cutting edge in your relationship with people whom you would not have interacted with or do things with. It also refers to going to places that were first forbidden by customs, traditions, or practice. It could also mean learning to integrate, not keeping up with traditional limits or boundaries

Incarnational Ministry: This is the church's contextualization within a changing culture. It is a relational identification with the neighbors which leads us into concrete acts of solidarity and accompaniment.[17] The origin of this term is when God took on human flesh and dwelt amongst his creatures to bring them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light belonging to the triune God (John 1:1-10). God became human in order to usher fallen humanity from the periphery of life to the center of his grace.

Institutional Review Board (IRB): A committee on a college or university campus that reviews research to determine to what extent the research could place participants at risk during the study. Researchers file applications with the IRB to approve their project and they use implied informed and consent forms to have participants know the level of the risks they agree to by participating in the study.

Missio Dei is the emergence of the understanding that missions can be defined as the mission of God and reframes our understanding of mission from being church-centric to becoming theocentric. This view was articulated especially by Newbigin, who summed

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[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ "Americo-Liberians," accessed August, 10, 2017.

[17] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 114.

up "*missio Dei*, the mission of God. . . . Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation."[18] Therefore, mission is God's enterprise in which we are called to participate.

Perichoresis: Three divine persons mutually inherent in one another, draw life from one another, "are" what they are by relation to one another. It also means being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion.[19]

Social Hospitality Theory: Hosting and being hosted, or the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.

Vai people: the Vais are a Manden ethnic group that live mostly in Liberia, with a small minority living in south-eastern Sierra Leone. These people are known for their indigenous syllabic writing system known as Vai syllabary, developed in the 1820s by Momolu Duwalu Bukele and other tribal elders.[20] They were considered as the first Muslims in Liberia. They mostly live in Grand Cape Mount and Bomi counties.[21]

Zoegoes: The word "zoegoe" is a Liberian word which refers to internally displaced drug addicts who live in cemeteries, street corners, awkward places, and are considered by society to be social deviants or outcasts.

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[18] Ibid., 7.

[19] Catherine Mowry Lacugna, *God for Us*, 270.

[20] Lenore Grenoble and A. J. Whaley (2006). "Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization." Cambridge University Press, Accessed January 12, 2019, Wikipedia, en.m.wikipedia.org.

[21] Liberia Positive, https:libpositives.com/blog/201710/30history-of-vai-people. Accessed January 10, 2019.

IRB Requirements and Ethical Concerns

This project was designed to conform to the IRB requirements of Luther Seminary. The purpose was to safeguard, promote, and ensure ethical and responsible treatment of all persons participating in the research was involving my community and neighborhood. The participants' confidentiality will be maintained in accordance with the IRB standards. All records of this study were kept confidential. All subjects in this thesis were not identified in any report published, neither did I publish any type of report, nor include any information that would make it possible to identify my subjects. All data were kept in a locked file in the pastor's office; only I, along with my PAR team, and advisors, Dr. Daniel Anderson and Dr. Alvin Luedke, had access to the data and, all tape or video recordings. While I made every effort to ensure confidentiality, anonymity couldn't be guaranteed. Moreover, the focus group discussions were recorded and subsequently transcribed by my PAR team, observing confidentiality of personal identity, and the responses from the questionnaires and excerpts from the focus groups' discussions which were helpful to this project were also quoted anonymously. In order to keep anonymity in this research, all names of persons, churches, towns and cities in the immediate and broader contexts are pseudonyms.

Since human subjects were involved in this research, I obtained the informed and implied consent of the subjects. No minor was included in this study, only human subjects who are eighteen years and above. Informed consent was documented by the use of a written form approved by the IRB and were signed by the subjects participating in the study. The person participating in the study also received a copy of the form, to comply with federal law, though I am not a resident of the United States, I will keep

signed informed consent forms for three years (45CFR 46.116) and they are available for IRB review if necessary. Implied consent letters were distributed to all participants taking part in the baseline and end line surveys.

Summary

This chapter introduced this thesis project, providing an overview and statement of the problem that led to this study. The research question and the various variables were briefly discussed and the reasons for the study were listed. Three categories of lenses that assisted in this study are briefly highlighted; namely, the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses. This chapter concluded with the summary of the methodology used to carry out this research and other matters which were important to this research. These other matters were the definition of key terms and the IRB requirements and ethical concerns. The following chapter provides the historical background and demography of the JF Church. Three major points are cited; namely, the historical highlight of the JF Church's neighborhood, the historical overview and the demography of the JF church, and the descriptive make-up of the JF church. It is necessary to highlight the historicity of my immediate and broader context in order to give the reader an idea of the circumstances surrounding the Solapee neighborhood.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHY OF JFC CONTEXT

The Historical Highlight of the JFC Neighborhood

This section of the paper provides the historical highlight of the JFC

neighborhood. The historical background of Solapee is provided, and the ethnographic

and demographic data of Solapee are outlined.

Historical Highlight of Solapee

The JF church is located in Montserrado County of the Republic of Liberia.

Liberia is a tiny West African state of 43,000 square miles and has a population of 3.5

million.[1] Liberia is bounded on the west by Sierra Leone, on the east by the Ivory Coast,

on the north by Guinea, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean.

The capital city of Liberia, Monrovia, is located in Montserrado County and it is

where the first free slaves from America landed in the early 1800s in what later became

known as Providence Island. This part of the nation, which was later known as the capital

city was purchased by the American Colonization Society to settle the free slaves from

America, known as the Congau people or Americo-Liberians.

A few months after their arrival, in 1822, a band of free slaves migrated north of

Providence Island to an area that would eventually become a suburb of Monrovia, which

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[1] Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, "Excerpts from the 2008 Population Census Report" (Monrovia: LISGIS Data Base, 2016).

was later named Solapee. This township is located on the left bank of the St. Paul River and was inhabited by the predominantly Vai (Muslims) and Bassa tribes before the free slaves moved in. This implies that this township was already a diverse neighborhood of people, with different religious groups and African traditional religions (ATR). The Vai ethnic group was an Islamic tribe, with several ATR practices, while the Bassa ethnic group had ATR as their religion but was hospitable to the early settlers. They were some of the first group of people to begin selling their lands to the settlers and other groups that migrated later. Solapee is the oldest township in Montserrado County and, according to the 2008 population census, 14,550 persons fall below 18 years while 13,887 persons fall above 18 years.[2] The population is much higher today.

Solapee has several populated communities that make up this township; the largest and most populated community is the Graystone area where the JFC is located. This community is regarded as the center of activities. The provision stores, central market, 85% of the schools, police station, most churches etc., are located in the Graystone community.

The JFC is strategically located in the center of Solapee. Its immediate neighborhood, known as the Rock Hill junction, is a famous intersection that leads to three townships and Monrovia: namely, the Rock Hill, Bardnersville, and Gardnersville Townships. According to the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo Information Service (LISGIS), this neighborhood has thirty secondary schools and twenty-four elementary

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[2] Ibid.

schools.[3] JFC Mission High School happens to be one of the recognized schools in this neighborhood.

For the past twenty years, Solapee has been populated with low income earners. This community has been underdeveloped and could only attract the lower class for a long time. There were no good roads, schools, medical facilities, recreational centers, or even major businesses to boom the economy of this township. To live in Solapee at the time was tantamount to being considered a villager or outcast. It was known for lack of development and was occupied by low income earners. They were mostly petit-traders (small traders) and gardeners. There was only one public high school (Elizabeth Tubman Memorial Institute), with several kindergarten and elementary schools. This township, which is just 7.8 miles from central Monrovia, was known for ritualistic killings of human beings by some unscrupulous individuals and secret societies or fraternities associated with the people seeking power or those ambitious of maintaining political power. This practice does not exist in this township any longer.

Solapee has been known for being the gateway through which electricity and safe drinking water pass from the White Plain water plant and the Mount Coffee Hydro Plant into Monrovia and its environs. In addition, the land is strategically located, not far from Monrovia, with level plain grounds. When my wife and I moved to this township, there were safe drinking water and electricity at the disposal of the inhabitants. The people were discovered to be very sympathetic to one another. Another striking feature is the hospitality and generosity of the Solapee people which was evidenced during the civil crisis when food could not be found anywhere else but in this township. This community

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[3] Ibid.

fed most of Monrovia and its environs. The degree of patriotism that characterizes the people in this community is also admirable. The moment you move into this township you will be overwhelmed by a sense of belonging and devotion to this community. However, it is believed that it is the recent migrants that seem to be making the difference. Some of the initial groups were not very welcoming and they would hardly sell their land to people who were moving in. The situation has now changed.

<div align="center">Ethnographic Data of Solapee</div>

It has been difficult to find an existing ethnographic data from studies already done about the Solapee community. Little can be discovered from the web or our last population census. Nevertheless, I have made some attempts to present some form of data to serve this paper. Mainly, I used two research types to come up with my findings.

- Participant and non-participant observation: this research type collects data by the process of observing/watching or by participating in a social context over a period of time.
- Unstructured interviews: this research opens questions that enables free development of conversation.[4]

After a week of interviews, coupled with my duration of stay in this community and the effort of Mr. Philip Johnson, an employee of Liberia Institute of Statistics, and Geo-Information Services providing some statistics from the data base of LISGIS, the following were discovered:

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[4] David Straker, Ethnographic data collections by Changing Minds.org. Accessed August 10, 2017, Changing Minds.org/explanations/research/measurement/ethnography-data-collection.htm.

- The original ethnic group of Solapee is the Vai Tribe;

- The second tribe to migrate after the Vais are the Bassa ethnic group;[5]

- They were followed by the migration of the Americo-Liberians who had settled on Providence Island from America and the Caribbean Islands. Thus, apart from Monrovia, Solapee became the first and oldest organized township in what was later to be known as the republic of Liberia. Its origin dates as far back as 1822.

The predominant culture prior to the coming of the slaves was a mixture of Vai and Bassa cultures. The religious beliefs were African Traditional Religion and Islam. The coming in of the Americo-Liberians and a form of western civilization and education soon impacted this community and brought about the third culture, which I consider to be the Christian western culture. Over a period of time, as schools were built by this new Christian colony, coupled with western civilization, which was introduced by these freed slaves, the western culture grew to become the dominant culture in this township. Over a period of time, other ethnic groups migrated into this township. Presently, the Krus are the largest, with a population of 5,029 persons, and they are followed by the Kpelle and Vai with a population of 3,288 and 3,198 persons respectively. All of the 16 ethnic groups, the Americo-Liberians, and other foreign nationals are residents of Solapee.[6] To a large extent, due to intermarriages and the influence of western civilization, the various ethnic-cultures have been diminishing. Though there are sporadic neighborhoods of some

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[5] William Band, interview by author, Solapee, August 25, 2016.

[6] Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services.

ethnic groups, their cultural influences can only be felt amongst themselves and not the general populace.

Demographic Data of Solapee

Solapee is a town located in Monteserrado County, Liberia, and it is considered a suburb of Monrovia. Montserrado is bounded on the east by Bomi County, on the west by Margibi County, on the North by Bong County, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Solapee is listed as one of the original settlements comprising the commonwealth of Liberia in the 1839 constitution, which was drafted by the American Colonization Society.[7]

According to the 2008 Population Census, Solapee was categorized as zone 1600 with a total population of 28,437 persons. There are 13,887 persons who are 18 years and above, while 7,181 of this number are female and 6,706 are male. The census also reported that 14,550 persons fell below 18 and 7,415 of this number are female while 7,135 are male. Moreover, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services have made a projection that by 2014 the population would have risen to 31,152 persons. It was further projected that 15,977 of this number will be female while 15,175 will be male.[8] The latest projection depicting the current population is not available.

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[7] The Liberia Connections, "The Constitution of the commonwealth of Liberia." Accessed August 27, 2016 from the Liberia Connections.

[8] Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services.

Historical Overview and the Demography of the Jordan Fellowship Church

To have an overview of the history and the demography of JFC, this section provides the historical highlights and the demographics of JFC. It will provide detailed information which will enable the reader to understand the JFC context.

Historical Highlights

The Jordan Fellowship Church is a body of believers located in Solapee, Montserrado County, Liberia. It is a semi-autonomous congregation affiliating with the Assemblies of God, Liberia. It is one of the oldest Pentecostal churches in the Solapee community whose impact can be felt in almost every part of the township, yet there appears to be some kind of hostility between this church and some neighbors.

The formation of the JFC came as a result of a week-long revival held from April 18- 24, 1988 by the late Rev. Joseph Andrew, general overseer of the denomination that JFC belongs to. At the close of the first tent crusade on the La-joy field, a predominantly Muslim community in Solapee, the first official Sunday worship service convened on April 24, 1988 with over twenty converts attending. My wife and I were introduced to this young congregation as the pastor/head of the church. I was given the opportunity to preach the first sermon.

This young church plant became a vibrant evangelistic force within the entire Solapee Township. Two baptisms were held on August 18 and December 22, 1988, respectively. By the close of 1989, we have had two additional baptisms before the inception of the Liberian civil crisis by December 24 of the same year, with a membership of 125 adherents.

By April 10, 1990, we were forced to close the church and evacuate Solapee and move to Bong Mines, Bong County because of the advancement of Charles G. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels on Solapee and Monrovia. While in Bong Mines, Bong County, Solapee became a bone of contention between Charles Taylor's rebel forces and government forces. Some of the fieriest battles to capture the seat of government in Monrovia during this civil unrest occurred in this township. Eventually, the break-away faction from NPFL of Charles Taylor, known as Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), under the command of Major General Prince Y. Johnson, captured Solapee and the entire Marshall Island and made it their headquarters, and the haven of rest and peace for Monrovia and its environs. The president of Liberia, Samuel K. Doe, was arrested by INPFL, under the command of Prince Y. Johnson, and brutally killed.

Ministering in Solapee during this time was a difficult task. All churches' doors were closed. By the grace of God, I returned and reopened the church on April 20, 1991. On one occasion, Prince Y. Johnson, along with his men, made an impromptu stop at our church during a revival service and ordered the church closed. The scene was terrifying; however, after much prayer, the church was reopened the following day. But the road ahead was very difficult, for fear had gripped the people and rebel converts that were won to the church.

There were several conversions among the rebels and civilians. Several baptisms were conducted and the church grew to about 350 persons. Many INPFL rebels were converted and became active participants and leaders in subsequent years. In the course

of time we went into the swamps around Solapee, cut down logs, and produced fire coal, sold it to purchase an acre and 3.3 lots (7.3 lots) of land to build a church.

Unfortunately, by October 1992, the NPFL of Charles Taylor invaded Solapee and we were again evacuated and carried to Monrovia. Solapee went ablaze with fire arms and military aircrafts for several months until February 1993 when the peace keepers (Economic Community of Military Guard) captured Solapee from the NPFL. By this time, Prince Johnson, scores of orphans, and a handful of soldiers surrendered to ECOMOG and moved to Monrovia. Later, Prince Y. Johnson was finally evacuated to Nigeria where he lived until the war subsided. We lost everything that we had tried to gather over the few years since we reopened the church. This setback for the church and family was huge.

After several battles, the peacekeepers captured Solapee with heavy casualties on both sides. We returned to Solapee on February 15, 1993, and found everything burnt. Praise God for the resilient courage to reopen the church with nine members in what was now known as a ghost town. We started services in a burnt building owned by one of our members who was then living in the USA. Our courage to return became a motivating factor for a lot of people to return to Solapee. The Lord graciously brought people back to Solapee and within a year we had a strong church again emerging from the ashes and shackles of this senseless civil upheaval. Several baptisms followed and the church grew in numbers as the Lord gave the increase.

From 1993 to present the church made the following achievements:

1. 1993-An elementary school was organized. The school has now grown to include a full senior high school in Solapee with over 800 students;
2. 1997-We moved the church and school on a new property that we purchased for the church;

3. 1998-We burnt fire-coal or char-coal, sold it and used the proceeds to purchase a bus for the church and school. The bus was used as a commercial vehicle during the weekdays. Proceeds from this bus were used to augment the church's budget. During the week-end the bus was used for evangelism and church planting. As a result of this evangelism, the Roseville Fellowship Church came into being.

4. 2004-We began the construction of our present church edifice and in 2014 commenced the remodeling of the Jordan Fellowship Church High School.

At present, the church has grown until its impact can be felt all over Solapee and its environs. Nevertheless, there appears to be a degree of hostility between our neighbors and this community. This negative attitude can be dated far back, to the early part of the inception of this community. This church was a direct result of the Jimmy Swaggart crusade in November, 1987, which was held at the Samuel Kayon Doe Sports Stadium in Paynesville, Monrovia, Liberia. One of the follow-up tents was brought to Solapee in April, 1988 to continue to follow-up the converts of the Swaggart crusade. Because of the immoral conduct of Swaggart, who had fallen, the stigma long affected this young church plant for several months.

During this period, my wife and I were code named "Swaggart's children," for we were just 22 years each. We were faced with threats of death and various persecutions from the early settlers, Muslims, Vai tribe, and other persons involved in heathen and ritualistic practices. I was told that I would become immoral like my father, Swaggart. Amidst all of these attacks, the church continued to grow. My messages were provocative and directed against the African Traditional Religions, ritualistic killers of human beings, immoral sins, and other hideous spiritual offenses. I, along with my wife, and many other young converts, became the voices of fearless young preachers crying in the wilderness and calling people in this township to repentance. After a few months as a freshman in college, I was not mindful of my homiletics, hermeneutics, or other pulpit ethics or

etiquettes from the onset of this church. This mounted more opposition, as we strived with all of our might to do the Master's will. At one time our tent was brought down by some unscrupulous people who felt that our messages were too offensive and provocative. We went out of the worship place until we lost the tent to Prince Y. Johnson, who took it and hosted it on his military base when he captured Solapee from the government forces. Unfortunately for our opposing neighbors, we became more forceful in our evangelistic campaigns, built a church and school, and became a powerful voice in this township, Assemblies of God denomination, Monrovia, and other parts of Liberia.

What has intrigued me is that, though the church and its founders have grown, and some of the older folks who resented and opposed our messages have died, the opposition and hostility has continued to increase among certain people and quarters of our Solapee neighborhood. What would have been the cause for this persistent hostility and opposition between us and our neighbors? Were we unforgiving? I hope not! Were our neighbors that fell within this category ashamed, envious, or even embarrassed of what they had done against us? I was not certain this was so. Initially, I could not fully establish why this hostile condition has persisted for three decades now. This was the underlining factor why I decided to delve into this Participatory Action Research, so that both our community and neighbors could in a missional context engage this conversation, ascertain the causes, prescribe appropriate interventions, observe the results, and come up with appropriate conclusions that would enhance neighborliness amongst us and our neighbors. Therefore, to accomplish all of this, I use the theoretical, biblical and theological lenses to engage this research.

The Demographics of the JF Church

The shifting demography of Solapee where 65% of the population is mainly youths and young adults is evident in Jordan Fellowship Church. Most of our membership falls within this range. The demography of this church has slightly shifted during the past fifteen years. When the church began in 1988, it was mainly composed of 20% children, 60% teenagers, 15% adult women and 5% adult men. Membership statistics reveal that members/affiliates ranging from ages 1 day to 24 make up a little bit over two-third, or 70%, of the church.

During the first fifteen years, the church had very few married couples. Most of the adult members were living together out of wedlock. During the last ten years, almost all of those in this category regularized their marriages according to the customary or civil laws of Liberia. For the first fifteen years of our existence, there were only three civil marriages and eight marriages by dowry according to customary laws of Liberia. At present we have fifty married persons (twenty-five couples) and we have an average of four marriages per annum. The mortality rate in Jordan Fellowship Church has been very low. Infant mortality has almost been non-existent.

Because of the composition of the church, the illiteracy rate is low. The church has many students. Therefore, those who make up the working class or doing petit (small) businesses and farming are few. Most of the non-working members are students ranging from nursery to graduate studies. The church has 302 persons on the membership roster with a weekly attendance of 275 persons per Sunday and 50 persons per mid-week Bible studies and prayer meetings.[9]

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[9] Jordan Fellowship Church Membership Records covering the period 2006-2016.

The Jordan Fellowship Church has made significant financial progress during the past ten years. There has been an increase in the flow of cash in the church and school. Nevertheless, the economic situation in the country has served as an impediment to the success of projects, since the Liberian dollar continued to lose its value. From 2006 to 2008, the exchange rate between the US dollars and the Liberian Dollar was 60 LD to 1 USD. By 2013, the exchange rate was 70 LD to 1 USD; and presently the exchange rate is 197 LD to 1 USD. Also, observe that both currencies are legal tender in Liberia and are used interchangeably according to the exchange rate.

With regards to our financial resources it is observed that:

1. 50% of the resources are spent on infrastructural developments (church and school buildings);
2. 20% of the resources are spent on Missions, evangelism and church planting;
3. 15% of the resources are spent on music, including musical and audio equipment;
4. 10% of the resources are spent on salaries, compensations, or honorarium;
5. 5% are spent on training purposes.

Reviewing the financial trend and the percentage allocations above, it is evident that some ministries like the children and youth ministries and salaries/compensations/honorarium are not prioritized in the expenditure of this community, something that deserves our attention and prompt review and intervention. MacNaughton rightly put it when he said, "Show me where the church spends its money and I will show you what the real church is."[10]

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[10] John H. MacNaughton, *Stewardship: Myth and Methods* (New York: The Seabury Press, 2002), 35.

A Descriptive Make-up of the JFC

Knowing what JFC is made of will help the reader to understand the immediate

context he/she is studying. Therefore, I intend in this section to provide the general

description of JFC and the central ministries that characterize this church.

General Description of JFC

JF Church consists of mostly low-income earners. It is in recent times that

members of the middle class began moving into Solapee. These low-income earners can

be identified as marketers, petit-traders (small market traders), school teachers, low

income government and private companies' employees, etc. Ninety-eight percent of the

membership of this church falls in this lower socioeconomic group that is struggling to

make it.

JF Church consists of predominantly Liberians. Of the sixteen ethnic groups,

fourteen can be found in this church. Ninety-eight percent of the men and women have

intermarried outside of their tribes and culture. Moreover, the cultures of the sixteen

tribes of Liberia have great similarities; therefore, the cultural makeup of this church

features singular cultural practices. Traditional marriages are somewhat similar with

minor differences. In addition, English is the only language spoken without

interpretation in our services. While the English spoken by few is standard, some speak

substandard English or "Liberian English."

The Central Ministries of the JF Church

This Christian community is structured and patterned after the broader

Assemblies of God Community, so many of the ministries that shape its identity are

similar to that of the Assemblies of God, Liberia. At JFC there are five cardinal ministries in which the activities of the church are centered around. They are as follows:

1. Men Ministry is responsible for coordinating men's activities in the church;
2. Women Ministry is responsible for coordinating women's activities in the church;
3. Christ Ambassadors is responsible for coordinating youth and young adult activities in the church;
4. Music Ministry is responsible to coordinate music in the church, mainly praise and worship and the choir ministration;
5. Christian education ministry coordinates all the church related teachings in the various organs of the church where believers are trained and nurtured for the work of service. There are four environments where Christian education occurs: a. Sunday school; b. Children Ministry/children church; c. Mid-week Bible studies; and d. JFC Elementary, Junior, and Senior High School where Christian education is integrated in the learning process.

Summary

In light of the above, this local church over the past ten years has focused its time and energy on a lot of spiritual and physical activities. It has been a very busy church with not much time left to spend with neighbors, to rest, or have leisure. Most of our time and energy has been spent on fasting and prayer and preaching and teaching of the word of God and construction projects. Therefore, the church is known for being a "church in action." Seven days in the week the doors of the church are opened for some kind of weekly service or auxiliary activities. Many persons outside the perimeters of the church see this community as being the fastest developing institution in the Solapee community. For the past ten years the church has been busy with construction projects. However, for the past few years our momentum for evangelism and social fellowships with our neighbors has dropped considerably. A year ago, in the middle of this program, this claimed our attention and we have begun doing some improvement in these areas. However, more is to be done with regards to our neighbors and those that are at the periphery of life.

This chapter provided the historical highlight of the Jordan Fellowship Church, taking into consideration the immediate and broader contexts. The following chapter discusses the two theoretical lenses (adaptive change theory and the social practice of hospitality) and their supporting literature.

CHAPTER 3

THEORITICAL LENSES AND LITERATURE

Introduction

Having explored the historical highlights of the Jordan Fellowship Church's

context, which consists of the broader (neighborhood) and immediate (JF Church)

contexts, the premise is now laid to explore the various lenses which were used to view

or answer this research question. Lenses in this context refers to the different perspectives

which, during the course of this study, influenced the view or answer to my research

question. To this end, the two theoretical lenses explored in this chapter are the adaptive

change theory and the social practice of hospitality. These lenses also had different foci

and have assisted me in exploring this question from diverse perspectives.

Adaptive Change Theory

Leadership on the Line by Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky is the primary

source of information about the adaptive change theory, as opposed to solving problems

using technical solutions. Organizations have always found it difficult to effect change

because of the internal pressure posed on people who are in authority to focus on the

technical aspects of problems. Study has shown that when an organization focuses its

energy on the technical aspects of complex challenges, they opt to achieve short-term

rewards.[1] The technical solution for the cure of malaria in a tropical region of Africa,

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[1] Heifetz and Linsky, 18.

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especially Liberia, is a prescribed malaria treatment of Quinine, Chloroquine, or other

malaria treatments. This is easy to obtain, but the result is usually short-lived due to the

lack of change in behavior and living conditions that would prevent mosquitoes from

breeding in the affected areas and entering homes. To find a lasting cure, one must move

a step beyond this technical solution to an adaptive change process that would prevent the

mosquitoes from breeding in the affected areas and entering homes or places where

people reside. Houses must have protective window and door screens to prevent the

mosquitoes from entering homes. The environments must be cleaned and pond of waters

where mosquitoes breed be rid-of. The habit of staying out in unprotected areas,

especially at night, must be discouraged. Without these changes in one's lifestyle, one

will apply a technical solution of a dose of malaria pills or injection for a moment and the

malaria will resurface, because the conditions that brought about the malaria still exist.

The same goes for acid reflux, diabetes, and other diseases which call for adaptive

change. In contrast to adaptive challenges, first, technical change calls for an application

of current know-how, while in adaptive challenge new ways are learned. Second, in

technical solution the authorities do the work, while in adaptive challenge the people with

the problem do the work.[2] Hence, one can see why the adaptive change theory became an

appropriate lens for this study.

Adaptive change requires that the people having the problem learn to change

their ways of life, attitudes, values, and behavior. It challenges our beliefs and ways of

thinking, and requires that we do things differently than we have done in the past. In

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[2] Ibid., 14.

addition, to have a sustainable change "depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself."[3]

Likewise, to be able to cultivate the missional practice of living in a *perichoretic* relationship with neighbors who may be hostile towards our faith community has required an adaptive change on our part. Adaptive change has challenged our beliefs, some of the values we have had for some time, and ways of thinking. Adaptive change requires that we do things differently then we have in the past, especially in establishing a *perichoretic* relationship with our neighbors. The word *perichoresis* has a trinitarian implication and it "expresses the idea that the three divine persons mutually inherent in one another, draw life from one another, 'are' what they are by relation to one another,"[4] It also refers to being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion. Hence, from my initial analysis, I have come to the conclusion that engaging our friendly and hostile neighbors in a relational atmosphere involves adaptive challenges because they require us to be prepared to experience new experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in our community or neighborhood. "Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values and behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment."[5] Usually, these challenges are never solved by some experts who provide answers from on high. Rather, adaptive challenges, for the past eight months, have required those of us who may be having the problem to become part of the solution.

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[3] Ibid., 13.

[4] LaCugna, 270.

[5] Heifetz and Linsky, 13.

Some of the major challenges we face in establishing relationships with our neighbors are adaptive in nature and will mean that adaptive leadership has to become one of the recipes for a sustainable change. It is this adaptive change process, which comes as a result of adaptive leadership, which has caught my imagination throughout this study. We further observed that creating a change which will affect the hostile behavior of our neighbors required us during the various interventions to move beyond our own cohort and beyond our own constituents, "true believers."[6] This change, though not yet one hundred percent, is coming through the dangerous and grave work of leading change and the critical importance of how I and the Jordan Fellowship Church community have survived through these interventions, without being burnt.

Furthermore, the authors, in expanding the adaptive change theory, carefully outlined how adaptive change is needed to navigate the change process and bring about permanent results, as we have been seeking with our neighbors during this research. With regards to this research and viewing it through the adaptive change theory lens, we have gained so much from the insight of Heifetz and Linsky and the leaders they profiled.

The several case studies ranging from individual and personal to governments and small towns contexts in this book provided illustrations for my research. For example, in the early 1990s, Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister of Israel, had been motivating his country toward an accommodation with their hostile neighbors, the Palestinians. While this move was yielding result, most of the right wing, especially the religious right, was feeling irritated of the compromise and his success in getting the community to wrestle

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[6] Ibid., 83.

with accommodating what they considered loss to their hostile neighbors. For them,

trading off sacred lands was non-negotiable. This led to Rabin's assassination, which

became a tragedy, as well as a terrible setback for his dreams, aspirations, and initiatives.[7]

Adaptive leadership can be dangerous, with devastating consequences. Asking an entire

community to change its ways, as we are seeking to do in this research project, and as

Yitzhak Rabin attempted doing, can be a dangerous side of leadership. People do not

resist change, but they rather resist loss. It is obvious that adaptive leaders will appear

dangerous to people, because of their attempts to question the community's values,

beliefs, or habits of a lifetime. Leaders place their lives on the line when they tell their

community what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear.[8]

> To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead
> people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their daily
> habits, tools, loyalties and ways of thinking —with nothing more to offer perhaps
> than a possibility. Moreover, leadership often means exceeding the authority you
> are given to tackle the challenge at hand. People push back when you disturb the
> personal and institutional equilibrium they know. And people resist in all kinds of
> creative and unexpected ways that can get you taken out of the game: pushed
> aside, undermined, or eliminated.[9]

In addition, the concept of *keeping opposition* close was very helpful during this

study. I discovered that it is true that people who oppose what we have been trying to

accomplish are usually those with the most to lose by our success. On the contrary,

members of our faith community have had the least to lose. The Lord has blessed us from

every direction. After thirty-one years of ministry, we can look back and see how far the

Lord has brought us and how much we have impacted our neighborhood. So, from the

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[7] Ibid., 11.

[8] Ibid., 12.

[9] Ibid., 2.

view point of the interventions during the study, we strived to give our opponents or neighbors more of our attention, as a matter of kindness, and as well as a "tactic of strategy and survival."[10] To survive and succeed in our leadership endeavors, one must work as closely with his or her opponents as he or she would be opened to work with their allies or supporters. On most occasion people are accustomed to working along with people who flow with their vision, passion, or perspectives. Therefore, this lens has helped us to see how we can adapt without fearing loss, and at the same time navigate through hostile waters in our context, as we have sought to establish *perichoretic* relationships with our neighbors for the past eight months.

An example of working with neighbors or people who we may be thinking are our opponents, as Pete did, is highlighted by Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky in their book, *Leadership on the Line*. As the executive director of a local nonprofit organization, Pete failed to get a project approved by the town Planning and Zoning commission in Connecticut, after his failure to keep his opposition close. He operated with political sensitivity and was able to acquire broad support from the elected and appointed officials in the local government. He succeeded in acquiring a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and did most of the background work, but did not initiate any plan of engaging his neighbors by soliciting their views or opinion at the early point of the plan of the project. Hence, his biggest mistake was his early neglect of the neighborhood residents. Pete had earlier resisted having a neighborhood meeting because he felt it would be unpleasant. He said he hated those "angry neighbor

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[10] Ibid., 89.

meetings."[11] What a sad trajectory he chose to walk on. He failed to discern all previous warning signs from within and without, so he failed miserably. We have so much to learn from neighbors or people who oppose us and vehemently go against our plans or projects.

Moreover, there has been a challenge in leading this change in our community, especially a change in our perspectives and opinions about our neighbors. When we in this community fail to recognize the behavior of some of our neighbors and our reciprocal response to their hatred or behavior as adaptive challenges, we will often tend to interpret their behavior as resistance and hatred towards us. This may be the opposite. This is why the first part of this book provides practical tips or suggestions for how we can lead change in our context and other organizations. According to Heifetz and Linsky, to lead change, one must do the following:

1. Get off the dance floor and get on the *balcony*. This is an image that captures the mental activity of stepping back in the midst of action, and asking "What's really going on here?"[12]
2. Think *politically* by finding key partners. "Finding partners who are members of the faction for whom the change is most difficult can make a huge difference."[13] Keeping opposition close is another way of thinking politically. In addition, to think politically, it is expedient to accept responsibility for our piece of the mess, acknowledge their loss, modeling your behavior by being an example and accepting casualties as our sign of commitment;
3. Orchestrate the Conflict. Once you tackle tough issues with adaptive challenges, it is obvious that there will be conflict, "either palpable or latent;"[14]
4. And finally Give the Work Back. "So, taking the work off your own shoulders is necessary but not sufficient. You must also put it to the right place, where it can be addressed by the relevant parties."[15]

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[11] Ibid., 86.

[12] Ibid., 51.

[13] Ibid., 82.

[14] Ibid., 101.

[15] Ibid., 123, 128.

Moreover, seeing this project through this lens has helped me to provide amicable answers to my research question and assist me to provide adaptive leadership in context. I have learned and experienced, during this study, that when you do adaptive work, such as this study has called for during these eight months, you take a lot of heat and may endure a good measure of pain and frustration.[16]

Next, the above four tips assisted me to succeed in leading adaptive change. I observed that I had to nurture the capacity to listen with open ears and to embrace new and disturbing ideas,[17] or change. Some of these ideas or changes became very useful to the study and subsequently enhanced the missional conversation this thesis is seeking to project. Even though change is a feared enemy and it is inevitable, nevertheless, leading requires that we develop new leadership skills around adaptability and the ability to deal with change or accept the consequences of change.[18] To sit and listen to one's neighbors and engage them in a joined discernment process during the interventions was a new skill we had to employ in leading an adaptive change. It is generally believed that it is the characteristic of the human species to resist change, even though we are surrounded by millions of other species that demonstrate wonderful capacities to grow, adapt, and change. On the contrary, we cannot fight change nor sweep it under the carpet, but rather, learn to manage or live with change and seek wisdom to lead through it during every cautious step of the way.[19]

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[16] Ibid., 200.

[17] Ibid., 233.

[18] Craig Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 2001.

[19] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 138.

Social Practice of Hospitality

The next lens I employed in answering this research question was social practice theory. From the general perspective, according to Craig Dykstra, "Practice is participation in a cooperatively formed pattern of activity that emerges out of a complex tradition of interactions among many people sustained over a long period of time."[20] More so, from the Christian point of view, Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass modified this definition by referring to Christian practices as "things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."[21] However, the definition I have been working with is the modified version put forth by Robert Muthiah, in which he defines practices as,

> any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity, carried out with a sensitivity to the Spirit's presence and ongoing work, through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[22]

In view of the above, and since my research has been centered on relationship between our community and neighbors, *hospitality* is both a Christian practice and a social practice. My emphasis will be on the latter, even though both are interwoven, and are done in response to and in the light of God's active presence. Social practice is carried out through the Holy Spirit who shapes us into the image of Christ or the Trinity, by our consistent engagement with the practice. This practice was purposefully selected

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[20] Robert Muthiah. "Christian Practices, Congregational Leadership, and the Priesthood of All Believers: Alasdair MacIntyre's Conception of Social Practices," *Journal of Religious Leadership*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 169, accessed September 12, 2018. http//www.arl-jrl.org.

[21] Ibid., 173.

[22] Ibid., 177.

because it was intended to provide us a clearer view of the direction of my thesis. The social practice under consideration has shaped our theology and fostered interpersonal relationships with our neighbors. Also, the several missional implications imbedded in this practice have helped us to identify steps our community needed to take in order to build communal relationship with our neighbors. This practice was inherently communal in nature and was carried out by groups of people and by communities. The communal nature of this practice can shape both the individuals' and community's identity[23] and help the community to positively engage their hostile neighbors, if they are really found to be hostile. Thus, this practice became a better tool for the examination of my research question and beyond. Cognizant of the fact that this social practice is also a missional practice or habit and a key-stone habit, which when put into practice can transform the entire local church system towards participation in God's mission in our neighborhood and the world,[24] the direction of my research was examined through and by it, in order to find an answer which has been properly researched.

This practice of *hospitality* is essential and has been at the heart of finding an answer to this research question. Hospitality, as a practice in this context, is a reciprocated and dynamic practice of giving and receiving hospitality between our community and neighbors respectively. In the meantime, as we, along with our neighbors, engaged in this kind of reciprocated hospitality, our community learned to leave our baggage behind or at home. The practice of leaving one's baggage behind is a

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[23] Ibid., 170.

[24] Nigel Rooms and Patrick Keifert, *Forming the Missional Church: Creating Deep Cultural Change in Congregations* (Cambridge, MA: Grove Books, 2014), 20.

"profoundly world-changing instruction."[25] By this we mean, Jordan Fellowship Church learned together how to become like strangers to our neighbors, in order to receive hospitality. This practice was intended to build simple, ordinary interpersonal relationship with our neighbors without any other ulterior motive, strategy, or intent.

Furthermore, beneath this hospitality lies a *perichoretic* relationship where there is a "mutual dependence and interdependence of hospitality—each person taking turns hosting and being guests."[26] From every indication, this practice was essential to this conversation and it facilitated the process of helping our community to begin to discern what God's preferred and promised future for us might be. Who is God calling us to join in accomplishing that preferred future in our community and neighborhood?[27]

Practicing hospitality is one of the ways the reign of God impacted our local community and the various neighbors within which our local church is nested. It is incumbent upon the church to engage in hospitality into the world. Judging from the African-Liberian perspective, hospitality is an integral part of building relationships with people. Thus, it is known to be a cultural and social practice, which over time has become a fundamental cultural norm. To be a true Liberian or African is to be hospitable to strangers or neighbors. However, the individualistic practice from the west has permeated our context until hospitality is now becoming non-existent. Peter Block acknowledges that "western culture, where individualism and security seem to be the priorities, we need to be more thoughtful about how to bring the welcoming of strangers into our daily way

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[25] Roxburgh, 169.

[26] Ibid., 22.

[27] Rooms and Keifert, *Forming the Missional Church*, 22.

of being together"[28] and to further discover ways we can receive similar hospitality from strangers or neighbors. This giving and receiving of hospitality has the potential to cement relationships between a Christian community and its neighbors, even though this latter development may not be the motive or intent for this practice.

A major component of hospitality within the African-Liberian context is the breaking of bread together or the exchange of cola nuts in certain cultures of the Liberian society. The giving and receiving of cola nuts, food, or water are a sign of warm welcome or reception. Without doubt, this practice creates conversation and social space that support community and neighborhood relationships. Food, water and cola nuts are often seen as a symbol of hospitality and we should be serious about it as we would do for a "life-giving act."[29] Therefore, as a lens, when we envisioned or graded this reciprocated hospitality between our neighbors and us, we discovered that this practice served or became a bridge between us and our neighbors. The neighborhood focus group-two session in our home, sporting events, and visit to the community's teashop were all occasions for hospitality.

Summary

In conclusion, the *adaptive change theory* and the *social practice of hospitality* were tools which helped us to critically engage or examine the research question. Each of these lenses was unique to this research and has had bearing on the missional conversation. The adaptive change calls for people with the problem to learn new ways

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[28] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 20080), 145.

[29] Ibid., 148.

and be ready to do the work themselves. This adaptive change enables a Christian community to cultivate the missional practice of living in a *perichoretic* relationship with neighbors and enhances the church's social practice of hospitality with their neighbors. This communal practice shapes both the individuals' and the local church's identity. The next chapter views this research from both the biblical and theological lenses. Biblical lenses are neighborliness in Luke's gospel (Luke 10:30-35) and boundary breaking (John 4:4-26), and the theological lenses are *divine perichoresis* and *incarnational ministry.*

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL LENSES AND LITERATURE

Biblical Lenses

The adaptive change theory and the social practice of hospitality were two theoretical lenses which lend support to this study. From the adaptive change perspective, we who had the problem had to learn to listen and change our way of thinking and behavior as we planned to build good relationship with our neighbors. These adaptive changes were accompanied by another lens, social practice of hospitality. Hospitality was highlighted as the social practice which also lent support to this work. This section highlights two biblical lenses.

Introduction

As important as the previous theoretical lenses have been to this study, the biblical and theological lenses also provided additional spiritual insight and support for this research. Therefore, doing this research from multiple biblical and theological perspectives and lenses has been a missional ingredient which has enabled us to answer this research question through the lens of God's words, and also assisted us to come up with a logical conclusion that is biblically and theologically grounded. Viewing issues from multiple perspectives is the essence of this program, and an important ingredient to the entire missional conversation. Since it has become evident by what we see happening around us, that God is doing something new, something different and something

unexpected in our neighborhood and world, so God's movement amongst us, in our

neighborhood and world, requires new approaches or perspectives.[1] The technological

advancement, cultural integration, and population explosion call for diverse ways of

looking at realities. This is where this multi-perspective is required. Therefore, in view of

God's words, there are two biblical lenses which have helped in this process:

neighborliness in Luke's gospel (Luke 10:30-35) and boundary breaking (John 4:4-26).

Neighborliness in Luke's gospel (Luke 10:30-35)

> [30] In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. [31] A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. [32] So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [33] But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. [34] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'"

Luke presents a perfect example of who Jesus believes a neighbor is in his

account to Theophilus. In this story, he narrates the dialogue between Jesus and the rich

man concerning eternal life and neighborliness. The underlining contextual factor of the

Samaritan is one in which it is embedded with layers of hostility between the Jews and

the Samaritans, yet at the end the Samaritan was proven to be good and a loving neighbor

to the unknown victim. Previously, the priest and the Levite failed to behave neighborly.

This Samaritan man took pity on the victim, who may have been a resident of the

neighborhood in which he was victimized or a friendly helpless looking stranger, and

bound his wounds.

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[1] Rooms and Keifert, *Forming the Missional Church*, 4.

There are several points of interest in this parable. First, the man of Samaria, who because of his background was hated by the Jews for their intermarriages with non-Jews and their lack of observance of the Mosaic law, is considered to be good, as compared to the priest and the Levite who passed by the injured man without showing compassion. It is believed that in Jewish culture contact with the dead was understood as defiling. Priests in particular were prohibited from getting in contact with uncleanness. It is therefore believed that the priest and Levite may therefore have assumed that the injured man was dead and avoided getting in contact with him to keep them ceremonially clean. This does not excuse them because they would have used the same to justify both touching a corpse and ignoring it. It was on their part an act of negligence of service. Instead of counter checking whether the man was dead or not, they passed on the other side to continue their journey.[2]

Second, Jesus redefined the word "neighbor" and gave it a new meaning. Accordingly, he sees a neighbor as anyone in need, or any person who may not be in the same social or religious strata with us. They do not have to be necessarily a person who lives in the same geographic location as us, but rather, our neighbor could be unbelievers, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, the poor, the homeless etc. On the other hand, this is not to mean that people who live in the same geographic location with us cannot be considered as neighbors in the true sense of this text. In this study, I considered those in our township who are not in the Jordan Fellowship Church as our neighbors. Third, the Good Samaritan can be compared to Christ who by his incarnation showed love and compassion to fallen humanity (John 3:16). If the church is to

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[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Good_Samaritan

demonstrate this love and compassion, then the church stands in the position to become the Good Samaritan. Using this lens, I saw Jordan Fellowship Church as the Good Samaritan and the injured and helpless man as our neighbor.

This context serves as an opportunity for service, especially when the community of God or the JF Church begins to discern what God may be up to in their neighborhoods and community and how they can join him in what he is doing in these places.[3] Therefore, the triune God has been ahead of us in our neighborhood continuing the work of reconciliation and bringing all things together in Jesus Christ, but we have not been trained to discern it. However, during this study, we discovered that this lens was very helpful in this PAR project and it helped us to participate in *missio Dei*, as it is reported in the methodology and results chapters of this thesis.

Moreover, viewing my contextual realities from the perspective of the Good Samaritan brought an enormous benefit to this study, since I brought Participatory Action Research in conversation and engagement with the dependent variable of neighborliness. Neighborliness is not always about being happy and comfortable with people or everyone; it is allowing God to polish our rough edges and bring us to maturity,[4] as we form relationships with people in and around our context. This lens confirms the reality that the act of neighborliness is a life-long journey that starts in our hearts and assists us to develop flexibility and compassion for our neighbors or people who may be in need.[5] The story of the Good Samaritan served as an example of neighborliness during difficult

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[3] Roxburgh, 114.

[4] Jay Pathak and David Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 168.

[5] Ibid., 34.

circumstances and also contains the example of several possible interventions, which were intended to impact or influence the result of the study. As a result of the neighborliness we are seeking to achieve, Trinitarian love must play a pivotal role or become a major factor or player in helping us answer our research question. Love is divine and it is inherent in the triune community of God.

In Trinitarian theology, God who is love chooses to be known by love.[6] It is this same love that brought God on earth to redeem the human race. The triune God exists in absolute unity and love amongst the triune community. This love is a selfless one which reflects the nature of God. He can only be "apprehended, not comprehended, in the union of love that surpasses all words and concepts."[7] However, we are invited to reflect this trinitarian love in our relationships with all persons, including our neighbors. We were made in the image of the triune God, who is a triune community of love. In the same way, we are called to reflect a community of love in our neighborhood and the entire human community. As the triune community seeks our wellbeing, we are to do same for our neighbors.

Without doubt, Luke helped us to view compassion ministry as a predominant factor of love in enhancing the missional conversation or enterprise and to evaluate the depth or the quality of the love we have had for our neighbors. Hence, a major factor which facilitates, promotes, or goes hand in hand with neighborliness is boundary breaking.

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[6] LaCugna, 332.

[7] Ibid., 332.

Boundary Breaking (John 4:4-26)

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. **5** So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. **7** When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" **8** (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) **9** The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) **10** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." **11** "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" **13** Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." **15** The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." **16** He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." **17** "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. **18** The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." **19** "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. **20** Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." **21** "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. **22** You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." **25** The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." **26** Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

In the framework and context of this research, boundary breaking is the act or idea of developing new approaches in looking at things or developing a new cutting edge with the intention of crossing traditional borders or landmarks or other sociological and psychological boundaries to carry out *missio Dei*. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile note that "boundaries today are increasingly not boundaries of territories but

boundaries of *difference*."[8] The entire ministry of Jesus was characterized by his many attempts to cross social and psychological boundaries to minister to people of diverse backgrounds, even those who were hostile to him. One instance was the space he created to engage the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-26). This episode took place before Jesus's return to Galilee. Many of the Jews regarded the Samaritans as foreigners and were very hostile towards them. This hostility could be dated as far back as the post-exilic period.

In this account, Jesus had to go through Samaria on his way to Galilee. I am of the opinion that Jesus being God was omniscient, so he chose this path intentionally. He knew there was a person in need, whom he intended to reach. He came to the Samaritan city of Sychar, where Jacob's well was located. Weary of the journey, he decided to rest at the well, as his disciples went to get food. Later, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus requested from her a drink. This was something that was difficult or prohibited for a Jew to do. The woman, having identified Jesus to be a Jew, objected and acclaimed, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask me for a drink?" Jesus engaged this woman in this life transforming conversation till she and her entire town got converted.

This passage clearly shows that Jesus was intentional about breaking boundaries. He bridged gaps of all social and religious classes to bring people from the margin to the center. He saw the Samaritans as his neighbors, even though, in this passage, the Samaritan woman initially responded to him in a hostile manner. His response and reaction to her, a woman whose entire mindset was hostile towards the Jews, was amazing. It is clear that by the way he responded he was breaking the boundary between

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[8] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 128.

two groups of people who were living in hostility for several years. Thus, he was removing the old cutting edge, which defines religion as being segregative, and redesigning a new cutting edge, which included religious tolerance and gender equality. He was establishing new borders of inclusion which would be characterized by tolerance, love, and fellowship. By doing this, Jesus was carrying out cultural and religious bridging and at the same time cultivating a *perichoretic* relationship of neighborliness between the Jews and their half-brothers, amidst their religious, social, and cultural diversities.

The text is clear that Jesus crossed four different boundaries to reach this woman and the town of Sychar. First, he crossed the religious boundary. The Jews and the Samaritans had religious differences. The Jews felt that they were more religious than their half-brothers, the Samaritans. Second, Jesus crossed sociological boundary. In our terminology, the Jews considered the Samaritans to be second class citizens who were inferior to them. They could not be included in the same class or social strata. Third, Jesus crossed geographical or territorial boundary. He was passing through a geographical region where the Jews would not dare pass through. Fourth, in a culture where women were seen as being inferior to men, he purposefully chose to engage a woman in a conversation when both of them were alone and secluded from the rest of the people. As a result of this fellowship, the Samaritan woman became an evangelist to her town.

The account of Peter breaking boundaries in Acts chapter 10, where he led the household of Cornelius to salvation, is another good example for the breaking boundary lens. For Peter to incarnate into this Gentile neighborhood/world, he had to be obedient to the voice of God when the Lord commanded him in a dream to put away all cultural

differences which existed between the Jews and the Gentiles and cross missions frontiers, in order to bring the Gentiles from the periphery of Judeo-Christianity to the center of Christ's love. As he was contemplating on this vision, the men sent by Cornelius to invite Peter to his house arrived and Peter subsequently invited them into Simon's house to be his guest. This act of being hospitable was unusual for a Jew to dine with a Gentile. However, the stage was previously set when Peter was commissioned in a vision to break boundaries and "not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15). What was unique in this case was that God was already ahead of Peter or the early church dealing with Cornelius, a Gentile centurion, whose love for God and humanity led to his inclusion amongst the saints of God. Peter eventually broke another boundary when he joined God in this Gentile neighborhood at Caesarea and at this time became a guest to a Gentile, Cornelius. Consequently, Cornelius and his entire household got saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. At the end of this episode, this mass conversion was climaxed by water baptism and a new church was born (Acts 10).

Therefore, "we have reasonably firm evidence that as people build more religious bridges they become warmer toward people of many different religions, not just those religions represented within their social network."[9] Therefore, when we used this lens in this study we created a missional perception or mindset in this multi-perspectival boundary-breaking work of the Holy Spirit which helped us discern how we could cultivate neighborliness with our neighbors who were hostile towards us. Accordingly, we also learned that the church was designed to be an open system interacting with its

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[9] Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 533.

community and neighborhood.[10] This open system assists a local church to learn how to

respond to or adapt to changes that are taking place within its environment or the external

context of the local church. It is prudent for a congregation to recognize that for it to

continue to exist it should not close itself off from its context and changing community,

as the Jews did to the Samaritans. The world around us is fast outgrowing the church.

While we live in the 21st century, the church's organizational concepts, structures, and

methodologies have remained antique and stagnant in the 18th and 19th centuries' ways of

life.

Equally important, there should be a balance in this open systems perspective or

approach. That is, the church should be seen as both forming and reforming. The church

is forming in the sense that the church is missional by engaging its context and

continuously recontextualizing its ministries to meet the needs of the contemporary

church and neighbors (*ecclesia semper formanda*). The church is reforming by reclaiming

the church's identity (*ecclesia semper reformanda*) in its neighborhood.[11] The ministry of

the Holy Spirit is essential in assisting congregations to engage in these processes.

In short, this is *missio Dei* in practice, which turns the church inside out as it

breaks down the walls or barriers that are erected between the congregation and our

neighborhood and the world outside.[12] Both Jesus and Peter, during their engagements

with the Samaritan woman and Cornelius, were forming and reforming, by breaking

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[10] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 144.

[11] Ibid., 54.

[12] Rooms and Keifert, *Forming the Missional Church*, 11.

social, traditional, geographical, religious, gender, and cultural boundaries in order to make the gospel relevant to their converts and context.

Prior to and during this study, I and my PAR team observed that there were similarities within the context of the Jews and the Samaritans, and ours, which suggested that these lenses were appropriate for this research and motivated me to use this lens. First, the Jews and the Samaritans had differences that divided them, while our community and neighborhood also had some differences that seemed to divide us. Second, the Jews and Samaritans were neighbors and they lived within the same geographic region but with physical, cultural, and psychological borders dividing them. The same is true with our community, even though our borders were not physical. Third, the Jews and the Samaritans lived in hostility, while our community and its neighborhood lived with some kind of hostile behavior amongst us. Hence, since the contextual realities in both settings were similar, we could easily view the research problem using this lens and eventually come up with interventions which enhanced our relationship with our neighbors.

Having explored the biblical lenses of neighborliness and boundary breaking, we are now left with the two theological lenses. They are divine *perichoresis* and incarnational ministry.

Theological Lenses

The biblical lenses were followed by two theological lenses. These two lenses see the research question from the perspective of the divine relationship of the triune God and how the church can incarnate into the neighbors' culture to bring about change.

Introduction

The theological lenses included an understanding of divine *perichoresis* and

incarnational ministry. These two lenses contributed to this study a research which was

theologically framed. There is interrelatedness between the two lenses, and the

relationship is also important to this study. These two lenses were selected because of

their relational and *kenotic* characteristic or elements, which contributed or engaged the

dependent variable of neighborliness.

Divine *Perichoresis*

Perichoresis is a Trinitarian concept which expresses the idea that the triune God

of three divine persons has mutual inherence in one another. They are so interrelated that

they draw life from one another, "are" what they are by relation to one another.[13] The

doctrine further states that "to be a divine person is to be by nature in a relation to other

persons."[14] The relationality and the social attributes of God are shown when we are in

relations with others. This fellowship is mutually dependent on one another, especially

where the image of the divine dance is used to explain their relationship. Catherine M.

LaCugna explains it this way:

> The metaphor of a divine dance is effective. Choreography suggests the
> partnership of movements, symmetrical but not redundant, as in each dancer
> expresses and at the same time fulfills him/herself towards the other. In inter-
> action and inter-course, the dancers (and the observers) experience one fluid
> motion of encircling, encompassing, permeating, enveloping, overstretching.
> There are neither leaders nor followers in the divine dance, only an eternal
> movement of reciprocal giving and receiving, giving again and receiving again.
> To shift metaphors for a moment, God is eternally begetting and being begotten,
> spirating and being spirated. The divine dance is fully personal and interpersonal,

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[13] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 270.

[14] Ibid., 271.

expressing the essence and unity of God. The image of the dance forbids us to think of God as solitary.[15]

The key word in the divine *perichoresis* is relationship. It is in such communion that members of the community of Christ should reflect this life of the Trinity amongst themselves and with their neighbors. In relational ontology "no person can be thought of by himself or herself, apart from other persons."[16] Comparably, the African-Malawian cultural philosophy of *umunthu (*personhood*)* and *perichoresis* have similar meaning: "A person is a person through other persons."[17] This perception deals with the relationship between a person and the community but can also refer to the relationship between a community and its neighbors.

Therefore, Trinitarian theology, the foundation for missional theology, is based on relationship.[18] The Trinity is relational and participatory, a *perichoretic* community of three persons who are mutually depending on each other with a shared life. Hence, for leadership to be effective in fostering good neighborliness, it has to be about fostering relationships within the community as well as with its neighbors. A missional church is one which is a relational community made out of internal relationships of members and external relationships among the community and its neighbors and the world. Thus, this Trinitarian relationship, which has its roots in the economic trinity and the social doctrine of the Trinity, is the core component of missional leadership which must be concerned with what God may be up to in our neighborhood. Therefore, I sought to establish in this

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[15] Ibid., 272.

[16] Ibid., 298.

[17] Kwiyani, 42.

[18] LaCugna, 57.

research that the Trinitarian theology of *perichoresis* is a catalyst which, when put into motion, created neighborliness.

In view of the aforementioned and in regard to soteriology, the triune God reached down to sinful humanity while they were yet sinners to establish this *perichoretic* relationship, through the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ on Calvary. For three years the ministry of Jesus was centered on building relationships. In light of this new relationship, the way was opened for man to become a friend of the triune community in this earthly neighborhood. The concept to be borrowed here is that since the transcendent God reached out to fallen humanity who was in a hostile relationship and opposition to God, and opened the corridor for men to be saved and participate in God's divine work, the church or our community can do same, in order to be neighborly. To an extent, since there is a *perichoretic* communion amongst the triune God, any community, in an attempt to build neighborly relationship, must by itself foster interpersonal relationships with its neighbors that are communal in nature.

Engaging this research by using the lens of divine *perichoresis* clearly had bearing on the dependent variable of neighborliness. According to Margaret Wheatley, "In the quantum world, relationship is the key determiner of everything and subatomic particles come into form and are observed only as they are in relationship to something else."[19] Subatomic particles do not exist as independent things. This sets the premise that the universe is interconnected even at the subatomic level. Each has a part to play. This bond of relationship which exists at the subatomic level is what holds the universe

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[19] Wheatley, 11.

together. If this can work at the subatomic level, this same concept can work amongst human interpersonal relationships.

Another example is in the field of human health. In viewing the human health from a wholistic perspective, the body can be viewed as "an integrated system rather than as a collection of discrete parts. Some biologists offer the perspective that what we thought of as discrete systems (such as the immune, endocrine, and neurological systems) are better understood as one system, totally interdependent in their functioning."[20] The entire physiological make-up of a human being is interconnected and has a bond of relationship that exists amongst its members. This is why when part of the body is affected, the entire body bears the pain, even other areas that are not directly affected. I have observed that whenever my stomach hurts, my head hurts me the more.

The insight that Wheatley brings into this conversation about relational anthropology and the universe was helpful in this research. We clearly see now that the *perichoretic* community of the triune God made the universe and man as *perichoretic* communities. Thus, relationship is the basis for the existence of any community or people. Life in the church is about relationships. Life in the neighborhood is about relationships. "Relational issues appear everywhere,"[21] even between order and chaos. To comprehend chaos, one must comprehend order, and to comprehend order, one must also comprehend chaos. What brings about chaos is the lack of order, and what brings about order is the lack of chaos. So, to know the other, you must study the other. There is a bond of relationships which exists between the two.

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[20] Ibid., 12.

[21] Ibid., 14.

Relationship is a foundational pillar to living in harmonious relationship within your immediate and broader context. Jesus emphasized the importance of relationship in his high priestly prayers when he prayed for all believers to be one. He said, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one. . . . . May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20-21). This kind of relationship amongst Christians set the basis for establishing *perichoretic* relationships with neighbors. This relationship becomes the driving force and the basis for the church to be involved in incarnational ministry.

<center>Incarnational Ministry</center>

The term incarnation of the Son refers to the period when "the triune God enters into limited, finite situation"[22] of humanity for the sole purpose of redeeming the human race from the domain of Satan to eternal life. This is when the Son became the true humanity of God. He took upon himself human limitations and lived among man (John 1:1) in a *perichoretic* relationship with his neighbors, disciples, prostitutes, the less-fortunate in society, the meek and lowly, the sick, and many other people of diverse backgrounds. So, incarnational ministry is when a person or community immerses in a culture or a diverse neighborhood of people for the purpose of ministering to their spiritual and physical needs. The triune God's incarnation is central to Christianity and it is not to make us Jesus, but rather like Jesus, as we are called to live in communion and relationship with people.

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[22] Jurgen Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom* (MI: Fortress Press, 1993), 118.

Therefore, incarnational ministry is a typology of Jesus' incarnation, where the church is called upon to incarnate into our neighborhoods and world in order to fulfill *missio Dei*. Hence, "The missional church is an incarnational (versus an attractional) ministry sent to engage a postmodern, post Christendom, globalized context."[23] It is impossible for the missional church to participate in God's passion for the world without first drawing close to its neighbors in communion. According to Van Gelder and Zscheile, "the risk in this kind of 'embrace' of the neighbor (especially the neighbor who is a diverse other, or even an 'enemy') is the way of the cross."[24]

Since our community is the hands and feet of Jesus in this virtual township, so our major task now is to continue to cultivate ways of attending closely to the stories, cries, and the needs of our friendly looking neighbors and those in our township who may even be our enemies.[25] According to the apostle Peter, "each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). It is by this that all persons will know that we are Christ's disciples, if we love one another (John 13:35). In addition, Titus also admonishes believers to "devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives" (Titus 3:14). According to Teresa of Avila,

> Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
> Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.
> Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.
> Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

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[23] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 4.

[24] Ibid., 116.

[25] Thompson, 82.

> Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.[26]

Moreover, we have learned that the way to do this was to first identify our contextual realities and subsequently engage them in this Participatory Action Research project by the various interventions outlined in the methodology used to come up with the findings in this study.

We were called to incarnate into Solapee or surrounding neighborhoods, as the triune God did through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit lift people from the margin to the center of God's love. Missional leadership and ecclesiology are incarnational concepts, which imply emptying ourselves (*kenosis*) in order to assist and form relationships with others. In this study, the *kenosis* was closely associated with the incarnation because both of them are adaptive in nature and had similar traits. They call for a change of mind; having the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, a mind which calls for a kind of humility which values others above ourselves, not looking to our interest but each of us to the interest of others, especially our neighbors. In our relationship with our neighbors and one another, the *kenosis* calls us to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:3-8).

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[26] https://www.jollynotes.com/joyful-living/we-are-his-hands-and-feet/

Summary

On the whole, viewing this research from both the biblical and theological perspectives added a missional ingredient which assisted us to frame this conversation from the perspective of God's word and provided a theological understanding of who God is amongst His people. In so doing, neighborliness in Luke's gospel, as demonstrated in the story of the Good Samaritan, redefines who a neighbor is and helps us to see and learn how a Christian community can embrace strangers who are in need and show them love. The boundary breaking lens from the perspective of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman helps us to be intentional in crossing traditional boarders or landmarks or other sociological psychological boundaries in reaching our neighbors who may be hostile towards us. The chapter concludes with two theological lenses. First, divine *perichoresis,* a Trinitarian concept, explains the interrelatedness of the triune God amidst their diversity and how a community of Christ can foster this relational attribute with their neighbors. Second, the incarnational ministry lens highlighted how a person or community of Christ can immerse in a culture or a diverse neighborhood of people to minister to them. Having explored the preceding lenses, the following chapter focuses on the methodology used to carry out this study. This chapter is subdivided into the following sections: a brief introduction of the methodology, a detailed description of the research design, data analysis, and the interventions.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

From the perspectives of the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses, and in an

attempt to cultivate the practice of neighborliness in the Jordan Fellowship Church, this

study has begun to assist our community to get involved in the practice of living in a

perichoretic relationship with our neighbors. Hence, my selection of Participatory Action

Research as my methodology of choice to accomplish this goal was appropriate.

Accordingly, this methodology was used to answer the question, *How might*

Participatory Action Research interventions cultivate neighborliness of the Jordan

Fellowship Church with their neighbors? First, this chapter presents a brief introduction

of the methodology stating the reason I chose. Second, a detailed description of the

research design I used during this study follows. Third, this chapter explains how I

proceeded to analyze the data from this study; and fourth, this chapter is concluded by the

various interventions, as indicated in the research diagram.

An Overview of the Research Methodology

Participatory Action Research (PAR) "is a form of action research in which

professional social researchers operate as full collaborators with members of

organizations in studying and transforming those organizations."[1] It is an ongoing organizational learning process which has an approach that emphasizes collaborative learning and mutual participation for the purpose of organizational transformation. This methodology focuses on *doing research with people rather than for people*. It brings the researcher, who is part of the people being researched, in mutual participation, action, collaboration, and reflection. More precise, Participatory Action Research typically has a focus outside of the organizational context which promotes human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs. It sees its participants, who are the people being researched, as equals and as such deserve equal rights and opportunity to participate and contribute freely in the research. The purpose of this methodology is to effect transformation in some aspects of the situation or structures in a given context or entails a cultural change in which the researcher, who is also part of the context being researched, "moves to empower the people to construct and use their own knowledge."[2]

Hence, during this research, this PAR methodology created a spirit of collaboration among the community, our neighbors, and myself in this joint exercise. Interestingly, since the JF Church and the Solapee neighborhood form part of the context being studied, and since I also form part of the two components of the context, I eventually became an integral part of the people being studied. Consequently, for this study to yield its desired result, every step of the process had to become collaborative, intentional, and participatory in scope.

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[1] Davydd J. Greenwood, William F. Whyte, and Ira Harkavy, "Participatory Action Research as a Process and a Goal," *Human Relations* (February 1993), 42 (2):175-192, accessed February 10, 2019. https://participaction.wordpress.com/whatpar/defining-par/

[2] David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2014), 55.

From the perspective of this program, I chose this methodology because I observed that this methodology focused on multiple perspectives and relationships, which eventually came through the process of joint participation of people who were engaged in this study with a common agenda. Accordingly, we were able to achieve satisfactory results because "the more participants engaged in this participative universe, the more we can access its potential and the wiser we can become."[3]

In addition, this study proved that PAR is a team-work approach to solving problems, because the people who were being studied were invited to do the research together, as a team. As a result, the results of this study tended to become reliable and trusted and were welcomed by the PAR team, neighbors, and our local church. Moreover, a major ingredient in such participatory teaming was diversity, another trinitarian and missional theme. Diversity in the composition of the PAR team in conjunction with the working of the Holy Spirit, strategies, practices, and interventions that spiced up the organization promoted unity and love amongst people of diverse origin who were working for the common goal of this study.

This participatory and collaborative study brought together several diverse groups that make up the demography of Solapee. First, this study brought together the Americo-Liberians or children of Negro descent who matriculated from the United States of America aboard the ship of pioneers who settled on Providence Island in the early 1800s, and subsequently settled in what later became known as Solapee in 1822. The Muslims, the second group participating in this study, with special emphasis on the Vai tribe, became an integral part of this research. Third, other persons of the African Traditional

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[3] Wheatley, 67.

Religion became part of the research and contributed to this research immensely. Fourth, the Solapee Old Timers or people who had lived in Solapee for a long period of time and the Zoegoes (internally displaced persons who lived in cemeteries or on street corners) were also involved in this study. Finally, our community, the JF Church and School, participated fully in this study. The qualitative and quantitative surveys were carried out by associate and full members of our community, and my Focus Group One and PAR team also consisted of Jordan Fellowship Church members.

Theological and Biblical Perspectives

From the theological perspective, the participatory, collaborative, and *perichoretic* nature of this research clearly demonstrated that missional Christianity/leadership is a paradigm shift in the theology of missions and leadership in context. This makes congregational mission, from the perspective of the missional conversation, a present day reality and a solution for doing God's missions and practicing adaptive leadership for the 21st century church. Throughout this study, it became obvious, that missional Christianity is a team game and can be traced throughout the Bible, theology, and church history.[4]

Biblical Perspective

Biblically, Moses had to learn a team game approach to leading nearly one million Israelites in the wilderness. His father-in-law, Jethro, surfaced as biblical history's first organizational consultant when Jethro advised Moses to change the game

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[4] George G. Hunter III, *Should We Change Our Game Plan?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 58-69.

plan from a Lone Ranger ministry model to a Team Game approach.[5] The result was found to be effective in solving problems and was overwhelmingly welcomed by the people. Collaboration and participatory elements became the determining factors in what I consider to be a primitive Old Testament missional paradigm, which was beginning to emerge (Exodus 18:13-26).

Jesus also built a team of twelve men who were trained for a little over three years, and they became the early pioneers of the Christian church. During these three years, Jesus was involved in building relationships and collaboration amongst the disciples on one hand and the multitude on the other hand. Jesus was a kind of leader who was people centered. He fed the five thousand and formed relationships until the multitude wanted to make him king (John 6:5-15). He went to where they were, and made every attempt to bring them from the periphery of Judaism to the center of his love or to what would later become known as Christianity. He visited the beaches/lakes, and homes of tax collectors and prostitutes to form relationships that resulted to those he visited becoming his followers (Luke 19:1-9; John 12:1-11; Luke 5:1-11). On several occasions, Jesus engaged his listeners or multitude in the conversation or discerning process. This was Jesus' methodology in finding solutions to problems. He intentionally asked the rich young man several questions to assist him in determining who the good neighbor was. This kind of mutual, participatory, and collaborative effort in problem solving was factored into the early church's decision-making process, especially when the church was growing and deacons were needed. The apostles and the disciples of

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[5] Ibid., 60.

believers participated in the discerning process, and by a joint and collaborative resolution found a remedy which was welcomed by all (Acts 6:1-7). Subsequently, the result led to the growth of the early church in such a way that the Lord was glorified.

<div align="center">Theological Perspective</div>

In view of the theological perspective, it is certain that I selected this method because of its participatory, relational, and perichoretic nature, and how it relates to this research and my doctoral program. Furthermore, in compliance with the new missional conversation/paradigm, Participatory Action Research has missional implications and can foster Trinitarian theology, missional ecclesiology, and missional leadership. The participative, diverse, and relational aspects of this methodology during this study supported and enhanced the missional conversation, from the perspective of this Participatory Action Research. My PAR team, including the various participants of this study, is of the opinion that this methodology will continue to yield lasting results. This is beginning to be realized, as a result of an adaptive change process that is taking place amongst us and our neighbors. Further, its diversified, perichoretic, and participatory nature is what lent credence to this method being a facilitator of this missional paradigm, especially in my case where it brought us in conversation with our neighbors in answering this research question and provided me the opportunity to lead in context.

Furthermore, this methodology provided the opportunity for our local church to be in conversation with those who were in opposition or hostile towards us, just as Jesus made every attempt to cross the Samaritan and Jewish boundaries to hear the stories of those on the margin or periphery of life, that were considered as outcasts. The conversation between the focus groups which consisted of our neighbors and our

community was intended to become reconciliatory by itself. Some of these focus group members were people who were hostile towards us and openly resented us. By selecting this kind of research, we were intending to create the space which allowed the Spirit of God to carry out reconciliation among us. Of course, this was an adaptive challenge which at the end provided healing and reconciliation between us and our neighbors.
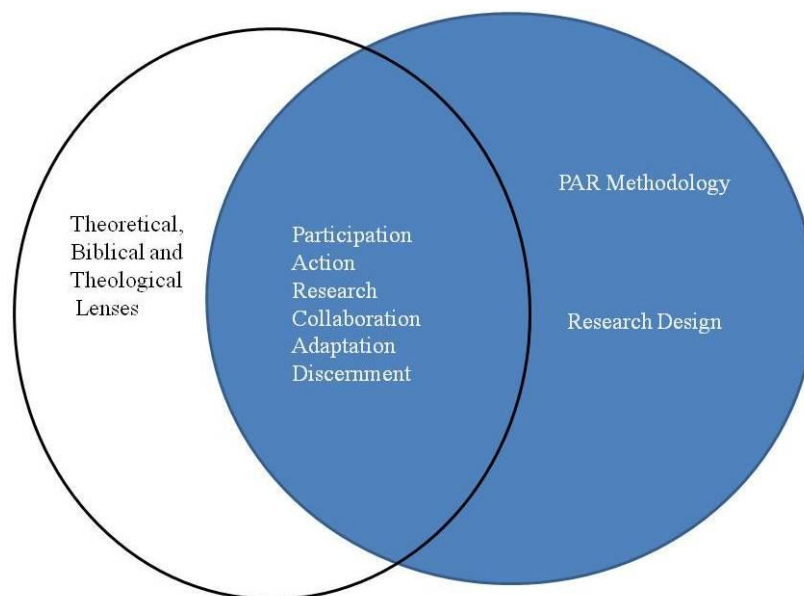
Figure 1. Relationship amongst the lenses, methodology, and research design

Research Design

The research design used in this study is the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Explanatory sequential is a subset of mixed methods. Mixed methods research is an "approach to enquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, interpreting the two forms of data, and using distinct design that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks."[6] In this Participatory Action Research we are studying the JF Church and the Solapee neighborhood. The research

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[6] Creswell, 4.

design used for this project brought into conversation these two groups, along with their

subgroups that have been experiencing hostility. To this end, the PAR team was involved

in integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods and data in a research study.

Qualitative data were open-ended without predetermined responses while the quantitative

data included close-ended responses. To be more precise, I purposely selected this

explanatory sequential mixed methods design because "it appeals to individuals with a

strong quantitative background or from fields relatively new to qualitative approaches."[7]

In other words, using explanatory sequential mixed methods for this project, I first

conducted quantitative research through a baseline survey to one hundred and one

respondents who were willing to participate, analyzed the results, and then built on the

results to explain them in more detail with the qualitative research which was done with

the JF Church Focus Group One and the Solapee neighbors of Focus Group Two. On the

whole, it is considered explanatory because the initial quantitative data results of the

baseline survey were explained in detail with the qualitative data, in order to provide a

clearer view of the research. Additionally, it is also considered sequential because the

initial quantitative phase of the research design (baseline survey) is followed by the

qualitative phase in sequence (Focus Groups One and Two Panel discussion).[8]

In general, my design included a two-phase project in which my research team

collected quantitative data from a base line survey of 101 persons of the JF Church in the

first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results to plan (or build onto) the first

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[7] Ibid., 217.

[8] Ibid., 15.

qualitative phase with the two focus groups made up of the JF Church and their neighbors respectively. The entire process proceeded in sequence. The data emanating from Focus Groups One and Two were recorded, transcribed, and coded by my PAR team in order to facilitate the interventions as shown in the diagram. The quantitative results from the baseline survey assisted us to know where our community was in term of assessment and identified and selected the types of participants who were purposefully selected for the qualitative phase and the types of questions that were asked of the participants. The over-all intent of this design was to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results from the base line survey. Moreover, Focus Groups One and Two had a joint session to carry out communal discernment through dwelling in the world and to jointly discuss issues relevant to this study. Three additional interventions came as a result of this joint meeting: JF Church High School and Sonie High School fellowship, community service, and *ataye* and tea shop visit.

The study was structured in such a way to collect survey data in the first phase, analyze the data, and then follow up with qualitative methods. The second phase end line quantitative survey of the 99 persons helped explain the survey responses and also determine the position of the JF Church respectively, as regarding its dependent variable (neighborliness).

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

First Phase of the Baseline Quantitative Survey (101 Persons)

JF CHURCH

Focus Group 1

NEIGHBORS

Focus Group 2

PAR Team

Record Transcribe Code

Interventions

Sermon Series

Teaching Series/Bible study

Dwelling in the Word

IDP/ Zoegoe Ministry

Seminars

Scholarship Program

Social Fellowship (sports and Teashop) visit

Communion, Discernment

Focus Group 15 + Focus Group 2

Latter Interventions

JFC High School and Sonie Sr. High School fellowship

Community services

Ataye /Tea Shop visit

Endline Second Phase of the end-line Quantitative Survey (99 Persons)

Figure 2. Research design

Baseline 101 JFC Members

Quantitative Data Collection And Analysis

Follow Up With

Focus Groups 1 & 2

Qualitative Data Collection And Analysis

Interventions

Endline Survey 99 JFC Members

Quantitative Survey

Interpretation And Results

Figure 3. Linear diagram of the research design

Data Gathering and Analysis

The data analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data bases were conducted

separately in this approach so that the quantitative results were then used to plan the

qualitative follow up. Second, my research team helped to interpret the follow up results in the discussion section of the study, during the two focus groups meetings. We tried to avoid every temptation to merge the two data bases, because our intent was to have the qualitative data help to provide more depth, more insight, into the quantitative results. In doing so, the PAR team made every attempt to establish the validity of the scores from the quantitative measures and discussed the validity of the qualitative findings, the personal demography, and the important explanations that needed further understanding. The reason we used this approach was that the quantitative data and results of the baseline and end line surveys provided a general overview of the research problem before and after the interventions; more analysis followed through the qualitative data collection to explain, refine, or interpret the general picture of the study.

I chose this method because of its strength of drawing on both the quantitative and qualitative research that minimized the limitations of both approaches in our study and in answering our research question. On a more practical level, we observed that this method provided a sophisticated complex approach which appealed to those of us who have fallen in love with it, because of its missional ingredients, and because it assisted us to be on the forefront of this new research procedure. This design incorporated multiple perspectives during the entire exercise. The diverse and participatory nature and the combination of variety of instruments, in conjunction with the interventions and the diverse people involved in the study, added a missional ingredient which lent support to the study. For instance, the participatory nature of reality and life has required scientists and leaders to focus their attention on relationships. In other words, "no one can contemplate a system's view of life without becoming engrossed in relational dynamics.

Nothing exists independent of its relationship."[9] It is this kind of collaboration, relationship, and equal participation for all that this design projected throughout the study.

My PAR team had access to both the quantitative and qualitative data in our community and neighborhood; the collaboration and relationship also became an additional ingredient or ideal approach which assisted us in answering this research question. On the procedural level, it also became a useful strategy which helped us to have a complete understanding of how the independent variables affected the dependent variable of neighborliness.

A total of 101 and 99 questionnaires were distributed to members of the JFC who were eighteen years of age and above on two different occasions, respectively, and were willing and available to participate in the survey. These instruments were two survey questionnaires (appendices C and D) which were used to gather the quantitative data at the commencement of the research (baseline survey) and at the end of the research (end line survey), respectively. The baseline survey was followed by two qualitative protocols (appendices E and F) for purposefully selected persons from Jordan Fellowship Church known as Focus Group One, on one hand, and the Jordan Fellowship Church Solapee neighborhood, known as Focus Group Two, on the other hand. These instruments were designed with elements of demography and interventions, and the dependent variable of neighborliness in mind, so as to determine whether the intervening variables would have influenced or affected the dependent variable to change the result. The last questionnaire contained questions intended to assess the various interventions at the end of the study.

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[9] Wheatley, 163.

After the approval of this proposal, I conducted a field test of these instruments to a sample of church members and neighbors. My nonprobability sample was drawn from among the various auxiliaries of the church and persons from our neighborhood. Various aspects of demographic elements were taken into consideration. On November 1, 2018, I conducted orientation with Focus Group One, and this was followed by the testing of the qualitative and quantitative instruments with leaders of the auxiliaries of the church on the same date. On November 11, 2018, I also conducted orientation with Focus Group Two and subsequently used the occasion to field test the qualitative protocol on the Focus Group Two participants. On November 18, 2018, I conducted the final orientation with the willing participants of the baseline survey. Since a good percentage of my prospective participants had some educational limitations, it became necessary for me to have an orientation with them regarding the entire research. During the orientation, I highlighted reasons why the research was necessary, outlining the benefits our community and neighbors stand to enjoy, and what would be expected of them. Questions were asked by the participants, while the atmosphere was charged with joy, excitement, and optimism. I also used the time to introduce the missional conversation and adaptive leadership, including how congregation and missional leadership would meet the needs of our church and equip us for participating in *missio Dei*.

Regarding the timetable, there were changes made to the schedule in order to cope with some unforeseen circumstances that we encountered during the scheduled period. The baseline survey was conducted on Sunday, December 9, 2018, while the end line survey was conducted on Sunday, June 16, 2019. The completion of each questionnaire served as an implied consent for those who participated in the research. The data have

been kept in my office at the church and protected in a prepared box safe intended for this research. The data will be kept for three years after the research. My PAR team, working along with me, distributed the paper questionnaires to all participants immediately after the Sunday morning services. During the process, the PAR team assisted those who were illiterate within the church to fill in their questionnaires. Prior to this time, all members of my PAR team, some of whom have been serving as my conversation team members, were cautioned to observe confidentiality during and after the process.

The quantitative data were collected and analyzed by my PAR team. First, I reported the number of respondents who did and did not participate in the survey. I drew a table with numbers reflecting the percentages of participants and non-participants. Second, I discussed the method by which response bias was determined by a cell phone contact to all non-respondents to determine if their responses differed substantially from those who participated. This constituted a participant-non-participant check for response bias. Third, I provided a descriptive analysis of data for all dependent and independent variables in the research. I also reported the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data and total number of respondents (N), frequency of respondents by category (n), percent of respondents by category, and means where appropriate.

I conducted independent t-tests for all respondents to either the baseline survey or the end line survey. I also performed the t-tests in order to do a comparison of the result of the two surveys in terms of determining the outcomes after the eight months of participatory action interventions.

It was observed that this t-test was excellent for this PAR project. In order to facilitate the statistical calculation, I ordered IBM SPSS Statistics Grad Pack (latest

version)[10] for one year to help with the statistical analysis of data and further sought the

assistance of a statistician to help with the statistical procedures, as the need arose. At the

end, the inferential statistical tests helped us to make an inference about the JFC and their

neighbors based on findings. I selected this test because with inferential statistics we had

a measurable level of confidence in the inferences we make.

In addition, the quantitative data and analysis were followed up with the

qualitative data collection and analysis from the two focus groups: namely, Jordan

Fellowship Church known as Focus Group One and our neighbors, known as Focus

Group Two. The participants in both focus groups were purposively selected from the

church and neighborhood respectively. The group from the church was selected based on

age, sex, and longevity in Solapee. They were also selected from the auxiliaries of the

church, to depict equal representation and participation of a cross section of the church.

The Focus Group Two, from the neighborhood, was selected from amongst the Christian

populace, Muslims, Americo-Liberians, traditional religious folks, aborigines of Solapee,

and short- and long-stayed citizens of Solapee. I also considered the various age groups

in order to reflect balance. The sessions for the two focus groups were held in the multi-

purpose hall of the JFC School. Refreshments for the focus groups and survey sessions

were provided. Two sessions were held during the research period (November 1, 2018 to

June 30, 2019).

The data emanating from the focus groups sessions were gathered by audio

recording and note taking. For qualitative data analysis, I used Charmaz' method of

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[10]*IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software*, version 25 (IBM, 2017), https://www.ibm.com/products/spss-statistics.

coding and I did incident-to-incident coding to create *in vivo* codes. Thereafter, I grouped

the *in vivo* codes into focused codes, and then grouped focused codes into axial codes,

after which I created theoretical coding by explaining the relationships between the axial

codes. For proper analysis, I sought to discover the types of *in vivo* codes which would

have been helpful in analyzing this qualitative data: first, I looked for "terms everyone

knew that flagged condensed but significant meaning; second, the participants'

innovative term that captured meanings or experience; third, insider shorthand terms

which reflected particular groups' perspective; and fourth, statements that crystalized

participants' actions or concerns."[11] I provided verbal guidelines for speaking and made

every attempt to encourage the full participation of all persons within the focus groups.

The PAR team which was responsible for doing transcribing and coding manually did

well to report the findings. Confidentiality was required of the focus and PAR team. The

data and scripts were kept confidential in the pastor's office during the research period

and will be kept for three years after the research. Every aspect of this report which was

published did not include any information that would make it possible to identify the

participants. Finally, the informed consent forms were distributed to all participants of the

focus groups and PAR team (see appendix B), and the PAR team members were required

to observe confidentiality during and after the process.

Interventions

My PAR team for this research consisted of seven persons who have been serving

as my conversation team during this journey. They were selected from amongst the

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[11] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Second edition, Introducing Qualitative Methods (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2014), 139.

Jordan Fellowship Church's Focus Group One. They have been members of this community. After the two separate analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data, various interventions were implemented from November 1, 2018 to June 23, 2019. A month was allocated for some interventions, while some had a little longer period. The first seven interventions were initially planned by me and in collaboration with my PAR team, while the last three came as a result of the communal discernment held between the two focus groups as shown in figure 2.

Sermon Series

A sermon series on *neighborliness in Luke's gospel* and *breaking boundaries* was preached during the research period (November – April). At the close of 2018, the church accepted the idea that we should focus our attention and energy on building good relationships with our neighbors. So, we code-named the year "2019", as "Our Year of Cultivating Neighborliness in Solapee." This theme was launched on January 6, 2019, during our first Sunday service. Series of sermons were preached during the intervention period. Rev. Jestina Folley, associate pastor of the Jordan Fellowship Church, and Rev. Abraham Jones and Rev. Mary Jones of the Unity Temple of Christ Inc. assisted me in ministering to our community and ministering during other neighborhood outreach programs. Intercessory prayers were also offered for our neighborhood during these worship services. At the end of these services special prayers were also offered for members in our local church who had conflict with neighbors. They were cautioned to forgive all those who had hurt them and find Easter gifts for these neighbors.

Bible Studies

The church had her regular Bible study on Wednesdays and Sundays, during Sunday school. These Bible studies became a systematic approach to building relationships with our neighbors and people outside of the church walls. Adaptive leadership was introduced during these meetings (November 2018 to May, 2019). Special emphasis was made on interpersonal relationships. Activities included panel discussions, small groups work, and teachings on the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5), neighborliness in Luke's gospel, and breaking boundaries. We had an average weekly attendance of 52 persons for this intervention during the church's regular Bible studies. In addition, special sessions were held during Sunday school to teach on "*Meeting the Social Needs of Members and Neighbors*."[12] The editor of this Sunday school manual emphasized that responding to the social needs of members and neighbors is an integral part of the church's mandate and can foster good relationship amongst members and with neighbors. Special exhortation was given to believers that showing kindness to others by meeting their social and other needs as the Good Samaritan did can be counted as done for the Lord and will be rewarded at the last day (Matthew 25:35-38).[13] This Sunday school session was attended by one hundred and two persons and was facilitated by the church's Sunday school staff.

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[12] Aidoo-Dadzie Gaylord, *Bible Lessons: Adult Teachers Edition* (Accra, Ghana: The Assemblies of God Literature Centre Limited, 2018), 151.

[13] Ibid., 156.

Dwelling in the Word

Dwelling in the word was regularly incorporated into Sunday school, Bible

studies, focus group meetings, church executive meetings, and Sunday worship services.

The various texts under consideration were as follows: the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25),

the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-26), and Peter and the household of Cornelius

(Acts 10) (November 2018 to April, 2019). The congregation was taught that this practice

was one of the Six Disruptive Missional Practices and it consisted of six parts:[14]

1. We began with prayers inviting the Holy Spirit to guide our attending to the Word of God.

2. We turned to the text which was printed and distributed to all participants.

3. We began with one person reading the passage aloud to the group. Then we allowed some silence in the hall to elapse as people let the words have their impact. The reading was done twice.

4. Next, I instructed the participants like this:

   - Find a person in the group that you are not familiar with (we called this person a "friendly looking stranger.")

   - Listen to this person as she tells you what they heard in the passage. What caught their imagination or what question they would have loved to ask a biblical scholar?

   - Listen attentively, as you will be required to report to the rest of the group what your partner said and not what you have said.

5. Then, I or a member of my PAR team instructed the participants to turn to their partner for 6 to 10 minutes and afterwards, we asked each person to state what they learned from their friend.

6. Finally, we wrestled as a group to determine "What might God be up to in the passage for us today."

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[14] Gary Pearce, www.churchinnovations,org/2015/09/01dwelling-in-the-word/

Internally Displaced Persons (Zoegoes) Ministry

We revived the internally displaced persons (Zoegoes are drug addicts that live in the grave yards) ministry. From general observation, some of the Zoegoes or internally displaced persons were related to people who may have appeared to be hostile towards our community. This ministry became a medium of reaching out to the parents or guardians of these Zoegoes, thus assisting us in opening the corridor through which we could engage our context and give back to our Solapee neighborhood the blessings we have received from God, while serving this township. It is indisputable that we have also benefitted from this township in several ways. We have a growing church, and the largest senior high school, so there is no reason why we should not be willing to share with our neighbors the abundant blessings of God. We are encouraged in scriptures to learn how to bless others around us without fear or reservation and be generous with our blessings to others. Moreover, scriptures also brings to our attention that God has blessed us not to live selfishly, but so that we can become a source of blessings and inspiration to others because he loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthian 9:6-7).

This intervention is substantiated several times in scriptures. In Genesis 12:1-3, the Lord told Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you and make you famous, and *you will be a blessing to others*." The Lord later reiterated this promise in Genesis 18:18-19 when he said that "Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him, including the internally displaced persons in our neighborhood.*" We are also told that "whoever brings blessings will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be

watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it" (Proverbs 11:25-26). The apostle Peter admonished the believers that "each one should use whatever gift he has received to *serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms*." (1 Peter 4:10). Further, the young pastor, Titus, encouraged his audience "to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful." (Titus 3:14).

Accordingly, our IDP ministry made two trips to the Lukorkor Cemetery where these Zoegoes (IDPs) reside or for some spent the day. During these two trips, relief items and food were distributed to over 175 IDPs by my PAR team, in collaboration with the members of the church's IDP ministry. Counseling, biblical exhortation, and prayers were offered during these visits. The scenes were filled with joyous singing and celebration by these IDPs, as they shouted at the top of their voices, "JF church oooh we love you oooh and that's the fact." Fifty-nine IDPs were fed, ministered to with the gospel, and given relief items for the first visit and sixty-one IDPs were ministered to during the last visit. The funds were raised in the church for this specific reason. Many parents and guardians who had children amongst these IDPs were appreciative of this outreach program and met us to thank the church. Some of these youthful IDPs came from people who our research had been studying.

<center>Seminar</center>

A seminar on themes that emerged from the qualitative and quantitative analysis which were relevant to the research was held on May 5, 2019 during the Sunday school period. The topics discussed were, Peace and Reconciliation, Breaking Boundaries, and Steps to Building Relationships with Neighbors and People of other Faiths. The

participants were divided into three groups: the senior adult group (ages range from forty and above), the junior adult and young people group (ages ranged from 18 to 39). We had three of the members of the PAR team serving as facilitators (one male and two females). The minimum qualification for these facilitators was a first degree. I perused all of the classes during the seminar and occasionally participated in the discussion

Social Fellowships

Sporting fellowships between our community and the Solapee Old-Timers Sport Association (SOPA) were held during the period under study. Two games were played. The purpose of these games was to build and strengthen relationship with people who were not in our social grouping. As the name SOPA depicts, this team consisted of people who were a mixture of other religions and non-religious groupings that have stayed long in the neighborhood which is being studied. We were the first religious organization to engage this social group in a fellowship. Most often churches fellowship with other churches during games or other social fellowships. We were intentionally establishing a new cutting edge that is intended to redefine our boundaries and enlarge our scope for fellowship as we intentionally incarnate into this neighborhood to build relationship with our neighbors.

The kickball (female baseball) and soccer games were played under a cordial atmosphere. I played the soccer game for about ten minutes and I requested that I be substituted to allow another person to play. My stamina could only allow me to play for this long. My wife also played the kickball game. It was fun and fellowship Sunday afternoon. At the end of the games, at about 6 pm, refreshment was provided by the church and both teams had fellowship.

On another front, a *reconciliation fellowship* consisting of parade and soccer and kickball games was held between the JFC Mission High School and the Sonie Sr. High School. There has been hostility between these two schools for nearly twenty-five years. This hostility was so grave that the two schools could not play games or fellowship together without a riot or a fight. The Sonie High School was founded by an Americo-Liberian family, while our school was founded by me, an indigene or a native from the hinterland of Liberia. However, during the PAR team and focus groups meetings, it was recommended that we begin to initiate building relationships with our neighbors. Initially, the alumni of the two schools made several attempts to plan a reconciliatory fellowship between the two schools in 2018 but were not successful. In a tournament planned by a sporting organization in our neighborhood, our sister school (Sonie Sr. High School), refused to turn out to play our school due to the prevailing hostility between the two schools. The points were awarded to us, but my PAR team and focus groups were not satisfied with the way things turned out for the proposed games.

Consequently, I decided to take the bull by the horn by inviting the wife of the proprietor, Rev. Agnes March, an indigene also, to a meeting. Since we had the same backgrounds (indigene and ordained clergy), I decided to use her as a point of contact. She was currently serving as the vice principal for administration of Sonie High School. She agreed and recommended that the meeting be held at my church's office. During the meeting, I asked her why her school never turned out to honor the match and whether her school had a problem with our school. She said she was afraid of the hostility that would have occurred as a result of the games. We had fruitful discussions, which were reconciliatory in nature and were followed by refreshment. We decided to turn a new

page and begin to speak reconciliatory messages to our respective institutions. As a result of this meeting, Sonie High School invited our school to play soccer and kickball games during their school's anniversary. I received the letter on May 15, 2019 and quickly dispatched a team to the campus of Sonie High School to better plan the games.

As a result of this visit, a committee was organized to change the nature of the games from just being anniversary games to a reconciliatory fellowship. Sonie Sr. High School also appealed that our school parade with them. On June 21, 2019, the parade began at about 11 am and was concluded with several games between the two schools. Three teams were formed to play the tournament. The students from the two schools formed one team, the teachers from the two schools formed one team, and the alumni from the two schools formed one team. The first game was played between the students of the two schools and the alumni of the two schools. The students won that soccer game one goal to zero. The final soccer game was played between students and the faculty of the two schools. Again, the students won by one goal to zero. As for kickball, the alumni female team won over the students' female team by eight points to nine. This intervention was not intentional. It came as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit and focus groups and the PAR team meetings during the latter part of this study. A detailed analysis of this intervention and the result we are beginning to enjoy will be highlighted in the next chapter.

I led a team to the *Ataye Shop* (Teashop) on a fellowship visit with a cross section of young people who gather every evening to drink ataye and discuss socio-political issues relevant to the state and our neighborhood. In our context, prominent people who reside in our township do not visit these places. Most often, the ataye shops are visited by

people who are at the margin. However, on some occasions politicians or people seeking

higher political offices usually visit these places to share their platform and solicit

support from the people in these shops who may be electorates. The attendees in the shop

were shocked when I arrived with a delegation of three persons. Two of them, a male and

a female, were members of my PAR team. The other female was a member of the Focus

Group Two who volunteered to be a part of this visit during the Focus Group Two

deliberations. The topic under discussion for the night was "how can the church in

Solapee positively impact their neighbors and build strong communal relationship with

them?" The discussion was free, frank, and healthy. As a result, many suggestions were

advanced and subsequently noted to be used at some point for my thesis and for the

church to act upon in the future. In addition, I provided tea for everyone who was in

attendance that evening. The night was considered a free night for everyone who was

there. The visit was concluded by several positive remarks made by the attendees who

applauded me and my delegation for taking our time to visit them and hear from them.

These activities were code-named "Operation Build Neighborly Relationship with

Our Neighbors." All of these interventions were intended to assist us to adapt without

fearing loss, create an atmosphere of social hospitality, help us to cross boundaries and

build *perichoretic* relationships with our neighbors.

Scholarship Scheme

The Jordan Fellowship Church Scholarship Scheme, a scholarship program, was

initially thought of as being a good way of building good relationships with our neighbors

and joining God in our neighborhood in what He has been up to. Our communal

discernment led us to develop a scholarship program which is intended to educate the less

fortunate children in our Solapee neighborhood. To obtain maximum results, we did not recruit beneficiaries during the early part of academic year 2018/2019 (September 1to 30, 2018). We did this on purpose, so that after most parents had sent their children to school, we would have moved into the various quarters in Solapee to spot out children whose parents were living on the periphery of life. Various teams were set up to explore the various communities and come up with potential beneficiaries. More emphasis was placed on recruiting children from different religious backgrounds and children from people whom we may have perceived to be hostile towards us. This exercise resulted in the teams recruiting thirty Muslim children and fifteen children from other impoverished backgrounds. Our church has unanimously agreed to educate these children up to the completion of their high school. They are currently enrolled free of charge at the JFC Mission High School in Graystone, Solapee. One of the parents of a beneficiary who is Muslim informed me during our Parent Teachers Association meeting that he has begun serving as self-acclaimed public relations personnel for our church and school amongst the Muslim community and beyond. Many of the Fulani Muslims have begun sending their children to our school.

<div align="center">Community Service</div>

Community Service became a major way of identifying with our neighborhood. From the baseline survey conducted, 95% percent of the respondents agreed that we carry out community services in our Solapee neighborhood. Various places were selected for cleaning up campaigns, including the main streets of Solapee, community toilets, Upper Solapee, Thumbs' UP, LaJoy, New Georgia, and Central Solapee. For the duration of this study, only one cleaning up campaign was held. The entire church gathered on Saturday

morning to clean-up the main street between the Thumbs' Up and the Taylor Mayor road

intersection. The atmosphere was filled with praise and celebration as we rendered free

service to the community.

In addition, in order to enhance relationship with law enforcement officers and the

township leaders and also become a material blessing to them, the church provided

several relief items to the Zone Seven police department and the commissioner's office of

the township of Solapee. Amongst the items distributed were: twelve bags of fifty lbs.

rice, several cartons of Tide soap, bags of drinking water, Clorox, tissues and thirty

gallons of Argo oil. The police and the office of the commissioner are not well paid. This

was a way of showing our love to them. The commissioner of the township of Solapee

was deeply gratified and surprised that a church could render this kind of humanitarian

assistance to the leadership of the Solapee Township. For their part, the commanders of

the Zone Seven police depot and the Rock Hill sub-depot expressed their thanks and

appreciation for the assistance rendered the police. Both the commissioner and

commanders emphasized that this was the first of its kind for a church to do such. Glory

be to God!

All these interventions took into consideration the theoretical, biblical, and

theological lenses. From the perspective of the theoretical lenses, our faith community

had to participate in these interventions as part of the process of adaptation, and engage in

the social practice of hospitality to accommodate our neighbors and begin breaking down

the tension and hostility that existed between us and our neighbors. Biblically, the

interventions were intended to assist us redefine neighborliness, as seen in Luke's gospel,

and also help us to break boundaries, in order to navigate hostile waters, so that we could

cross religious, sociological, geographical/territorial, and gender boundaries. Finally, from the theological perspective, these interventions were also intended to assist us see divine *perichoresis* as a lens envisioned to help us see the importance of relationship and to enlighten us that we can never bring about reconciliation without first building up relationships and learning to incarnate in a neighborhood that was considered hostile towards us.

The PAR team was responsible to gather the statistics, while two members assisted me to analyze and report all data from the interventions. Finally, an end line survey was conducted with 99 persons who were eighteen years of age and older and were willing to participate in this survey, in order to measure the effects of the interventions on the dependent variables.

Summary

The research methodology chosen for this study enhanced the missional conversation and the discerning process in the form and fashion that was participatory, action oriented, well researched, collaborative, adaptive, informative, and reliable, and that served the purpose of informing the study. Without doubt, the result of this study, as analyzed in the next chapter shows, the goal of this study is being achieved. The research methodology, including its design and data analysis, along with the various interventions, contributed to this achievement. Thus, we can affirm that the selected methodology for this study became a joint venture of the researcher and the people being researched, working together in participation, action, and study (research).

This chapter provided a brief introduction of the methodology, a detailed description of the research design, data analysis, and the interventions. The next chapter

provides an in-depth layout of the results, as they were gathered from the data and properly analyzed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

Introduction

The previous chapter provided the overview of the research methodology, the

biblical and theological perspective of the research design, data gathering and analysis,

and the interventions. This chapter outlines the results of the research after eight months

of interventions between the Jordan Fellowship Church and its Solapee neighborhood.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first is a review of the research

methodology, the second is the report and the interpretation of the results of the research,

stating multiple sections of the quantitative and qualitative results, and the third is

triangulating the data from the quantitative and qualitative research and how they

correspond with the lenses.

A Review of the Research Methodology

This chapter provides the results of the research done to determine the answers to

the research question, *How might Participatory Action Research interventions cultivate*

neighborliness of the Jordan Fellowship Church with their neighbors? To answer this

research question, Participatory Action Research (PAR) was selected as my methodology

to enable me to proceed with how I could find answers to this question. The reason I

selected this methodology was to bring about transformation in our context by

investigating and determining the prevailing causes of the unfriendly and hostile behavior

some of the neighbors have had for the Jordan Fellowship Church and come up with

interventions in some aspects of the situation or structures in a given context to entail a

cultural change. This meant that as a researcher and being a part of the context being

researched, I had to move to empower the people from this faith community and its

neighborhood to construct and use their own knowledge[1] in finding solutions to the

prevailing problems. My PAR team consisted of seven persons within the Jordan

Fellowship Church (see table 1).

Table 1. PAR team members

Participant	Age	Gender	Tribe	Dept.	Edu.	Member
1	53	Female	Kissi	Ass't Past.	BTh. BBA	1988
2	39	Male	Gbandi	S School	BBA	2013
3	36	Female	Gbandi	Financial	BBA	1993
4	42	Female	Lorma	Women	BSc.	2012
5	36	Female	Kpelle	Choir	BSc.	2010
6	27	Male	Kpelle	Youth	High Sch.	2010
7	48	Male	Grebo	Men	University	1992

To further achieve this outcome, I also selected the explanatory sequential mixed

method as my research design, which brought into conversation the Jordan Fellowship

Church along with their neighbors. My PAR team was involved in integrating both

quantitative and qualitative methods and data in this research study (See figure 4).

Qualitative data were open-ended without predetermined responses, while the

quantitative data included close-ended responses.

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[1] David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization.* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2014), 55.
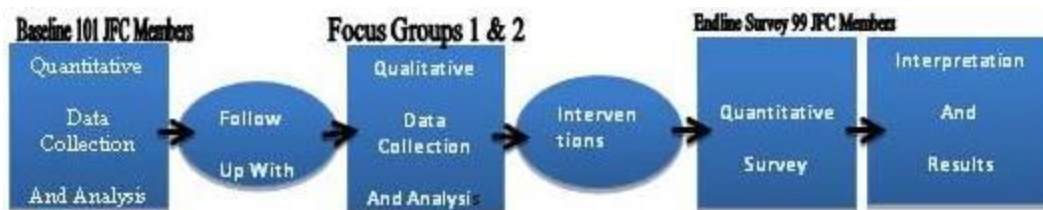
Figure 4. Linear diagram of the research design

After the approval of my thesis proposal, I conducted field tests on my

instruments to ascertain its strength and weaknesses, and to determine whether the

questions were clear. My non-probability sample was drawn from the auxiliaries of the

church and neighborhood on November 11 and 18, respectively. I first conducted

quantitative research through a baseline survey to and 101 respondents from the Jordan

Fellowship Church on December 9, 2018 and analyzed the results. This first part of the

quantitative survey was followed up by the two focus group discussions with the Jordan

Fellowship Church and the Solapee neighborhood. The quantitative data and results of

the baseline and end line surveys provided a general overview of the research problem

before and after the interventions; more analysis followed through the qualitative data

collection to explain, refine, or interpret the general picture of the study. The entire

process was structured in a way that it proceeded in sequence. The data emanating from

Focus Groups One and Two were recorded, transcribed, and coded by my PAR team

separately, in order to facilitate the interventions as shown in the diagram in chapter 5

(see figure 2).

Several interventions followed with the expectation that these variables could

affect a change on neighborliness. These interventions are two-fold. The first eight

interventions emerged from the PAR team during the earlier part of the research, while

the last three came as a result of the communal discernment held between the two focus

groups. The list is as follows:

1. Sermon series on neighborliness from Luke's gospel and breaking boundaries was preached during the research period (November 2018 – April 2019);
2. Bible studies (November 2018 to May 2019);
3. Dwelling in the Word from the passage of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25), the Samaritan woman at the well (St. John 4:4-26) and Peter and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10) (November 2018 to April 2019);
4. Internally Displaced Persons (Zoegoes) Ministry;
5. Seminar on the themes that emerged from the earlier qualitative and quantitative analysis which were relevant to the research was held on May 5, 2019;
6. Social fellowships with our neighbors;
7. Sporting fellowships between our community and the Solapee Old-Timers Sport Association (SOPA) was held during the period under study;
8. A reconciliation fellowship consisting of parade and soccer and kickball games were held between the Jordan Assembly of God Mission High School and the Sonie High School;
9. Scholarship Scheme for Muslim and other needy children;
10. Free community service to the police, commissioner's office, and neighborhood; and
11. *Ataye*/tea shop visits.

At the close of these interventions, an end line survey was administered to 99

persons within the Jordan Fellowship Church to determine present status of

neighborliness within the Jordan Fellowship Church and the Solapee neighborhood

context and to also determine whether a change had occurred. These 99 participants

represented those who were eighteen years and above and were willing to participate in

the survey.

At the end of this survey, the quantitative data were collected and analyzed by my

PAR team, with the help of SPSS 25. The team proceeded to provide a descriptive

analysis of data for all dependent and independent variables in the research and also

reported the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data and total number of respondents

(N), frequency of respondents by category (n), percent of respondents by category, and

means (M) where appropriate. Moreover, a member of my team and I conducted independent t-tests for all respondents to either the baseline survey or the end line survey. We performed the t-tests to do a comparison of the results of the two surveys in order to determine the outcomes after the eight months of participatory action interventions.

The quantitative data and analysis were followed up with the qualitative data collection and analysis from the two focus groups. The data from the two focus group sessions were gathered by audio recording and note taking. The transcriptions of the audio recordings of the two focus group discussions were done manually by two team members and it took two months to carry them out. For qualitative data analysis, the team used Charmaz' method of coding and did incident-to-incident coding to create *in vivo* codes. Thereafter, two members of the PAR team grouped the *in vivo* codes into focused codes and then grouped focused codes into axial codes, and after which we created theoretical coding by explaining the relationships between the axial codes.

The following section of this chapter covers the report of the quantitative and qualitative results obtained from the study. To provide a complete picture of the quantitative results, a summary description of the participants is provided, various graphic characteristics are reported, and a comparative analysis of the Jordan Fellowship Church relationship with their neighbors, before and after the interventions, is presented by data reflecting multiple sections, with various categories or topic introduced. My intention is to provide a balanced and true picture of the results by depicting and interpreting the data tables and figures in the text, in order to properly explain and interpret the quantitative findings from the baseline and end line surveys. The final part of this section provides the results of the qualitative research. A summary description of

the participants of the two focus groups is provided and the qualitative data from two focus group discussions and one joint discussion of the two groups, along with the data gathered from the memos and notes written during the *Ataye* shop visit and the sporting events, are coded into *in vivo*, focused, axial, and theoretical codes. Further, in this section, the relationships between the theoretical codes of Focus Groups One and Two are diagramed to better explain their connections and how this community of faith can continue to foster the spirit of neighborliness within her neighborhood.

Report and the Interpretation of the Results of the Quantitative Research

The questionnaire included six categories of questions (see appendices C and D). The first part of the questionnaire asked for demographic information on gender, age, and religion. Each of the participants was asked questions concerning their age, tribe, and religion. The participants were gathered from persons who were regular attendees or affiliates of the Jordan Fellowship Church and were willing to participate in the survey. The second section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to make general assessments of the relationship that exists between the Jordan Fellowship Church and their neighbors, before and after the interventions. The third section of questions on the questionnaire was intended to solicit views on the positive impact the Jordan Fellowship Church has had on its members and neighborhood. The fourth section of questions was designed to allow respondents to grade the missional practices that have enhanced neighborliness and their impact on the church's relationship with their neighbors, before and after the interventions.

The fifth section asked the respondents to assess the Jordan Fellowship Church on two fronts: whether they were an incarnational ministry in its neighborhood and whether

they were becoming an incarnational ministry during and after the interventions. The sixth section asked the participants to assess various interventions, which were intended to assist the main researcher to lead an adaptive change process by breaking boundaries, for the purpose of assisting the church to become neighborly. Finally, the seventh section was intended to seek the opinion of the respondents on the necessity of funding missional practices with the anticipation that these practices would cultivate neighborliness between the church and its neighbors.

Demography

The total number of persons responding to the both surveys was 200. One-hundred-and-one persons participated in the baseline survey, while ninety-nine persons participated in the end line survey. The survey was conducted on Sundays so as to ascertain maximum participation of the persons who were eighteen years old and above in the church. The instructions and questions were orally read and the respondents were given time to select or provide the answers of their choice. The following table (table 2) provides the statistical information on age.

Table 2. Survey participants by age groups

Ages	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
18-20	17	17.0	13	13.1
21-25	19	19.0	17	17.2
26-30	11	11.0	12	12.1
31-35	15	15.0	13	13.1
36-40	11	11.0	12	12.1
41-45	11	11.0	15	15.2
46-50	4	4.0	6	6.1
51-55	6	6.0	8	8.1
56-60	5	5.0	2	2.0
61 and above	1	1.0	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0	99	100.0

If you observe the age range carefully, you will notice that the age groupings carry a minimum of five years. This is because some of the respondents were not highly educated or were illiterate, and a five year age range was easier to be identified and understood. In the baseline survey, ages twenty-one to twenty-five had nineteen persons participating, which accounts for 19.0% of the respondents and was the highest. This was followed by the ages ranging from eighteen to twenty, with a total of seventeen participants, accounting for 17.0% of the total respondents. In the end line survey the ages ranging from twenty-one to twenty-five maintained the lead with seventeen persons participating, accounting for 17.2% of the total number of respondents. However, for the end line survey, the ages ranging from forty-one to forty-five had fifteen persons participating, accounting for 15.2% of the total persons that participated. The largest age groups represented for 84 respondents in the baseline survey (see table 2) were between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, carrying a valid percentage of 84.0%. Similar result is repeated, where the largest groups represented for 72 respondents in the end line

survey (see table 2) were between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, carrying a valid

percent of 82.8%.

Table 3. What is your gender?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Male	27	26.7	42	42.9
Female	74	73.3	56	57.1
Total	101	100.0	98	100.0

There were more females that participated in the both surveys (see table 3). In the

baseline survey, of the total 101 persons that participated, 74 persons, accounting for

73.3%, were female, while 27, persons accounting for 26.7% of the total respondents,

were male. In the end line survey, the total number of persons that participated dropped

by two. Of the total valid number of ninety-eight persons, fifty-six were females,

accounting for 57.1% of the total number of participants, while forty-two persons were

male, accounting for 42.9% of the total persons participating in the survey. The results of

the baseline survey further revealed that there was an increase in the number and

percentage of males that participated in the end line survey.

Table 4. Survey participants by tribes

Tribe	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Bassa	11	11.6	6	6.5
Gio	6	6.3	6	6.5
Lorma	5	5.3	2	2.2
Kpelle	13	13.7	16	17.4
Vai	3	3.2	3	3.3
Kissi	7	7.4	7	7.6
Gola	3	3.2	4	4.3
Kru	16	16.8	16	17.4
Gbandi	7	7.4	8	8.7
Mano	2	2.1	2	2.2
Grebo	13	13.7	11	12.7
Belle	1	1.1	0	0.0
Krahn	1	1.1	4	4.3
Americo – Liberian	4	4.2	4	4.3
Fantee	1	1.1	0	0.0
Lenbyea	1	1.1	0	0.0
Daingola	1	1.1	0	0.0
Mande	0	0.0	1	1.1
Foreign national	0	0.0	2	2.2
Total	95	100.0	99	100.0

The data in table 4 reveal that fourteen tribes, including the Americo-Liberians participated in the baseline survey, while thirteen tribes, including the Americo-Liberians participated in the end line survey. The three tribes that JF Church has been experiencing hostility from participated in both surveys. The Fantee and Lenbyea are West African tribes and the foreign nationals are referring to non-West African tribes. The church's membership records reveal that fourteen of the Liberian tribes are members of the church. However, the data also reveal that the tribal groups being studied or that have been hostile towards the JF Church are in the minority in the church. This is reflected in the table above (see table 4) and is confirmed by the membership records. The table shows that of the three tribes (Bassa, Vai, and Americo-Liberians), the Vais that participated in

the baseline survey amounted to three respondents, with a valid percentage of 3.2%, while the Americo-Liberians amounted to four respondents, with a valid percentage of 4.2% in the baseline survey. The Vais had three persons that participated in the end line survey, with a valid percentage of 3.3%, while the Americo-Liberians maintained the total number of four respondents, with a valid percentage of 4.3%. The table above shows that the church has made noteworthy progress amongst the Bassa tribe. Of the total number of ninety-five valid respondents in the baseline survey, eleven Bassa respondents, accounting for 11.6%, participated, while in the end line survey, of the ninety-nine total respondents, six Bassas, accounting for 6.5%, participated. While we cannot attribute this increase to only the interventions carried out during this research, it is worth noting that the JFC church now has one of the resistant tribes in her neighborhood within her fellowship.

Baseline and End Line Assessments of JFC and Neighbors Relationship

The following tables reveal the general assessment of the JF Church's relationship with her neighbors, before and after the interventions. The degree of hostility and the reasons for JF Church neighbors' hostile behavior towards them is assessed as well as the expression of love and hostility between the two groups, before and after the interventions are. This part of the questionnaire was intended to determine whether a change occurred on the dependent variable of neighborliness as a result of the interventions.

Table 5. Assessing JFC love for their neighbors

On a 5 point scale where "1" means no love, "2" less love, "3" love "4" love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate JF Church love for their Neighbors?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
No Love	5	5.2	3	3.2
Less Love	10	10.3	1	1.1
Love	12	12.4	8	8.6
Much Love	20	20.6	12	12.9
Great deal of love	50	51.5	69	74.2
Total	97	100.0	93	100.0

Table 5 provides an assessment of JF Church's love for her neighbors. This is a self-assessment intended to show the degree of love that the church perceives they have for her neighbors. This may not reflect the perception of our neighbors, which could vary from our self-perception. The choice of answers begins from "No love" to "Great deal of love." In the baseline survey, fifty respondents of the total number of ninety-seven respondents, representing 51.5% of the valid total of respondents, agreed that the church has a great deal of love for their neighbors. After the interventions, the end line assessment shows an improvement in Jordan Fellowship Church's love for her neighbors. The data above show that, of the total valid respondents of ninety-three, sixty-nine respondents, amounting to 74.2%, agreed that the church has a great deal of love for her neighbors. Comparatively, the data (see table 5) further show that five of the 97 valid respondents, representing 5.2% of the valid total, agreed in the baseline survey that the Jordan Fellowship Church has no love for their neighbors, while in the end line survey, the number of valid respondents that agreed that the church has no love for its neighbors dropped from five to three, representing 3.2% of the valid total of respondents.

Table 6. Independent t-test results for the relationship between JFC and their neighbors

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p

1.1 On 5 point scale where "1" means to love; "2" means less love "3" means love "4" means much love "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate Jordan Fellowship Church's love for their neighbors?

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
Baseline	4.03	97	-.507	-318	179	.002
End Line	4.54	93				

An independent t-test was conducted to identify the difference in means between the baseline and end line assessments of the church's love for their neighbors. The mean increased in table 6 above from the baseline (4.03) to the end line (4.54). This increase was statistically significant. It is very clear that though the research period was short, the effects of the interventions on neighborliness are beginning to be felt in little ways, but the result also shows that more is yet be done.

Table 7. Rating neighbors' hostility towards JFC

On a 5 point scale, where "1" means not hostile and "5" means very hostile how would you rate some of our neighbors' hostility towards our faith community?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Not hostile toward us	6	6.3	18	20.5
Less hostility towards us	18	18.9	5	5.7
Hostile towards us	27	28.4	20	22.7
Much hostile towards us	21	22.2	14	15.9
Very hostile toward us	23	24.2	31	35.2
Total	95	100.0	88	100.0

Under this same category of questions, the researcher delved into assessment of the neighbors' hostility towards this local church, using the lenses of this faith

community (see table 7). Considering the cumulative sum of the neighbors who were

much hostile and very hostile towards this faith community, forty-four of the ninety-five

valid respondents in the baseline survey, representing 46.4% of the cumulative valid

total, agreed that some of the local church's neighbors were "much" and "very" hostile

towards this faith community. In the end line survey, this number increased to forty-five,

representing 51.1% of the cumulative valid total. The difference can be assessed, in term

of figures, as being a 4.7% difference between the baseline and the end line surveys,

signaling that there is more work to be done. Again, when an independent t-test was

carried out, there was not a significant difference in the means from the baseline to the

end line (see table 8).

Table 8. Independent t-test results for the hostility between JFC and their neighbors

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
1.2 On a five point scale, where "1" means not hostile and "5" means very hostile, how would you rate some of our neighbors' hostility towards the Jordan Fellowship Church?						
Baseline	3.39	95	-.008	-.041	182	.968
End Line	3.40	88				

Another comparison can be seen from the first response to the same question,

where six valid responders, representing 6.3% of the valid respondents did not agree in

the baseline survey that the church's neighbors were hostile towards them. In the end line

survey, the number of valid respondents that chose this same response increased to

eighteen valid respondents, representing 20.5% who did not agree that the neighbors were

hostile to this faith community. The increase of 14.2% after the interventions is worth

noting, and may be attributed to the various interventions held during the research period.

Table 9. Assessing the neighbors' love for JFC

On a 5 point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate our neighbors' love for our community or church?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
No Love	12	12.5	11	12.5
Less Love	19	19.8	2	2.3
Love	21	21.9	17	19.3
Much Love	20	20.8	17	19.3
Great deal of Love	24	25.0	41	46.6
Total	96	100.0	88	100.0

Since the notion that some of Jordan Fellowship Church's neighbors were believed to be hostile to them and that this view and perception had been widely held by members of this local assembly, without any research data to show the validity of this assumption, this question was designed to assess the neighbors' love for this faith community, before and after the interventions. In the baseline survey, twelve of the valid respondents, totaling 12.5%, agreed that the neighbors have no love for this faith community. In the end line survey, there is no difference in the valid percent of respondents who believe that the neighbors have no love for this faith community. However, the results in the data above (see table 9) also show that there was a change in the respondents' responses in both surveys. In the baseline survey, twenty-four of the ninety-six valid respondents, totaling 25.0%, agreed that the neighbors have a great deal of love for this faith community. In the end line survey, after the interventions, forty-one valid respondents, totaling 46.6% of the valid percent, agreed that the neighbors have a great deal of love for this faith community. There is an increase in the difference by 21.6%, after the interventions. When an independent t-test was performed, there was an

increase in mean from the baseline (3.26) to the end line (3.85). This increase was

statistically significant (see table 10).

Table 10. Independent t-test results for the neighbors love for JFC

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p

On a five point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how
would you rate the neighbors love for the Jordan Fellowship Church?

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
Baseline	3.26	96	-.592	-2.936	182	.004
End Line	3.85	88				

The question below is at the crux of this research (see table 11). The researcher

launched this study in order to create a neighborly atmosphere between his faith

community and the external context in which this church finds itself. To be able to

adequately find the answer to the research question, the PAR team has been

brainstorming to discover reasons for this hostility. A similar question was asked to

Focus Group One of the Jordan Fellowship Church and various views were sampled. I

included the below question in this category because the researcher felt that to answer the

research question, we must assess our relationship with our neighbors, so we can

determine the cause(s) of this hostility.

Table 11. Assessment on why neighbors hate JFC

Which of the following statements best describes why our neighbors hate JFC?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
The way we preach the word is Irritating	66	72.5	61	68.5
Because they envy or are jealous of us	9	9.9	10	11.2
Because we do not fellowship or identify with them	13	14.3	13	14.6
Because we are not friendly or neighborly	1	1.1	2	2.3
Because we are mean and not hospitable to our neighbors	2	2.2	3	3.4
Total	91	100.0	89	100.0

The way we preach ranks the highest in both surveys as being the reason why our neighbors hate us or are hostile towards us. In the baseline survey, sixty-six of the ninety-one valid respondents, representing 72.5% of the valid percent, believe that the way we preach the word is irritating and our neighbors dislike us for this. In the end line survey, though, the valid responses for this question and the valid percent are lower by six respondents and 4.0% valid percent respectively; they still rank the highest. This result seems to confirm the assumption or analysis the researcher previously made in the historical chapter of this thesis, that the way he preached, the holiness gospel, not observing homiletics, hermeneutics, and pulpit etiquettes at the onset of this ministry, were irritating. This is not to conclude that everything about the messages that were preached was wrong, for we know that man hates the truth (Luke 6:21; John 3:19-20). Jesus and the prophets were persecuted for their stand against sin or evil (Matthew 5:12), and the founders of the Lutheran church, Martin Luther and his friends, were persecuted

for the truth they unveiled to their generations.[2] However, I must admit that this portion of the results has unveiled an assumption that I have had over the years. For this assumption to be true, the qualitative instruments research this deeper.

A careful analysis of the results also shows that when you take a sum total of all the responses that are related to this faith community, four responses each in the baseline and end line, amount to 90.1% and 88.8% of the valid percent as being some of the reasons our neighbors dislike us. For example, the way we preach is irritating (72.5%); we do not fellowship or identify with them (14.3%); we are not friendly or neighborly (1.1%), and we are mean and not hospitable to our neighbors (2.2%). If you add all these valid percentages in the baseline result you will have a sum total of 90.1% of the valid percent. If this procedure is repeated with the end line data, you have the sum total of 88.8% of the valid percent in the end line survey that can be attributed to JFC as the reasons her neighbors dislike her. An independent t-test was also conducted to determine the mean difference between the baseline and the end line. Table 12 shows that the mean increased from the baseline (1.51) to the end line (1.61). This difference is not statistically significant.

Table 12. Independent t-test results for the cause of the neighbors' hostility/hatred for JFC

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
Which of the following statements best describes why our neighbors hate us?						
Baseline	1.51	91	$-.101$	$-.687$	175	.494
End Line	1.61	89				

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[2]10 Facts About The Reformation Leader. Learnodo Newtonic (November 1, 2019), accessed December 2, 2019, https://learnodo-newtonic.com/martin-luther-facts.

The positive impact the JFC has had on its members and neighborhood.

The third category of questions on the questionnaire was intended to solicit views

on the positive impact the Jordan Fellowship Church has had on its members and

neighborhood. The assumption is that the church can never impact its neighbors if it has

not impacted its members within its faith community. To assess the impact of the church

on both its members and neighbors, before and after the interventions, this category of

questions was designed to sample the opinion of the willing participants who took part in

this exercise.

Table 13. The impact of JFC on its members

This ministry has positively impacted me in some way(s).

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Agree Strongly	94	96.9	87	93.5
Agree Somewhat	3	3.1	4	4.3
Disagree Somewhat	0.0	0.0	1	1.1
Disagree Strongly	0.0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	97	100.0	93	100.0

Each of the respondents was asked whether they agreed that this faith community

has positively impacted them in some way. In table 13, four levels of responses were

provided (ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly). In the baseline survey,

ninety-four of the ninety-seven valid respondents, representing 96.9% of the valid

percent, "agreed strongly" that this church has positively impacted them. Only three of

the respondents, representing 3.1% of the valid percent, "agreed somewhat" that the

church has impacted them. In the end line survey, for the same question, eighty-seven

valid respondents, representing 93.5% of the valid percent, "agreed strongly" that the

church has impacted them, while only four valid respondents, representing 4.3% of the

valid percent, agreed "somewhat" that the church has positively impacted them in some

ways. When an independent t-test was conducted to compare the means of the baseline

and end line survey for this question reflected in table 15, there was no statistically

significant difference between the means.

Table 14. The impact of JFC on its township

The Jordan Fellowship Church has positively impacted the township of Solapee in some
way(s).

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Agree Strongly	87	87.9	82	87.2
Agree Somewhat	11	11.1	11	11.7
Disagree Strongly	1	1.0	1	1.1
Total	99	100.0	94	100.0

In both surveys, each of the respondents was also asked to affirm or disaffirm the

statement that the Jordan Fellowship Church has positively impacted its neighborhood. In

the baseline survey, eighty-seven of the ninety-nine valid respondents, representing

87.9% of the valid percent, "agreed strongly" that the church has positively impacted its

neighborhood in some way(s). Eleven respondents, representing 11.1% of the valid

percentage, "agreed somewhat" that the church has positively impacted its neighborhood.

In the end line survey, eighty-two of the ninety-four valid respondents, representing

87.2% of the valid percent of respondents, "agreed strongly" that the church has impacted

its neighborhood, while in the end line survey, eleven of the ninety-four valid

respondents, representing 11.7% of the valid percentage of respondents, "agreed

somewhat" that that the church has positively impacted the community in some way(s) (see table 14).

Comparing the results of the baseline and the end line surveys, for the "strongly agreed" response, there is a decrease of 0.7% in the end line response rating after the interventions. What is important is that before and after the interventions, this faith community is convinced that she is impacting her neighborhood community in some way. If one finds the cumulative sum of the "agreed strongly" and "agreed somewhat" responses in both surveys, the data indicate that ninety-eight of the ninety-nine valid respondents in the baseline survey, representing 99.0% of the valid percent, agreed that this church has positively impacted her neighborhood in some ways. This is confirmed when a similar procedure is carried out for the end line survey. The end line data indicate that ninety-three of the ninety-four valid respondents in the end line survey, representing 98.9% of the valid percent, agreed that this church has positively impacted her neighborhood in some way(s). While this judgment is subjective, because it is the assessment carried out by the church itself, notes taken during the Focus Group Two neighborhood discussions with the church's neighborhood confirmed this assertion to be true. All of the neighbors attending this meeting agreed that the church has positively impacted this neighborhood. The question now is what has caused this hostility between this faith community and their neighbors? This is yet to be determined in other data analysis. When an independent t-test was carried out (see table 15), question 1.2 shows that the end line mean (1.15) increased from the baseline mean (1.14). However, the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 15. Independent t-test on the positive impact of JFC on its members and neighbors

(baseline *N* = 101; end line *N* = 99)

	M	*n*	*MD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
1.1 This ministry has positively impacted me in some way(s)						
Baseline	1.03	97	-.066	-1.405	122	.163
End Line	1.10	93				
1.2 The Jordan Fellowship Church has positively impacted the township in some way(s)						
Baseline	1.14	99	-.008	-.120	191	.904
End Line	1.15	94				

<center>The missional practices that have enhanced neighborliness</center>

My proposed investigation led me to develop the fourth category of questions, which were designed to allow the respondents of the both surveys to assess and determine the missional practices that have enhanced neighborliness and their impact on the church's relationship with their neighbors, before and after the interventions. I made every attempt to operationalize the lenses in these interventions, in order to achieve the goal of this research. The following tables show results of this assessment.

Table 16. Assessing the effectiveness of JFC witness to its neighbors

How effective has our church been in our witness to our neighbors?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Strongly effective	35	35.7	44	45.4
Somewhat effective	35	35.7	44	45.4
Somewhat not effective	12	12.2	4	4.0
Strongly not effective	16	16.4	5	5.2
Total	98	100.0	97	100.0

After a careful observation of the result (see table 16), the baseline survey shows that, before the interventions, we have not been very effective in our witness to our neighbors. In the baseline survey, a little over one-third, or thirty-five out of ninety-eight valid respondents, representing 35.7% of the valid percent, reported that this community has been strongly effective in its witness to their neighbors. However, in the end line survey, the number of valid respondents increased by nine valid respondents, representing 45.4 % of the valid percent. For the "strongly effective," there was an improvement in our witness by 9.7%, during the interventions.

Considering a similar analysis for those respondents who believed that we have not been strongly effective in our witness to our neighbors, there was a decline in the end line survey in the number of respondents that hold to this assertion. In the baseline survey, sixteen of the ninety-eight valid respondents, representing 16.4% of the valid percent, believe that we have been strongly not effective in our witness to our neighbors. But in the end line survey, five out of the ninety-seven valid respondents, representing 5.2% of the valid percent, believes that this faith community is strongly not effective in her witness to their neighbors. This means that, according to the data, after the interventions, the percentage of persons who believe that this church has not been strongly effective in her witness to her neighbors are less compared to the previous baseline data. In addition to this analysis, an independent t-test was conducted to compare means of both surveys for the question (see table 17). The table shows that there was a decline in means from the baseline (2.09) to the end line (1.69). This difference was statistically significant.

Table 17. Independent t-test results of the missional practice of witnessing and its impact

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
How effective has our church been in our witness to our neighbors?						
Baseline	2.09	98	.401	2.998	178	.003
End Line	1.69	97				

Ministering to our neighborhood became a major practice during this PAR project. As you can see in the table below (see table 18), the data reflecting the opinion of the respondents before the interventions show that thirty-nine out of the valid ninety-eight respondents, representing 39.8% of the valid percent, agreed that the church's involvement in community service is extremely important. As part of the interventions, we began new community services of cleaning up our neighborhood, providing relief items to the police and township commissioner's offices, and providing scholarships for over fifty Muslims children and other children needing support in our neighborhood. These community services by the church became a dominant factor during the interventions (see chapter 5).

Table 18. Assessing the importance of JFC involvement in community service

How would you rate the importance of our church involvement in community service?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Extremely important	39	39.8	46	47.4
Very important	46	46.9	46	47.4
Somewhat important	4	4.1	5	5.2
Not at all important	9	9.2	0	0.0
Total	98	100.0	97	100.0

In the end line survey, forty-six out of the ninety-seven valid respondents, representing 47.4% of the valid percent, believe that it is extremely important for the church to engage in community services. This is followed closely by those who believe that community service is very important for the church to engage in. Before the interventions, forty-six of the valid respondents who participated in the baseline survey, representing 46.9% of the valid percentage, believed that community service is very important.

Interestingly, while nine out of the valid ninety-eight respondents, representing 9.2% of the valid percent, believe that for the church to engage in community service is not at all important, in the end line survey, no respondent agreed with this statement (see table 18). This implies that during the interventions, when members of the church were given the opportunity to participate in these community services, other persons who were not convinced that these community services were important were convinced when neighbors visited our church to extend thanks and appreciation to this faith community for identifying with them. Commendations came from the police, commissioner's office, parents of the scholarship children, and other persons of interest. An independent t-test

was also conducted to compare the means of question 1.2 (see table 19) and it is reported

that there was a decline in mean from the baseline (1.83) to the end line (1.58). This

difference is statistically significant.

Table 19. Independent t-test results of the missional practice of engaging in social/ community services by JFC

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	*n*	*MD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
1.2 How would you rate the importance of our church involvement in community services?						
Baseline	1.83	98				
			.249	2.308	193	.022
End Line	1.58	97				

Table 20. Recommending the practice of Dwelling in the Word

I recommend that we continue to practice Dwelling in the Word, as we had practiced in recent times

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Recommend Strongly	77	81.1	84	88.4
Recommend Somewhat	15	15.8	8	8.4
Somewhat do not recommend	1	1.0	2	2.1
Strongly do not recommend	2	2.1	1	1.1
Total	95	100.0	95	100.0

Further, each of the respondents was asked if he/she could recommend dwelling

in the word, as a missional practice, in order to help us sharpen our discernment and

further assist us in the discerning process. Dwelling in the word has been a new practice

in our local ecclesiology. Prior to this project, the researcher made several attempts to

introduce this practice to this faith community. It became a major component of the

church's Bible study on Wednesdays. By the time this research could commence, the

researcher made a decision to include it as one of the interventions intended to help this faith community explore the various scriptural texts related to neighborliness and breaking boundaries and the incarnation.

Table 20 above shows that at the commencement of this study, the practice was already becoming a missional habit. Seventy-seven of the ninety-five valid respondents, representing 81.1% of the valid percent, recommended strongly that we continue to practice dwelling in the word. In the end line survey the number of valid respondents increased by seven, with a valid percentage of 88.4%. This practice enhanced the discerning process during the interventions, as we explored the biblical and theological lenses and other scriptural texts related to this study. When an independent t-test was conducted, the mean declined (see table 21) from the baseline (1.24) to the end line (1.16). This change was not statistically significant.

Table 21. Independent t-test results of dwelling in the word

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
I recommend that we continue to practice Dwelling in the word, as we had practice in recent times						
Baseline	1.24	95	.084	1.082	188	.281
End Line	1.16	95				

Assessment on incarnational ministry and funding social service programs

The fifth category asked the respondents to assess the Jordan Fellowship Church on two fronts. In the baseline survey, we asked the respondents to evaluate the church in light of the incarnational concept, and in the end line survey, after the incarnational interventions, the respondents were asked whether this local church was an incarnational ministry in its neighborhood. On the second front, I solicited the views of the respondents

on the necessity of organizing and funding missional practices with the anticipation that

these practices will cultivate neighborliness between the church and its neighbors.

Table 22. Assessing the possibility of JFC becoming an incarnational ministry

Where incarnational ministry is when a person or a faith community immerses in a
culture of a diverse neighborhood of people for the purpose of ministering to their
spiritual and physical needs; can we affirm that the JF Church is an incarnational ministry
or becoming an incarnational ministry in Solapee?

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Agree Strongly	53	55.2	76	80.0
Agree Somewhat	26	27.1	19	20.0
Disagree Somewhat	12	12.5	0	0.0
Disagree Strongly	5	5.2	0	0.0
Total	96	100.0	95	100.0

A major factor which plays in creating neighborliness in a community of hostile

neighbors is the incarnational ministry. This concept has been my focus since I began this

doctoral program. The missional programs were carefully selected to assist us to observe

incarnational attentiveness, and as such, I had to assess this form of ministry in both the

baseline and end line surveys. After the baseline survey, several activities were held to

assist us to incarnate into the various cultures to establish *perichoretic* relationships with

our neighbors, a process which is still ongoing.

The baseline data (see table 22) above show that before the interventions, fifty-

three of the ninety-six valid respondents, representing 55.2% of the valid percentage,

believed that this church was becoming an incarnational ministry. However, after months

of teaching on incarnational ministry and participating in incarnational activities during

the interventions, the concept began to be fully understood by the respondents of the local

church. This is reflected in the end line data, where seventy-six out of the ninety-five

valid respondents, representing 80.0% of the valid percent, believed that this local church

was becoming an incarnational ministry. If one combines the valid respondents and the

valid percent for the agreed strongly and the agreed somewhat in the end line survey, the

total valid respondents will sum to 95 and the valid percent will be 100.0%. This can be

understood as being remarkable.

Looking at this result from those that disagreed somewhat and those that

disagreed strongly, it can be observed that there was a decline in the number of

respondents and valid percent in the end line survey. Those who disagreed somewhat in

the baseline survey were twelve valid respondents, representing 12.5% of the valid

percent. In the end line survey, none of the respondents disagreed somewhat or disagreed

strongly (see table 23). An independent t-test was conducted to identify the differences in

the means between the baseline and end line for question 1.1 (see table 23). The mean

declined from the baseline (1.68) to the end line (1.20). This indicates that there was

improvement, and this improvement was statistically significant.

Table 23. Independent t-test results for the assessment of the incarnational ministry of JFC before and after the interventions

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
1.1 Where incarnation ministry is when a person or a faith community immerses in a culture of a diverse neighborhood of people for the purpose of ministering to their spiritual and physical needs, can we affirm that the Jordan Fellowship Church is an incarnational ministry in Solapee?						
Baseline	1.68	96	.477	4.789	133	.000
End Line	1.20	95				

Table 24. Building tea/*ataye* shop for entertainment and recreational purposes

I support the idea that we build a tea shop/*Ataye* shop for entertainment and recreational purpose, as a way of bridging gaps between our neighbors and us.

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Agree Strongly	38	39.2	51	53.1
Agree Somewhat	15	15.5	21	21.9
Disagree somewhat	9	9.3	14	14.6
Disagree strongly	35	36.1	10	10.4
Total	97	100.0	96	100.0

Ataye or tea shops in our context are regarded as places where political debates are held. Most often, only the way-ward or drug addicts are found there, and usually only people of low status visit these places. However, as of late, this place has been attracting many youth. Before this research, members of my PAR team had never thought of visiting these places. It was sacrilegious for a person of my status to visit this kind of place. The baseline survey results above confirm that our faith community saw this kind of a place as being inappropriate for a believer to visit. This was supported during the Focus Group One discussion. Of the ninety-seven valid respondents, thirty-eight respondents, representing 39.2% of the valid percent, agreed strongly that we should build tea or *Ataye* shops as a means of incarnating into our neighborhood to bridge gaps between this faith community and its neighbors. After our interventions, especially when I led a few members of my PAR team to visit the *Ataye* shop, the end line survey results shows that fifty-one out of the ninety-six valid respondents, representing 53.1% of the valid percent, agreed strongly that investing in social programs like this was expedient.

The difference (13.9%) between the baseline and end line surveys was noteworthy (see table 24).

The support for investing in this kind of social service ministry is even made stronger by the data shown above. In the baseline survey, thirty-five out of the valid ninety-seven respondents, representing 36.1% of the valid percent, strongly disagreed to invest in such ministry. However, in the end line data, the difference in the percentage of valid responses between the end line and the baseline for the same question is the difference of 25.7%. This means that while in the baseline survey 36.1% disagreed strongly, in the end line survey only 10.4% disagreed strongly. This is an indication that the interventions worked to some extent. When an independent t-test was conducted to determine the difference in the means between the baseline and the end line for this question, the means declined from the baseline (2.42) to the end line (1.82). This difference was statistically significant (see table 25).

Table 25. Independent t-test results for the assessment of the incarnational ministry of JFC before and after the interventions

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	n	MD	t	df	p
1.2 Do you support the idea that we build an ataye tea shop for entertainment and recreational purpose, as a way of bridging gaps between our neighbors and us?						
Baseline	2.42	97	.600	6.257	181	.001
End Line	1.82	96				

Table 26. Assessing JFC willingness to invest resources in the Zoego/IDP ministry

 I recommend that the church invest resources in the ministry to the Zoegoe (Drug addicts or Internally Displaced Persons) that live in the graveyards in our neighborhood and are related to our neighbors.

	Baseline N=101		End Line N=99	
	n	%	n	%
Recommend strongly	84	84.8	85	87.6
Recommend somewhat	12	12.1	11	11.3
Somewhat do not recommend	2	2.0	1	1.1
Strongly do not recommend	1	1.1		
Total	99	100.0	97	100.0

The Zoegoes are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are considered social outcasts or social deviants. Most of these victimized persons are related to people within the township. At the beginning of this program, the researcher and his wife felt the need to form a ministry which would continuously minister to these internally displaced persons. The data in the baseline survey presented in table 26 show that the church had already begun participating in this ministry a year before this research began. However, I discovered that this ministry could help us reach our neighbors, as several of their children are victims of drug abuse and other crimes. They have their own culture and way of life that one must incarnate into in order to minister to them. At the beginning of this ministry, many of the members of this faith community were skeptical. It became necessary for me to sample their opinion on the continuation of this ministry for the purpose of bridging gaps between us and our neighbors and building relationships with people on the margin, like the IDPs.

The baseline data (see table 26) reveal that eighty-four of the ninety-nine valid respondents, representing 84.8% of the valid percent, recommended strongly that we

continue in the IDP ministry. The end line reveals a slight increase in the percentage of

respondents that strongly recommended this ministry. The valid respondents increased by

one and the valid percent also increased by 2.8%. To identify the difference in the means

between the baseline and end line for this question (see table 27), an independent t-test

was conducted. The means declined from the baseline (1.19) to the end line (1.13). This

difference was not statistically significant.

Table 27. Independent t-test results for assessing the incarnational ministry of JFC before and after the interventions

(Baseline $N = 101$; End line $N = 99$)

	M	*n*	*MD*	*t*	*df*	*f*
1.3 I recommend that the church invest resources in the ministry to the Zoegoes (Drug addicts or Internally Displaced Persons) that live in the graveyards in our neighborhood and are related to our neighbors						
Baseline	1.19	99	.058	.908	194	.365
End Line	1.13	97				

Leading an Adaptive Change by Breaking Boundaries

The sixth category asked the participants to assess various interventions, which

were intended to assist the main researcher lead an adaptive change process by assisting

this faith community to break boundaries, for the purpose of assisting the church to

become neighborly in a hostile environment. It has been the tradition of this local

assembly and other churches to fellowship with groups of their kind. For the purpose of

this research, this local church decided to cross social and religious boundaries by

organizing sporting events with the old-timers sports association of this neighborhood, a

non-religious group. This association was made up of people we are seeking to form

relationship with. We also had reconciliatory soccer and kickball games with a school

which has been hostile towards us and has had conflict with this faith community's high

school for over twenty years. There was a joint parade which mended the broken

relationships again. This question was intended to assess the level of positive outcomes

that may have affected our neighborly relationships during these fellowship games and

parade with a school which has been hostile towards JFC high school. Part of this

question was not included in the baseline survey because the researcher intended to

evaluate the social and reconciliatory interventions which were held after the baseline

survey.

Table 28. Assessing the positive outcome of the sporting interventions between JFC and neighbors

How would you evaluate the positive outcome of the sporting fellowship intervention which was held between our community and the Solapee Old Timers Sports Association of our neighborhood and the JFC High school versus Sonie High School, in order to build good neighborliness?

	End line N=99	
	n	%
Strongly effective	78	83.0
Somewhat effective	15	16.0
Somewhat not effective	0	0.0
Strongly not effective	1	1.0
Total	94	100.0

Amongst the response options which were provided in the questionnaire, only

three received responses (see table 28). None of the respondents chose "somewhat not

effective." Of the ninety-four valid respondents, seventy-eight, representing 83.0% of the

valid percent agreed that these social and reconciliatory social gatherings were strongly

effective. Fifteen out of the ninety-four valid respondents, representing 16.0% of the

valid percent, said that these interventions were "somewhat effective." This implies that

the researcher was successful in leading and initiating an adaptive change in this faith

community. The way of life and the belief system which this faith community has had

about some of their neighbors had to change, in order to be able to view their neighbors

as people they can fellowship with. These interventions called for humility on the part of

the researcher, along with the people desiring the change.

Table 29. Assessing the effectiveness of the interventions in building relationship between JFC and neighbors

How effective have these interventions been affecting our relationship with our neighbors?

	End Line N=99	
	n	%
Very effective	39	62.9
Fairly effective	23	37.1
Total	62	100.0

From the general perspective of viewing this church's relationship with her

neighbors and the current conditions surrounding their neighborhood, how do they see

the prevailing interpersonal relationships between this faith community and her

neighbors, especially those that may have been hostile towards them? A total of thirty-

seven missing values, representing 37.4% of the people that participated in the exercise,

could not be tallied in this assessment. Therefore, from the amount of missing values, it

can be determined that the respondents may not have understood the question, so many of

them did not attempt it.

However, from the valid responses above (see table 29), thirty-nine of the sixty-

two valid respondents, representing 62.9 percent of the valid percent, agreed that the

interventions were very effective in affecting our relationship with our neighbors, while

twenty-three of the sixty-two valid respondents, representing 37.1% of the valid percent, are of the opinion that these interventions were fairly effective in positively affecting the relationship between their faith community and their neighbors. This result portrays that building *perichoretic* relationships with our neighbors is not one hundred percent instantaneous; rather, it is going to be an ongoing project which will take time and effort. What is worth noting is that, according to the data above, some improvements have begun. It is these interventions and by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit that used this research to build a bridge between us and our hostile neighbors. The result of these interventions have been vivid, though not very large yet, but we have the assurance that better days are ahead. Moreover, when you find the cumulative sum of the "strongly effectives" and the "fairly effectives," it is clear that 100.0% of the valid percent agreed that the interventions have been effective in building *perichoretic* relationships with our neighbors.

<div align="center">Qualitative Data for follow-up Comments in the End line Survey</div>

Questions five, six, seventeen, eighteen, twenty-one, and twenty-four of the end line questionnaire had requested follow-up responses. Not every respondent responded to every follow-up question. However, some provided follow-up responses on the questionnaire. The data in this section were gathered and coded accordingly. Out of these data came *in vivo* codes. Question eighteen of the end line questionnaire produced several *in vivo* codes that had to do with the way I preached which contributed to the reasons some neighbors have been hostile. Over thirty followed-up responses had to do with my messages on holiness or uncompromising sermons, especially on moral issues. These *in vivo* codes were clustered into emerging patterns resulting in focused codes of emerging

actions. The focused codes are listed in table 30. These focused codes when they were

clustered, brought out emerging actions, known as axial codes.

Table 30. Focused codes and axial codes

Focused Codes	Axial Codes
FC 1 Impacting the members and neighbors spiritually FC 2 Showing love and concern to each other and neighbors FC 3 Uncompromising preaching causing hostility FC 4 Cultivating relationship and unity in the neighborhood	AC 1 The church's spiritual responsibility to its members and neighbors
FC 5 Serving the neighborhood through relief and humanitarian services FC 6 Sanitation FC 7 Providing education for the less-fortunate FC 8 Serving the neighborhood through medical services	AC 2 The church's involvement in holistic ministries

The two emerging actions in table 30 (AC1 and AC2) are referred to as the

church's spiritual responsibility to its members and neighborhood and the church's

involvement in holistic ministries. These are the dual focus of the missional church. The

demonstration below in figure 5 shows that the missional church in a hostile

neighborhood has two major responsibilities. The first is to minister to its members, and

that is to look inward, and the second and most important is to minister to its neighbors,

and that is focus outward. These axial codes emerged as a result of the church looking

outward during the interventions. The death of so many churches has come about as a

result of the church focusing inward and neglecting *missio Dei* in the neighborhood and

beyond

Figure 5. Theoretical coding for the qualitative section of the surveys

The church should have a bifocal lens, where it can demonstrate the ability to see in both directions to carry out the church's holistic ministry (ministering or preaching the gospel with love, mercy, relief, educating the less-fortunate children, ministering to the IDPs-Zoegoes, and doing sanitation) in the neighborhood where it finds itself. At the same time it is not to forget to focus inward, by impacting its members physically and spiritually and promoting love in the body of Christ. This movement by the church towards fulfilling *missio Dei* will be followed in parallel directions by the church loving

her neighbors and at the same time striving to cultivate relationship and unity in the

neighborhood (see figure 5).

Ministering or preaching with love is important because out of the end line

questionnaire, several follow-up responses were coded in the initial *in vivo* codes as,

"uncompromising preaching, true preaching, preaching on holiness, preaching the truth,

and strong preaching." While it is true that we need to preach the gospel

uncompromisingly, we should also seek to propagate the good news with mercy and love,

understanding that we are saved by God's grace and not by ourselves or any human effort

(Ephesians 6:8).

Qualitative Research Result: Focus Group One and Two Discussions

The next phase of this study was the qualitative research. This aspect has to do

with the Jordan Fellowship Church focus group discussion, referred to as Focus Group

One, the Solapee neighborhood focus group, also referred to as Focus Group Two, and

the joint focus groups discussion of the Jordan Fellowship Church and the Solapee

neighborhood focus group. The Focus Group Two from the neighborhood was selected

from amongst the Christian populace, Muslims, Americo-Liberians, traditional religious

folks, aborigines of Solapee, and short- and long-stayed citizens of Solapee. Every

attempt to get African Traditional Religion representation in the Focused Group Two

discussion became futile.
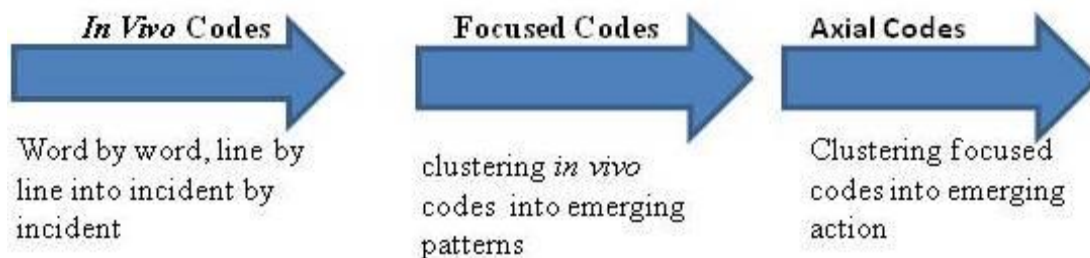
Figure 6. Qualitative coding process

Two separate protocols were prepared in order to solicit the views of the church and their neighbors. Both discussions were audio recorded and notes were also taken. To come up with the findings in this paper, I used Charmaz' method of coding and I did incident-to-incident coding to create *in vivo* codes and thereafter grouped the *in vivo* codes into focused codes and then grouped the focused codes into axial codes, and finally created the theoretical coding by explaining the relationships between the axial codes.

Focus Group One Discussion (Jordan Fellowship Church)

The group from the church was selected based on age, sex, and longevity in Solapee. They were also selected from the auxiliaries of the church, to depict equal representation and participation of a cross section of the church, with the exception of senior adults who were not available. The table below shows that Focus Group One consisted of fifteen members of the church; there were eight Liberian dialects represented. They were Kissi, Kpelle, Bassa, Mende, Gbandi, Lorma, Grebo, and Kru (see table 31).

Table 31. Participants of Focus Group One discussion

Participants	Age	Gender	Tribe	Dept.	Edu.	Member
1	53	F	Kissi	Pastor	BTh. BBA	1988
2	55	F	Kpelle	Deacon	8th Grade	1989
3	51	M	Kissi	Pastor	BA	1994
4	49	F	Bassa	Pastor	BTh.	1994
5	33	F	Congau	Youth	High Sch.	1996
6	52	F	Mende	Pastor	MA	1998
7	39	M	Gbandi	S Sch.	BBA	2013
8	36	F	Gbandi	Finance	BBA	1993
9	42	F	Lorma	Women	BSc.	2012
10	51	M	Kru	Relief	8th Grade	1995
11	36	F	Kpelle	Choir	BSc.	2010
12	47	F	Kru	Children	BSc.	1993
13	27	M	Kpelle	Youth	High Sch.	2010
14	48	M	Grebo	Men	University	1992
15	54	M	Grebo	School	University	1992

The discussion began with prayers. I provided verbal guidelines for speaking and made every attempt to encourage the full participation of all persons within the focus groups. The PAR team which was responsible for doing transcribing was inclusive and a member of the team assisted me in the coding. The protocol consisted of four categories of questions (see appendix E). The first category contained questions which assisted us to do self-evaluation of our relationship with our neighbors. The second category was made of questions which evaluated the ministry of this local church amongst its neighbors. The third category was intended to help us to discern God in the neighborhood and what He could be up to. The fourth assisted the focus group to discern the prospect of cultivating neighborliness between the church and its neighbors. Finally, a follow-up question was asked to determine if there was anything to be discussed which was not included in the discussion protocol.

The discussion was healthy, with several interesting topics and themes coming forth. This forum lasted for four hours and fifty minutes, and when it was manually

transcribed, the result was sixty double spaced type-written pages. There were ninety (90) *in vivo* codes which were coded from the transcribed conversation. There were pre-focus group discussions and post-focus group discussions, which are included in the manuscript. However, we carefully excluded those discussions and only included in this paper those directly related to the research question and discussion protocol. The transcript from the discussion is the main source of qualitative data in this study.

I sought to discover the ninety *in vivo* codes which were helpful in analyzing the qualitative data. As a researcher, my goal was to look for terms everyone knew that flagged condensed but significant meaning. Many of these terms below were repeated several times in the conversation. Words like hatred, hostile, resist, indifferent, not friendly, and selfish contributed immensely to the conversation. I also identified participants' innovative terms that captured meanings and experience related to the research question, especially if the terms or phrase provide a complete understanding or contribute to the research conversation and can show how any independent variable affects the dependent variable of neighborliness. Some of these words were friendship, friendly, relationship, cordial relationship, and friendliness. In addition, I was keen to discover any insider terms which reflected his or her perspective or a particular group's perspective on the protocol. Some of these words were walking circumspectly, spiritual problems, resist, indifferent, not friendly, and selfish. How these words played in the conversation helped the group to understand the problem (s) the research was trying to address. Finally, I took note of statements within the transcript that crystalized the focus group participants' actions or concerns.[3]

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[3] Charmaz, 134.

The list below and table 32 contains nine focused codes which were gathered from the ninety initial *in vivo* codes. Thus, the ninety *in vivo* codes were divided into nine groups, with a focused code heading each group. This is to say that nine themes emerged from this focus group discussion. We consider these themes as focused codes. These focused codes are:

1. Promoting education in the neighborhood;
2. Loving our neighbors;
3. The Holy Spirit empowering the church for service;
4. Some hostile neighbors resisting the church and its gospel;
5. Cultivating neighborliness;
6. Building relationship;
7. Developing and promoting social service programs;
8. Carrying out spiritual outreach program;
9. Drug addiction (Zoegoes).

The conversation was at times a narrative with emotional expressions, but they provided detailed and descriptive situations in this neighborhood at some point in time. As a researcher, trying to discover why the neighbors we so love have become hostile to our faith community, and how I can lead an adaptive change in this hostile context, was a noble task that had the potential to bring about genuine reconciliation between this faith community and its neighbors. Therefore, in my focused coding, I had to recode the transcript or *in vivo* codes guided by the research question and other themes that were relevant to the research, in order to come up with the focused codes.

It is very clear in the transcript that the members of the Focus Group One were trying to discern what the causes of hostility were and how they could find amicable solutions to this hostility. These focused codes which were gathered from a list of ninety *in vivo* codes summed up to the initial themes of the entire discussion. The focus group

saw our educational system as a means of promoting education in our neighborhood. The scholarship to the Muslim children and other children in need should be continued. They also saw love as a channel for winning our neighbors over or even those who may have been hostile towards us. Further, if this faith community is going to achieve this, the Holy Spirit must empower them for service to some of these hostile neighbors who had been resisting the church and the gospel they are presenting and strive to build relationship and cultivate neighborliness with the internally displaced persons and drug addicts (Zoegoes). What we also see coming out of these *in vivo* codes is the potential to develop and promote, to a large extent, social service programs which will minister to these IDPs, drug addicts, and other social deviants.

Table 32. Focused codes and axial codes for Focus Group One

Focused Codes	Axial Codes
FC 1 Carry out spiritual outreach programs FC 2 Developing and promoting social service outreach programs FC 3 Continuing to promote education in the neighborhood	AC 1 Breaking Boundaries
FC 4 Building relationships FC 5 Cultivating neighborliness	AC 2 Divine *perichoresis*
FC 6 Drug addiction – the Zoego FC 7 Some hostile neighbors resisting the church and its gospel	AC 3 Incarnational Ministry
FC 8 The Holy Spirit empowering the church for service FC 9 Loving our neighbors	AC 4 Divine Empowerment

To come up with the axial codes above, the focused codes had to be related together in order to reveal codes, or categories to construct linkage amongst the codes,

emerging as themes from the data. There are a few ways I went about doing this. I looked

for relationship between the focused codes and linked them by a common name that

defined them. In some cases, I looked for meanings by looking at the focused codes to

see if they had the same meaning. At times I asked if the focused codes consisted of the

same activities, behaviors, or events, or whether they were saying the same thing. In this

study, four axial codes emerged from the nine focused codes. Each category of focused

codes were defined by an axial code by meaning, relationship, behavior, or if they were

saying the same thing. It is very interesting to note how very important themes or axial

codes derived from the focused code by carefully examining them by the process of

deductive reasoning.

The first axial code that derived from three focused codes was breaking

boundaries (see table 32). This means that three major ways the church can effect

neighborliness in a hostile environment is by carrying out spiritual outreach programs,

developing and promoting social service outreach programs, and continuing to promote

education in the neighborhood, especially assisting kids or people from diverse origins

who may not be in the same social groupings with us. These three focused codes laid the

premise for boundary breaking. Moreover, every spiritual outreach program must be

followed or accompanied with social service and helping the poor kids in our context to

have the opportunity to become educated.

The second axial code that emerged from the nine focus codes is divine

perichoresis, a Trinitarian word for relationship (table 32). This concept of building

relationship was dealt with extensively in chapter four of this thesis. The context in which

the axial code building relationship was used in the conversation was *perichoretic* in

nature. The *in vivo* codes provided several ways this community could build relationship.

Investing in teashop or ataye shop, attending township meetings, and fellowshipping with

sporting organizations like a non-religious social group, like the Solapee Old-Timers

Sports Association, are just few of the ways relationship building can be carried out. The

axial code, divine *perichoresis*, is closely related to the focused code, cultivating

neighborliness. Neighborliness is about building relationships. Some of the *in vivo* codes

were social, friendly, reach out, association, cordial relationships, and friendship. All of

these *in vivo* codes share the same principles as *perichoresis* and neighborly do.

The third axial code gathered from the data was incarnational ministry (table 32).

The axial code derived from two focused codes: drug addicting people and hostile

neighbors resisting the church and its gospel. After a careful assessment and breaking

down of these two focused codes, a generic relationship can be formed between

incarnational ministry and drug addicting people, who may be IDPs and hostile neighbors

resisting the church and its gospel. Both focused codes have distinct cultures and way of

life that will need a church to incarnate into their context to build neighborly relationship

with them. This relationship between the axial code and focused code is not one that

defines them as being the same as previous codes, but both focused codes are attended to

through the process of an incarnational ministry. To be able to reach these two groups of

people, one must humble himself or herself and incarnate into their sphere to minister to

them. Both groups in the focused codes are recipients and beneficiaries of incarnational

ministry. The relationship is, therefore, on mutual benefits. The two groups in the focused

codes benefit from the goods coming from the incarnational ministry, while an

incarnational minister or ministry gets their eternal reward and joy from the fact that the

hostile neighbor and IDPs or drug addicts have been reached with the gospel or material good. So the relation becomes generic to the both.

The final axial code, divine empowerment, finds it source from two focused codes, namely, the Holy Spirit empowering the church for service and the church loving her neighbors (see table 32 and figure 7). Love is the gospel's most powerful weapon against evil or hostility. There is a strong connection between loving your neighbor as yourself and divine empowerment. As Pentecostals, we always equate power to the Holy Spirit. While this is not wrong, love contains the inherent ability to win our adversaries or hostile neighbors over. This love for our neighbors is permeated into our lives and ministries by the power of the Holy Spirit who empowers us for service. So, this axial code, divine empowerment, becomes the result of the focused codes, the Holy Spirit empowering the church for service to our neighbors and loving our neighbors. These two focused codes produce divine empowerment for the missional task. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers the church to serve the world by demonstrating *agape* love for our neighbors. Thus, love is the fruit of the Spirit, and as such, it cannot be divorced from the Holy Spirit who is the source of divine empowerment.
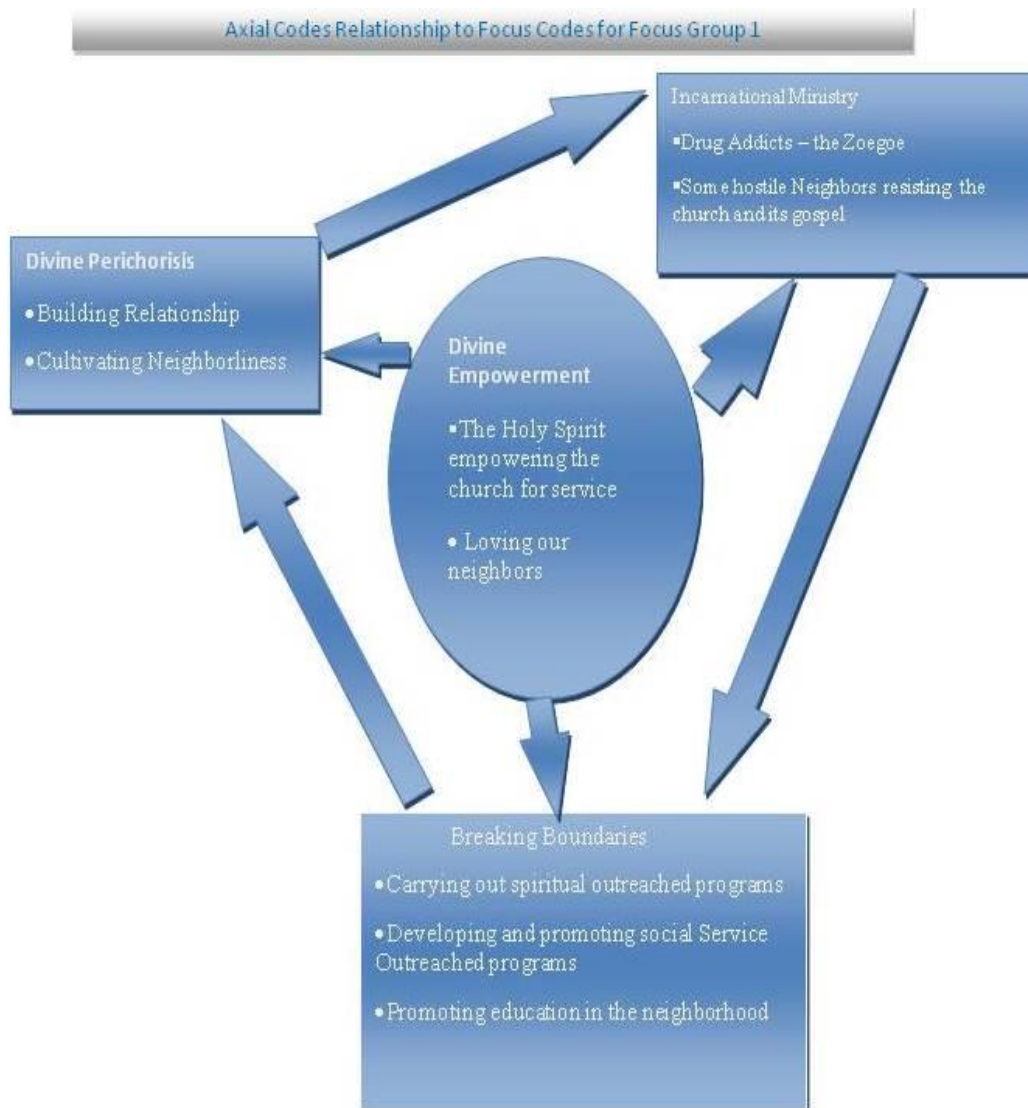
Figure 7. Axial codes relationships to the focus codes in Focus Group One

The ninety *in vivo* codes gave us nine focused codes and the nine focused codes

gave us four axial codes (Incarnational Ministry, Breaking Boundaries, Divine

Perichoresis, and Divine Empowerment). Of these four axial codes, three form part of the

biblical and theological lenses I used in this research (chapter 4), while one (Holy Spirit

and Love) is the invisible lens beneath this study, which serves as the spiritual dynamite,

enabling them to exist and maintain their viability. These four axial codes form a

relationship that is unique to this study. There is also an interconnection amongst them and three of the axial themes are empowered by one of the axial themes in the middle, which exists to maintain their interconnectedness (see figure 7).

Figure 7 shows this relationship and their interconnections. Moving clock-wise, incarnational ministry becomes the beginning point for an effective way of reaching our neighbors and impacting our neighborhood by becoming the hands and feet of Jesus in this neighborhood and world. The incarnational paradigm facilitates the process of immersing into the culture of our neighbors, especially the IDPs who reside at the graveyard and become neighborly. Being neighborly is being proactive. To minister to people, one must go where they are, hear their stories, and see things from their perspectives.

Incarnational ministry enables a community of faith to break boundaries. Intrinsic in breaking boundaries is to be willing to incarnate into a culture, or from the perspective of this research, a hostile neighborhood and IDP culture, for the purpose of carrying out spiritual outreach programs, developing and promoting social outreach programs, and promoting educational programs that will impact the neighborhood in a positive way. From the theological and biblical perspective, Jesus never broke boundaries while in heaven. He had to incarnate, dwell amongst us in this sinful world and became like one of us to redeem us from the curse of the law and provide salvation for the entire human race. In my mind, incarnational ministry must precede or entail breaking boundaries.

So, what happens when boundaries are broken? New relationships are formed and neighborliness is cultivated. Therefore, breaking boundaries facilitates or enhances divine *perichoresis*. When Jesus broke the ancient Jewish and Samaritan geographical, social,

gender, and religious boundaries, he formed new relationships with the Samaritans. The concept of the relationality of the triune God became evident and Jesus eventually sought the opportunity to cultivate neighborly relationship with a group of people with whom they had been in hostility with for decades and generations. The concept of divine *perichoresis* will lead us back to incarnational ministry, where a faith community desiring of forming new relationships, in order to become neighborly and win the lost to Christ, must get involved in incarnational ministry.

How does a faith community do this? It is only by and through divine empowerment. The Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit, love, empower the church to incarnate, beak boundaries, and become *perichoretic* by building relationships and cultivating neighborliness. It is a heart filled with love that will lead the church to incarnate, break boundaries, form relationships, and cultivate neighborliness. The Holy Spirit and its fruit, love, must be in the center of incarnational ministry, breaking boundaries, and *perichoresis*, empowering them to coexist and accomplish divine goals (see figure 7). The role of the Holy Spirit in this research cannot be over emphasized. The Spirit of God opened the space for the church to engage her neighbors during these research months.

Therefore, in this age of uncertainties, where Spirit-led leadership is required in forming, restoring, and leading faith communities in mission, missional leaders must be prepared to engage or experience the Holy Spirit not in any mystical way but rather in actual greater ways that our knowledge and experience of God's Spirit will enable us have power, extraordinary wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in bringing about the desired change(s) in our faith communities when we lead in context and impact our

neighborhood. Moreover, there is an interconnection between Gods Spirit, the "spirit of wisdom" and understanding, good sense, insight, and knowledge of how things are.[4] In my mind, as a researcher, the correlation signifies that wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are personified to indicate that the "*ruach,*" the creative power of God, can be known, associated with, related to, and experienced by leaders and the community in which they serve.

To enforce this idea of experiencing the Holy Spirit, the Hebrew word for spirit, "*ruach,*" which denotes "something that lives in contrast to what is dead" and also refers to "the breath of life and the power that gives life,"[5] confronts us with God's presence, both experientially (in us) and throughout the entire universe.[6] There is also a probability that the word "ruach" is related to "rewah," meaning breadth which could also imply that "ruach" creates space,[7] the very essence of Participatory Action Research and Collaborative Change and innovative leadership and congregational and communal discernment. Participatory Action Research and Collaborative Change is about changing context and approaching people to evaluate and carry on critical reflection themselves.[8] Of course, this is adaptive in nature and needs the Holy Spirit in the discerning and adaptive change process. This is why, in figure 7, the Holy Spirit is in the middle serving as the fulcrum on which the missional church gets its support to engage in incarnational

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[4] Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1994), 192-193, 105.

[5] Lois Malcolm, *Holy Spirit Creative Power in Our Lives* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 12.

[6] Ibid.,12

[7] Ibid., 12

[8] Dwight J. Zscheile, "Action research and Collaborative Change" (Lecture and Discussion, Doctor of Ministry in CML Cohort Session, Luther Seminary, Minnesota, January 25, 2017).

ministries and is effective in breaking boundaries, building relationships, and cultivating neighborliness.

The Psalmist declares, "Out of my distress, I called on the Lord; and the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place" (Psalm 18:19 and 31:18). Through the Holy Spirit, God is already at work in our communities and neighborhoods. When leaders are guided by "ruach" to create "rewah" (space) where people are and are able to make the conversation more participatory, the Holy Spirit helps the community to discern by listening to God in prayer, the word, to one another in Christian community, to strangers, neighbors, and the world.[9] Until we learn to listen to the Holy Spirit we are not going to accomplish much. Operating in a hostile environment, where neighbors' hostility can be discerned, Spirit-led discernment should be an ongoing process for a missional leader and his or her faith community.

<center>Focus Group Two Discussion</center>

After the Jordan Fellowship Focus Group One discussion, the research design pointed us to having another focus group discussion with our neighbors, referred to as Focus Group Two. Since this research was about a faith community and their neighbors, it became necessary to engage these neighbors around a protocol which was designed to solicit their opinions about the Jordan Fellowship Church and its impact in the neighborhood. In this protocol we began by asking for the duration of stay of the participants and a few demography questions (see appendix F). We also asked them to explain what they knew about this faith community and the protocol asked them to carry

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[9] Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Spirit and Congregational Discernment" (lecture and Discussion, Doctor of Ministry in CML Cohort Session, Luther Seminary, Minnesota, January 24, 2017).

out an evaluation of the Jordan Fellowship, considering their relationship with their

neighbors, and the church's positive or negative impact on them. The protocol also asked

them to recommend some of the things they would love to see the church do in the

neighborhood or what were some of the things they love or dislike about the church and

what they would love to see the church change in how as a church it can live and exist in

the neighborhood. The protocol asked them to explain any bitter experience they may

have had with the church or any member of the church. Other topics of interest and

follow up questions were discussed.

Table 33. Participants in Focus Group Two discussions

Participants	Age	Gender	Tribe	Edu.	Religious Affiliation
1	42	F	Congau	MA	Christian
2	58	M	Bassa	BTh.	Christian
3	33	M	Kru	BSc.	Christian
4	45	M	Vai	BSc.	Muslim
5	32	M	Vai	BBA.	Muslim

Table 33 shows that there were five active participants. Two of my PAR team

members did not participate in the discussion, but rather one of them served as the

recorder and transcriber, while the other served as the person responsible for hospitality

and entertainment. The discussion was held in the multipurpose conference room of the

Jordan Fellowship High School. The participants were selected from amongst the tribal

groupings being studied. I took into consideration their longevity in this township and

religious affiliation. Two religious groups were represented in this discussion. They were

Christians and Muslim (see table 33). Every attempt to get the representation of African

Traditional Religion proved futile.

The discussions were held under a very good atmosphere and several suggestions and recommendations emerged. There were seventy-nine *in vivo* codes from the Focus Group Two discussions. These *in vivo* codes highlight very important words that were stressed throughout the discussion. These *in vivo* codes were grouped into focused codes. As a result of this exercise, nine focused codes emerged. They are as follows:

- F C 1 Investing in medical outreach;
- F C 2 The church should be investing in social services;
- F C 3 Christian activities the church is doing well;
- FC 4 Collaborating in the township;
- FC 5 Showing love to our neighbors by acts of kindness;
- FC 6 Expanding the scope of our educational program;
- FC 7 Fundraising to support social programs;
- FC 8 Elements that create boundaries between the church and the neighborhood;
- FC 9 The church practicing religious tolerance.

What appears to be coming from the neighbors seems to be having some similarities with the church's focus group. Seeing the potential of the church, neighbors were saying that getting involved in medical outreach and social service and continuing to practice the Christian activities were ways of impacting our neighborhood and investing in medical outreach. Many of these recommendations shifted the initial interventions designed for this study and were included on the list of interventions to see whether these interventions could affect the dependent variable of neighborliness. Building relationships with non-church members and showing acts of kindness could help us. The deliberation brought to light the opportunity we have as a church to use our resources for the good of the community and become selfless as a body of Christ in our attempts to win our neighbors over.

Members of the focus group alluded to the fact that we have a school that could begin thinking about raising funds to begin expanding the scope of our current program

to include vocational courses. This, they believe, will assist the IDPs to learn a career, so we could evacuate them out of the graveyards. There were some friendly fires from our neighbors when they periodically, during the course of the discussion, outlined some things we needed to get rid of as a church to foster interpersonal relationship with the neighborhood. Some of the friendly fires were put off by the neighbors themselves who were in contrast to their colleagues. On the other hand, the Muslims applauded the church for practicing religious tolerance.

Table 34. Focused codes and axial codes from Focus Group Two

Focused Codes	Axial Codes
FC 1 Investing in medical outreach FC 2 The church should be investing in social services FC 3 Christian activities the church is doing well	AC 1 Impacting the Neighborhood
FC 4 Collaborating in the township FC 5 Showing love to our neighbors by acts of kindness	AC 2 Building relationship
FC 6 Expanding the scope of our educational program FC 7 Fundraising to support social programs	AC 3 Empowering the Church for service
FC 8 Elements that create boundaries between the church and neighbors FC 9 The church practicing religious tolerance	AC 4 The church Coping with Diversities in the neighborhood

The nine focused codes were grouped into four axial codes (see table 34). The axial codes summed up the entire discussion into four themes. The first axial code that emerged was the church impacting the neighborhood. There are three ways the church can impact the neighborhood. One of the questions in the protocol was to assess the

church and outline the ways the church could impact the neighborhood. So, what appears to be coming from the conglomeration of focused codes are: investing in medical outreach, investing in social service, and continuing to carry out those activities that we are currently engaged in, which are helpful to the church and neighborhood.

The next axial code has to do with building relationships in the township. Members of the focus group felt that our faith community collaborating with other churches, without being selective, is a good way to build relationship with other churches in the neighborhood. Relationship building also comes by the way we show our love without segregation and can translate our love into kindness. Empowering the church for service was the third axial code. This is carried out in two ways: expanding the scope of our educational program, where vocational education will be taught, in order to alleviate the flooding of IDPs on street corners and cemeteries, and raising funds to support social programs and other social related services. Finally, the church which is coping with diversities in the neighborhood can easily exercise religious tolerance and deal with other vices that tend to create boundaries between the church and neighbors.
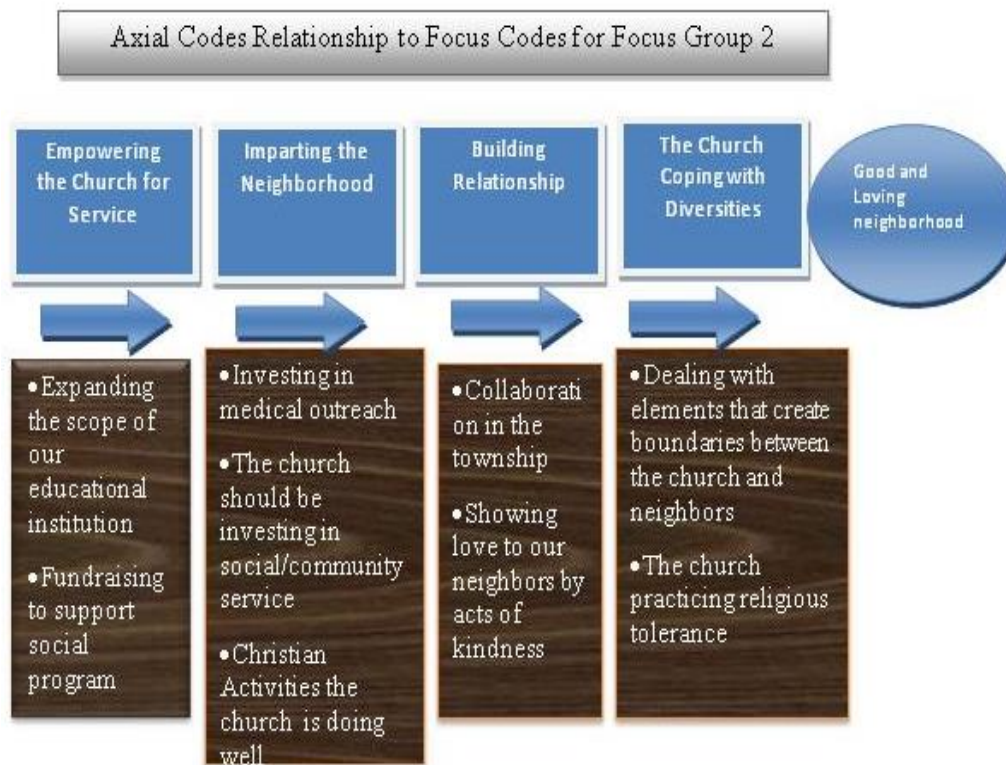
Figure 8. Axial codes relationships to focused codes for Focus Group Two

The axial codes developed from the focused codes point to building a good

neighborhood where the church can exist in an environment which is loving and free

from hostile behavior against the church. There are several factors which are responsible

for building this kind of neighborhood. The axial codes in figure 8 are connected in

chain, interrelated, and can also be interchangeably related at random and not necessarily

in sequence. In the sequential relationship, the church endeavors to empower itself by

financial and economic empowerment through the raising of funds to carry out its

programs. This empowerment also calls for expanding the scope of its educational

program to include vocational education for children in the community, especially those

that are social deviants and IDPs. This economic, financial, and human resource

development will build the capacity of the church to adequately make the church potent

and viable, in order to impact its neighborhood in meaningful ways. This is why the church must continue to foster those Christian activities that she is currently doing so well.

It is when the church is empowered that she can adequately meet the medical challenges that the neighborhood is faced with. Most of the IDPs which are related to our neighbors are carrying infectious diseases that need prompt attention. Should the church be investing in social and community services, it has to be empowered. The church has just paid five thousands Liberian dollars to remove a pile of dirt which was located in the middle of our township, to be precise, our immediate neighborhood. It is obvious that when the church begins to positively impact its neighborhood, it will begin to form new circles of relationships in the neighborhood, by the demonstration of our love to our neighbors by the acts of kindness previously shown them, through community and social services. This kind of relationship building comes in the form of collaboration between the church and its neighbors and collaboration between this faith community and other religious institutions for the common good of the neighborhood where this faith community and these religious institutions are located.

When the church steps outside of it comfort zones to extend its relationship by collaborating and demonstrating kindness in concrete terms, she will be pointed towards coping with diversities. A major problem of the church is to cope with diversities. To build stronger relationships and maintain these relationships, the church must see diversity as a divine gift. All parts of the body are not the same. We have the eye, mouth, nose, ears, and other parts of the body playing different roles (1 Corinthians 12:12). For relationship to be strengthened and matured, it must move to the next level. One must

have the ability to cope with diversities, especially diverse perspectives and religious views. In this contemporary age, religious tolerance is needful and helpful. The church must stand for what it believes, but at the same time respect people for what they also stand for and believe. Like the triune God, we must coexist in our diverse make up and make the world a better place to be. If the church is intentional about this, she will be keen to observe bad practices and behaviors that create boundaries between her and the neighbors and do away with them, in order to make the neighborhood habitable and loving.

These axial codes do not have to exist or operate in sequence. For example, we can take them from the back. When the church copes with diversities, she will eventually build relationships, impact her neighborhood and consequently empower herself for service, and as a result make the neighborhood a loving and habitable environment in which to live.

Relationship between the Theoretical Codes of Focus Groups One and Two

Table 35. Relationship between the theoretical codes of Focus Group One and Two

Focus Group One Axial Codes		Focus Group Two Axial Codes		Result of both Axial codes
Breaking Boundaries	+	Impacting the Neighborhood	=	The social Ministry of the Missional Church
Divine *Perichoresis*	+	Building relationships	=	The Trinitarian concept of cultivating Relationship
Incarnational Ministry	+	Coping with Diversities	=	The church in Missions within the Neighborhood
Divine Empowerment	+	Empowering the church for service	=	Divine and Human component for cultivating neighborliness

Table 35 shows the relationship between the theoretical coding for the Focus

Group One of the Jordan Fellowship Church and the theoretical coding of Focus Group

Two of the neighborhood. The two sets of axial codes for the church and the neighbors

were grouped into identical sets. As a result of this rearrangement, four major themes

emerged as the over-all central idea of the entire combined focused groups' discussion.

The first category is the divine and human components for cultivating

neighborliness. There are two major components involved in becoming neighborly. It has

a human and divine side. For the divine side, the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit,

love, must be combined with the human aspect, education, or human resource

development, to make a combination that will cultivate neighborliness. From the

perspective of this research, we saw it worked. The Spirit of God opened the spaces for

the church to use its funds to reach their neighbors. This is the first step for becoming

neighborly. The second category describes the second step to be the Trinitarian concept for cultivating relationships. This is where the theology of the relationality of the Triune God contributes to the socio-dynamic relationship that the church must engage, in order to exist in a culture which may be hostile towards it. The theology of *perichoresis* has played throughout this study.

With this mind, the church is led into mission within its neighborhood or context. This moves the church to another step. The divine and human components for cultivating relationship, in relationship with *perichoresis*, moves the church into incarnational ministries, where it can cope with a wide range of diverse situations, perspectives, and ideas and still exist and be able to impact its neighborhood. At the final analysis, the church, which is a sent community, becomes a vibrant missional church, participating in the social ministry of *missio Dei*. This fourth step exposes the church to its neighbors as she delves into meeting the social needs of the neighborhood. As a result of this ministry, sociological, tribal, geographical, and religious boundaries are crossed and broken, as the church crosses mission frontiers to impact their neighborhood or world. It is clear that there is a relationship amongst the social ministry of the missional church, the Trinitarian concept for cultivating relationships, the divine and human components for cultivating neighborliness, and the church in missions within the neighborhood.

<div align="center">Focus Group One and Two Joint Discussion</div>

Table 36 shows the focused codes collected from a joint discussion session of the two focus groups which met to discuss issues relevant to the research, in respect to the progress of the research, especially the interventions which were ongoing. The purpose of this short joint session was to assess the progress made so far, the hitches, if any, and to

propose the way forward. The meeting was cordial and very friendly. Muslims and Christians met around the table in the school multipurpose hall and held friendly talks, with joint recommendations coming forth, in the interest of the research.

Eight focused codes came out of the in *vivo codes*. These codes represent the central ideas that were projected from the meeting. The focused codes are shown in table 36. These focused codes point to the importance of the interventions and how they were beginning to help the neighborhood. The themes emanating from the codes suggest that the church should continue to provide scholarships for children in need, incorporate vocational education in the curriculum of the church school, and continue to be involved in community service. These codes highlight that the church was involved in sharing their blessings with the neighborhood and was improving its infrastructure. Given the games with the Solapee Old-Timers Sport Association, it was observed that sports were a unifying and reconciliatory force and, as such, the church should continue to fellowship through indoor and outdoor programs. Several commendations for the progress were made.

Out of the eight focused codes derived four axial codes. The table below shows the four axial codes. They represent the theoretical analysis of the focused codes (see table 36). After the grouping of the focused codes, the following axial codes emerged: giving back to the community, joining God in the neighborhood, self-improvement, and the applauding church and neighborhood.

Table 36. Focused codes and axial codes for the joint focus groups

Focused Codes	Axial Codes
FC 1 Providing scholarships for children in need	
FC 2 Providing vocational education for youths in the Township	AC 1 Giving back to the community
FC 3 Sharing the blessings from God with the neighbors	
FC 4 Fellowshipping through in-door and out-door programs	
FC 5 Cleaning the neighborhood through community service	AC 2 Joining God in the Neighborhood
FC 6 Uniting the church and neighbors through sports	
FC 7 Developing and improving the infrastructure of the church and school (self-improvement)	AC 3 Self-Improvement
FC 8 Commending the church for progress, both from within and without	AC 4 The applauding church and neighborhood

Looking at figure 9 below, there is a relationship amongst these axial codes. The church is in the middle of improving its infrastructure and giving back to the neighborhood. Both ends are held together by the missional church. The church should never let go of its missional obligation of joining God in the neighborhood, as she seeks to discern what God would be up to and join Him in sharing God's blessings with her neighbors. However, in the opposite direction are the church's programs to improve its infrastructure and human resource development. The local church becomes the scale. It must hold both in a balance. It is obvious that when there is a balance, there will be commendations from the church itself (the applauding church) and the neighbors (the applauding neighbors). Hence, all of the participants, especially the Muslims neighbors,

in the joint focus group, applauded the church for the progress made so far in improving its facilities, initiating a scholarship and sporting programs, and for engaging in several social service programs within the neighborhood. From the joint focus group's discussion, the interventions during this research placed the church in this position. See figure 9 below.
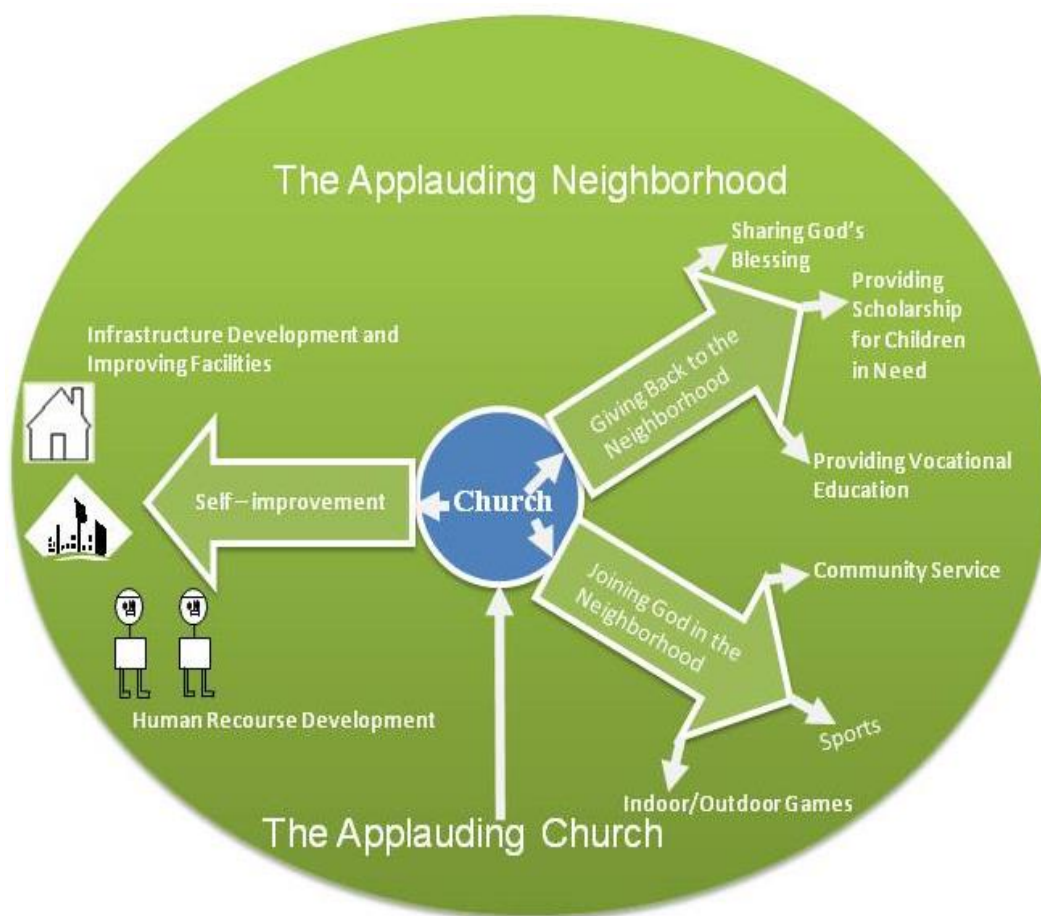
Figure 9. Theoretical coding for joint focus group

Triangulating the Data from the Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The result of the research is intended to display the outcomes and remedy for *How might Participatory Action Research interventions cultivate neighborliness of the Jordan Fellowship Church with their neighbors?* In order to provide a comprehensive and

balanced conclusion and outcomes, which will answer the research question, the following analysis took into consideration the qualitative research, quantitative research, the theoretical, biblical, and theological considerations, my personal experience before and during the research, and testimonies from neighbors before and during the interventions and from credible persons within the township. This section of this chapter presents what this research discovered about the cause for the hostility between the church and their neighbors, motivating the church to focus outward and how the results converged.

What the Research Revealed about the Cause of the Hostility

This eight-month study about this faith community and its neighbors has revealed that there have been two major factors responsible for the hostility between the church and their neighbors. The first is the messages that were preached during the early and middle stages of the church's formation and existence, and the second is the church's inability to focus outward. The baseline survey first confirmed this hostility when it reported that seventy-one persons out of the ninety-five valid respondents, amounting to 74.8 of the valid percent, confirmed that some of the neighbors were hostile, much hostile, and very hostile towards this church (see table 7). In order to ascertain the cause of the hostility, respondents agreed that the way we preach the word is irritating and it is the reason for the hostility. Accordingly, in the baseline survey, sixty-six out of ninety-one valid respondents, amounting to 72.5% of the valid percent, agreed that our neighbors feel that the way we preach the word is irritating. In the end line survey, sixty-one out of the eighty-nine valid respondents, accounting for 68.5% of the valid percent, also agreed that the way we preach the gospel is irritating (see table 11). However, in the

follow-up responses, all of the valid respondents that provided follow-up responses for this question attributed this hostility to the Holiness Gospel we preached. This is means that the messages on holiness[10] and righteousness were irritating.

In connection to the same cause of the hostility, the qualitative study in the Focus Group One section supported this same assertion. Some *in vivo* codes gathered were: selfish, hostile for holiness preaching, not friendly, hatred for sin messages, etc. These *in vivo* codes when they were grouped gave us a focused code that I named, "some hostile neighbors resisting the church and its gospel. The situation worsened, according to Focus Group One discussion, when we retreated to proclaiming a defensive gospel against our neighbors. This kind of preaching only worsened the situation and our neighbors became more hostile. From my personal experience in the this township, being the founding pastor of this ministry, coupled with my previous knowledge of exegesis, hermeneutics, homiletics, and etiquettes, I do agree that I may have violated a few of these principles in the discharge of my duty and as such could have contributed to this hostility. Moreover, I stand indicted, but I have already embraced this missional paradigm and have begun making necessary changes in this respect. Thus, I can be vindicated from this indictment on these grounds. On the other hand, there were people who hated and resented the church because of what we stood for. We still stand for this same truth and this truth we shall preach. However, our methodology and approach must change in order to accommodate penitent sinners or people with spiritual weaknesses.

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[10] The messages on holiness called the people to an immediate halt of their sinful behaviors, and turn from their wicked ways. If they did not comply right away, they were considered as children of the devil. The messages were never sugar-coated, but were propounded raw, and without compromise.

From Inward Focus to the Outward Focus of JFC

The research further revealed that the second factor responsible for the hostility between the church and its neighbor is the inability of the church to focus outward, but rather focusing in inward. All of the church's outward focus was evangelistic and not social. Thus, the church became selfish, only going out to add numbers but not to become the hands and feet of Jesus in the community. The church has been too self-centered in its ministry within the neighborhood. All of the quantitative and qualitative studies have strongly confirmed that this local church has spent all of its efforts on focusing inward and has abandoned its outward ministry to the neighborhood or the broader context of this faith community.

In addition, the qualitative study in all of its focus group discussions and joint focus group discussions outlined the church's weakness as being the tendency to only focus inward, at the expense of engaging in other outward ministries. Many of the *in vivo*, focused, axial, and theoretical codes in the qualitative sessions of this research support this analysis (see table 32 and 34). Therefore, from experience, it is a common human tendency in this part of the world that, when you only focus inward, you will eventually attract enemies or people who may become jealous or envious of your success stories and will hate you because of your accomplishments. This is why when this faith community ventured into participating in this PAR project, along with its interventions, a positive change began to emerge between this church and her neighbors.

For example, the baseline survey, when assessing this faith community's witness to its neighbors reported that only thirty-five of the ninety-eight valid respondents, amounting to 35.7 of the valid percent, graded this church's witness to their neighbors as

being strongly effective. In the end line survey the figures were forty-four valid respondents and 45.4 valid percent respectively (see table 16). Reacting to the church's involvement in community service, the tallied report shows only 39 of the ninety-eight valid respondents, amounting to 39.8% of the valid percent sees community services as being extremely important, while in the end line survey the figures are forty-six valid respondents and 47.4 valid percent respectively (see table 18). For incarnational ministry, fifty-three of the ninety-six valid respondents, amounting to 55.2% of the valid percent agreed strongly that this faith community is an incarnational ministry (see table 22). Moreover, assessing this church's willingness to invest in building *ataye* tea shop as a way of bridging a gap between our church and the neighborhood, only thirty-eight of the ninety-seven valid respondents, amounting to 39.2% of the valid percent agreed strongly for such investment (see table 24).

Converging Results

In addition to these discoveries, this research has come up with the outcomes which are intended to answer this research question and solve this problem between this church and its neighbors. Many of these outcomes converged or turned out to be the very interventions which have been carried out to solve this problem. These interventions turned out to be some of the best ways we could cultivate neighborliness in our context. The outcomes are presented in chapter 6. It was thrilling to discover how the results converged and led to the same conclusions. That is, many of these outcomes were tested as interventions brought in to this social science experiment to affect neighborliness, and to some degree, they have begun to work. When all of these outcomes are conglomerated into a group, they can be considered as the *outward focus of the missional church*. This

has appeared to be the prime solution for this research problem. A robust Spirit-led adaptive leader must motivate the church to not spend all of its time looking inward, but rather spend a considerable amount of time looking outward. These outcomes derived from all the qualitative theoretical coding in this research and the analyzed quantitative data. The following chapter explains these outcomes in detail and how the results converged or move towards the same conclusion.

Summary

This chapter delineated the results of this research from three major points. The first section of this chapter provided a review of the research process, stating the methodology which was used in the process. The second section provided a report and interpretation of the results of the research. This section covered the introductory narrative, and summary descriptions of all the participants for the qualitative and quantitative studies. The various data, including multiple sections, were provided, including the introduction of each category or topic, the data tables for the quantitative study, and the coding and quotations for the qualitative study, interpretation of the tables and figures in the text, and the explanation and the interpretation of the findings. The final section of this chapter triangulated the data from various sources and related it to how it answered my research question.

The next chapter states the conclusions and reflections of this research. It summarizes what I have learned from this research and what is important about the findings. It further provides the findings from the perspectives of my theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses, provides the limit of generalizing from these findings, and

provides questions which are relevant for further research and the summary of the

chapter.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter deliberated on the results of the research after eight months

of interventions between the Jordan Fellowship Church and its Solapee neighborhood. In

accordance with the outline of the results, the chapter was divided into three sections. The

first was a review of the research methodology, the second was the report and the

interpretation of the results of the research, stating multiple sections of the quantitative

and qualitative results, and in the third and final section, the quantitative and qualitative

data were triangulated and related to how they answered the research question.

This chapter states the conclusions and reflections of this research. It summarizes

the findings and what I have learned from this research and what is important about the

findings. It further views the findings from the perspectives of my theoretical, biblical,

and theological lenses, provides the limit of generalizing from these findings, and

provides questions that are relevant for further research and the summary of the chapter.

The Findings and What I Learned from the Research

There were several outcomes that emerged from this study. They are outlined as

follows: the cause of the hostility, the social and community service ministries of the

missional church, the trinitarian concept for cultivating relationship, the church in

mission within the neighborhood, mission in daily life, learning to focus inward, and the

need for a robust adaptive leader. These were the visible outcomes that converged at the end of this study. These findings assisted me, JFC, and the neighbors to properly address the research question.

The Causes of the Hostility

The first finding was what emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data as being the major causes for the hostility between this local church and its neighbors. Firstly, the neighbors felt that messages that were preached during the early and middle stages of the church's formation and existence were uncompromising and provocative. Secondly, they also felt that the church was too self-centered and unable to focus outward. The third reason for the hostility was the failure of the church to engage in social services. The Focus Group Two of the Solapee neighborhood and the joint focus group discussions suggested these reasons. This is highlighted in detail in the next paragraphs below.

The Social and Community Service Ministries

Hence, the second finding, the social and community service ministries of the missional church emerged, as one of the solutions to cultivating neighborliness in a hostile environment (see figure 10). From the result, I learned that social and community services are paramount to making a faith community a medium of hope for a dying or hostile neighborhood. The church is called to exist as an entity that focuses outward by giving back to the neighborhood the blessings they have received from God or have inherited from the community. The qualitative section of the end line survey considered this practice as the church's focusing outward and engaging in holistic ministries. The qualitative research further revealed that breaking boundaries, impacting the

neighborhood positively, and joining God in the neighborhood will help to bridge the gaps between a church and its neighbors. Gathered from the end line survey, after the interventions, participants in this survey from this local church made several assessments about their faith community. During the end line assessment, the respondents from the church assessed community service as being extremely and very important to their local church. During the end line survey, the same assessment was made on whether this church was becoming an incarnational ministry. Most of the respondents agreed strongly that their church was becoming an incarnational ministry (see table 22).

Furthermore, assessing the church's willingness to build an ataye tea shop as a means of building a bridge between the church and its social context, and build relationship with our hostile neighbors, over half of the respondents supported this idea. Similar results were obtained about the church socializing with the Old-Timers Sport Association and this church's school with another hostile sister school. Though this assessment was an insider perspective of the local church, yet, this analysis points to the necessity for community and social services by the JF Church with their neighbors. I consider this as a fair assessment by the insiders themselves.

In support of this result, I discovered that the qualitative data analysis supported the finding above. In the theoretical coding of the two focus group discussions, I considered this practice as "the social ministry of the missional church" (see table 35). As for the theoretical coding of the joint focus group session, this is considered as giving back to the neighborhood (see AC 1, in table 36). Figure 5 highlights sharing God's blessings, providing scholarship for needy children, and providing vocational education in the neighborhood to help the IDPs acquire knowledge and skills. As the school year

came to an end, a group of Muslims parents and other neighbors who were assisted by the church's scholarship program converged at the church on July 15, 2019, during the church's worship service to extend thanks and appreciation to the church for awarding their children scholarships to attend the church's school from the time of enrollment up to graduation from high school. The service was wonderful and well attended by Muslims and order persons from five Christian denominations. The occasion was filled with applauses, as these parents spoke words of appreciation to the Jordan Fellowship Church. This is a testimony that this PAR project has begun yielding results. From these results so far, I learned that incarnating into the neighborhood to participate in social activities, render humanitarian services, and serve the community is a way of driving the focus of the church outward and establishing *perichoretic* relationship with neighbors.

<div align="center">The Trinitarian Concept for Cultivating Relationship</div>

The third finding which emerged during this research is considered to be the Trinitarian concept for cultivating relationship (see figure 10). This meant that there were relational issues between the church and their neighbors; therefore, the Trinitarian concept for cultivating relationships was employed in order to bring about a change. Most of the interventions in this research were about cultivating relationships. This concept is drawn from Trinitarian theology and was dealt with extensively as one of my theological lenses. However, it resurfaced throughout every stage of this PAR project. The problems we are studying are relational in nature. The baseline survey confirmed that there was a relationship problem. In our analysis above, the baseline and end line figures also showed that there was hostility between the church and its neighbors. This was confirmed when in the baseline survey we assessed the relationship between the church and its neighbors.

When the respondents from the church were asked to assess their love for their neighbors during the baseline assessment, it was surprising to note that a little over half of the respondents agreed that the church has a great deal of love for their neighbors. I expected that the number would have been more.

My argument is that the church's love for her neighbors should be 100% or unconditional, as Christ loves the church. Anything short of this signals the existence of a problem. From the church's perspective of their love for the neighbors, almost half was not in the affirmative. Again, this is can be considered as a fair assessment of the church by herself. Interestingly, after the interventions, the number of those who agreed that the church has a great deal of love for their neighbors increased by almost 23%. This is an indication that the interventions are helping the church to build relationships with their neighbors and, consequently, the church's perception about the neighborhood began to change. This point was assessed by another question which asked the respondents to determine how effective the interventions have affected the relationship between the church and her neighbors in the end line survey. The results from this assessment show that some work was done on the church's relationship with her neighbors. In my view, I learned through this study that building relationships in a hostile neighborhood will take time, so the church must be intentional and be willing to demonstrate it in concrete terms. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity played a pivotal role in this study and assisted us in crossing boundaries in order to adapt and establish relationships with people of diverse backgrounds.

The Church in Mission within the Neighborhood

The fourth finding, *the church in missions within the neighborhood,* emerged from all of the focus group discussions and the assessment which was carried out during the baseline and end line surveys (see figure 10). It became clearer that the missional church crosses boundaries to become incarnationally sensitive and attentive, in order to minister to people. This means that the church must become constantly responsive and attentive to the signs of opportunities of emerging into a given culture to minister or share the love of Christ to a people in need, as we did to the IDPs living in cemeteries. The church's attentive and responsive attitude hastened her incarnation, even in diverse neighborhoods like ours, to affect the lives of even those on the margin. Also, the life of the church began becoming a matter of living the incarnational life or principle.

The composition of Focus Group Two and the joint focus group session were intentionally carried out to establish relationships and assist us in coping with diversity. Muslims and Christians sat together in a Christian environment to discuss issues that were relevant to this study and the neighborhood. I later discovered that religious tolerance is a pivotal point in coping with diversities. This has never been done in my context. I learned to expand our relationship horizon to include people of diverse religious and social backgrounds. From my experience during this project, diversity should not be a barrier to coexisting with our neighbors. The result of both axial codes of Focus Groups One and Two, respectively, when grouped, outlined the mission of the church within the neighborhood, as incarnational ministry and coping with diversities (see table 35). From every indication, I learned that the result of this theoretical coding, which brought both these axial codes (incarnational ministry and coping with diversities),

facilitated the process of cultivating neighborly relationship with people around us. When focusing outward, it is the church's mission within the neighborhood to incarnate in order to minister Christ to the neighbors, as the church seeks opportunities to meet the needs of people in her broader context who may be IDPs, or those on the margin or periphery of life.

Mission in Daily Life

The fifth discovery was about making mission a daily life affair (see figure 10). Eventually, *mission in daily life* became another way of seeing this kind of ministry. It is the church's core identity, where all members are called to be missionaries in their neighborhood, schools, marketplaces, tea shops, and the world. This was my focus for the past few months. My visits to the tea shops created the space for me and my members to engage our neighbors in their daily lives.

Both assessments in the quantitative research support this claim. After several incarnational practices, coping with intentional practices of engaging people of diverse background in many of the interventions, the end line assessment revealed that this faith community is becoming an incarnational ministry. The baseline assessment revealed a lower number of respondents who agreed that this local church was an incarnational ministry, as compared to the number of respondents in the end line assessment that agreed that this local church was becoming an incarnational ministry. The increase signals an improvement in the church's incarnational practices or ministry. The remaining nineteen of the ninety-five valid respondents, accounting for 20% of the valid percent, agreed somewhat that this church is becoming an incarnational ministry. The percentages in the baseline survey were low as compared with the end line result.

The Divine and Human Components for Cultivating Neighborliness

The sixth finding is what I considered to be divine and human components for cultivating neighborliness (see figure 10). The research made known that every aspect of the ministry has both a divine and human component. These neighbors within these focus groups appreciated the infrastructure developments which were on-going on the church's school campus. Funding is required to effectively finance the missional church in the neighborhood. Most of the interventions were funded by this local assembly. One of the axial codes in Focus Group Two discussion was "empowering the church for service (see table 34). To adequately support social and community services, building an ataye tea shop and the church in mission within the community, funds have to be raised. Focused codes six and seven of the Focus Group Two discussions were "expanding the scope of our education programs," to include vocational skills learning and "fundraising to support social programs," respectively. These two focused codes produced an emerging action known as empowering the church for service (see table 34). Similarly, in the quantitative instrument, the end line survey reported that the church should invest in building an ataye tea shop for entertainment purposes, while in the baseline instrument the figures representing the "agree strongly" and "agree somewhat" responses, in favor of such investment were smaller. For investing in the IDPs' or Zoegoe ministry, the baseline survey reported a lower percentage, while in the end line, more respondents recommended that the church should invest in this ministry. It is certain that our visit to the ataye/tea shop and feeding the IDPs at the cemeteries triggered the increase in the number of respondents in the end line survey that agreed that the church continue to invest in these ministries. Hence, I learned that as a church we should be ready to

financially support social services or incarnational programs, because these services are capital intensive.

For the divine component for cultivating neighborliness, the research, through the combinations of focused codes in Focus Group One discussions, developed an axial code named divine empowerment (see table 32). I discovered in this study that the Holy Spirit became the channel through which spaces were opened to engage this PAR project. In Focus Group One theoretical coding, the incarnational ministry, breaking boundaries, and cultivating neighborliness drew their strength from the Holy Spirit, who empowers the church for service for every missional task. The Spirit of God is at work through dwelling in the Word and communal discernment. Should the church learn to hear the voice of God through the scriptures and prayer, it will become an ardent advantage for it to explore ways and means for engaging the missionary task of God in the church, neighborhood, and the world. Much earlier, in the two quantitative instruments, 81.1% of the valid percent in the baseline survey recommended strongly that the church should continue to practice this new missional practice of dwelling in the Word, so that it can sharpen its discernment and be able to hear the Spirit of God speak through Scripture. In the end line instrument, 88.4% recommended strongly that this new practice should continue.

<div align="center">Focusing Inward and Outward</div>

The seventh finding sees focusing inward as a complementary partner to focusing outward. All of the preceding findings were intended to assist the church to focus outward. However, we learned that focusing inward is an important factor in building a

vibrant missional church within a neighborhood. In order to accomplish this, I learned

that our inward focus should call for developing and improving the infrastructure of the
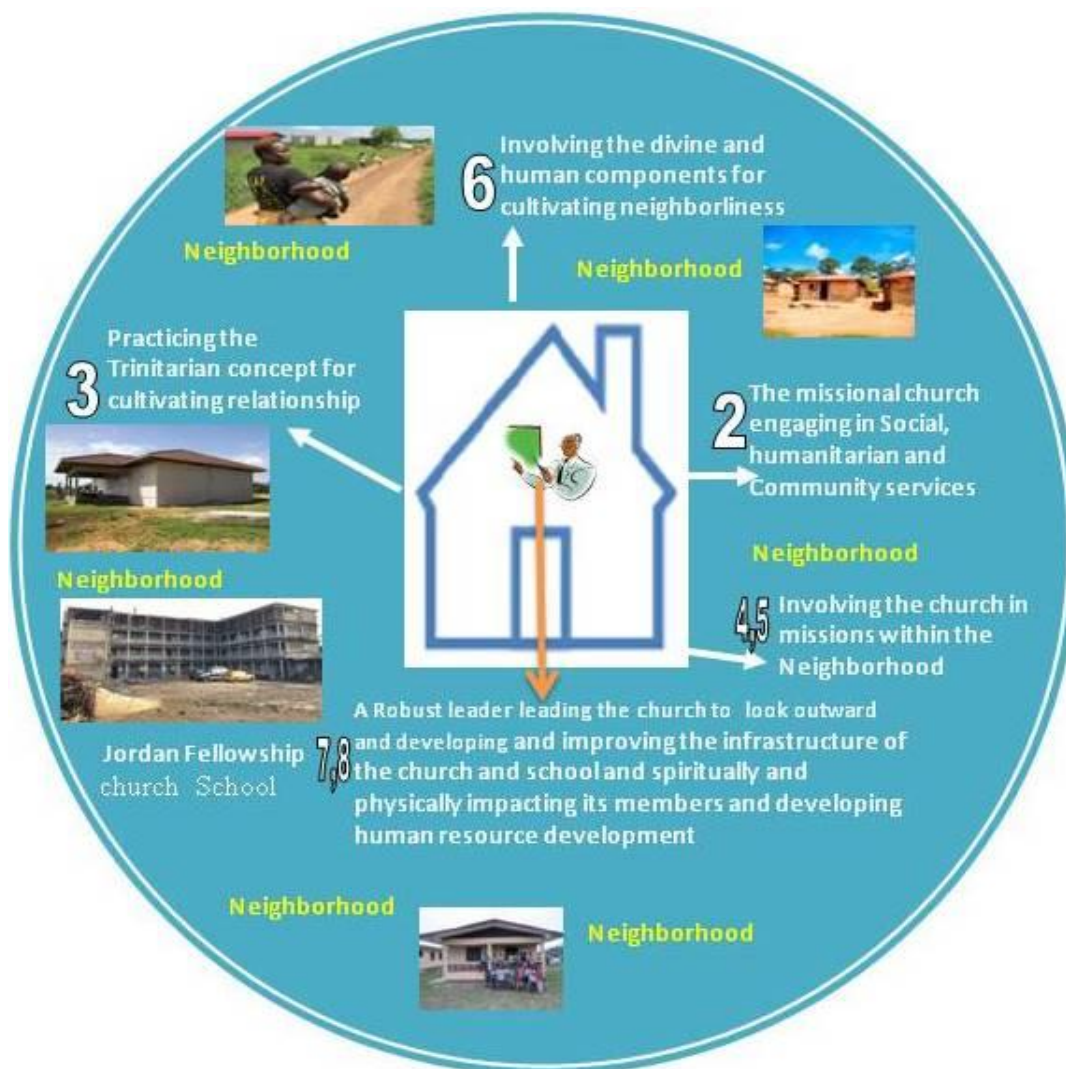
Figure 10. Outcome of the research[1]

church and school, spiritually impacting its members and human resource development

(see figures 9 and 10). As a result of these three achievements, this led the members of

the church and the neighbors to applaud the church for improving its educational

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[1] The outcome of the research displayed in figure 10 begins with the second outcome. The first outcome, the cause of the hostility, though very important, could not be diagramed.

facilities. Further, I learned that while the outward focus of the church is important, as seen in figures 5, 9, and 10, the church should not forget about its internal needs, which may be necessary for increasing, sustaining, and maintaining its effectiveness in carrying out *missio Dei,* and the person who is to lead in context in achieving this internal value is a Spirit-led, robust adaptive leader.

<div align="center">A Robust Adaptive Leader</div>

Finally, beneath these preceding outcomes is the eighth finding which focuses on the need for a robust adaptive leader (see figure 10). I learned that there must be a robust adaptive leader who leads in context and assists his faith community to cultivate relationship with neighbors. He must be willing to lead his people to change and not fear loss[2] (see adaptive leadership as a theoretical lens in chapter 3). Yes, in my context, he must be an adaptive leader who observes incarnational attentiveness and leads his or her church to be involved in social and community services in their neighborhood and who is willing to lead in a unique context, understanding the Trinitarian concept of *perichoresis,* and cultivating relationships. This adaptive leader also leads his church in missions within the neighborhood and discerns the human and divine components for cultivating neighborliness and acts accordingly, depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. Finally, such an adaptive leader will lead his people to develop and improve new and existing infrastructure of the church and school (see figure10).

I further discovered that all of the interventions in this research required adaptive leadership. This is what we tried to provide during this PAR project. We sought to motivate this church to change, in order to adapt a new culture, which required us to visit

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[2] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 94.

the cemeteries, sit with the Muslims, socialize with non-Christians, visit the ataye tea

shop and receive hospitality from my host, and we later became hospitable to them in

return. All of these were robust in nature and were done with the intention of creating

new boundaries that will incorporate diversity and eventually win some to Christ. I was

hopeful that these interventions were going to defuse the hostility with our neighbors and

win them to Christ and subsequently impact our township in positive ways. I cannot say

that we have a high success rate, but we are on the path heading for cultivating lasting

relationships with our neighbors.

What Is Important about These Findings?

The reasons below outline the importance of the findings. Through this study, we

were able to discern the cause of the hostility, provide a missional prescription for the

research question, see the emergence of a missional ecclesiology, see the correlations

amongst the lenses, and see how the Holy Spirit played a role in the study.

Discerning the Cause of the Hostility and the Missional Prescription

In the first place, the results of this research assisted me in identifying the cause of

the hostility between this local assembly and its neighbors. The quantitative and

qualitative data showed that the neighbors were not happy with the uncompromising

gospel which was preached. On the other hand, during the early period of this church

plant and being a young preacher, I was not mindful of the way I presented the word of

God. Sometimes, principles of homiletics, hermeneutics, and etiquette were not followed

in the delivery of sermons. There were also elements of jealousy or envy against this

local church which worsened the situation. However, the discovery of the causes of this

hostility helped us to find the right missional prescription to begin cultivating relationships with people who were hostile against the church.

From every indication, these findings have drawn our attention to the fact that this research has several missional implications and it provides several suggestions for enhancing the missionary motif of the church in missions—m*issio Dei*. Essential to fostering *missio Dei* in the church's neighborhood and the world, the findings lay out the necessity for the church to focus outward in its ambition to cultivate neighborliness in a hostile environment. This led the church to get involved in holistic ministries within its neighborhood, with the intention of ministering to the whole person and giving back to this neighborhood the blessings we have inherited from the Lord. Consequently, this outward focus of this local church has become a medium for cultivating neighborly relationships in this environment. However, the findings also revealed that the outward focus of the local church should go alongside with its inward focus. This is important because this bifocal lens will assist the church to focus in both directions, with emphasis on the outward focus of the church, since this external focus is what we had neglected in our ecclesiology.

<center>The Emergence of Missional Ecclesiology</center>

The findings have clearly shown that the interventions have begun enriching our emerging missional ecclesiology and have also begun motivating the church to engage in missional practices that enhance relationship with the triune God, local congregations, and those outside of the household of faith, including our neighbors who may be hostile towards us. In addition, the findings are serving as an impetus for engaging in the practice of providing missional leadership. This is intended to facilitate a trinitarian and

missional ecclesiology, with the intrinsic ability to assist us to lead in a diverse and unique context.

Relationships Amongst the Lenses

The results also show that there were relationships amongst the lenses. In some instances, one lens facilitated the others or served as a link for other lenses (see figures 7 and 8). The relationships were not intentional but they emerged as the research proceeded from one stage to the other. This is important because these relationships show in clear terms that there was cohesiveness and interrelationships amongst the lenses. For example, there was no way we could incarnate into a hostile neighborhood without adapting, forming relationships, being hospitable, or being willing to become neighborly as portrayed in Luke's gospel and break boundaries.

The Holy Spirit and the Research

Finally, the findings show that the Holy Spirit played an important role in the entire research process, especially in opening spaces for our local church to engage her neighbors. Three interventions emerged as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Findings from the Perspectives of the Theoretical, Biblical, and Theological Lenses

The lenses were selected to assist us answer the research question. So, analyzing the findings from the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses is important and helps us to see how the lenses play a pivotal role in this PAR project and what emerged as the outcomes of this study.

The Theoretical Lenses

From the theoretical perspective, this PAR project made it clear that inherent in missional theology is adaptive change theory. I sought to establish in this research that the incarnational lens, *kenosis,* and divine *perichoresis* are adaptive in nature. Absolutely, when the triune God in His divine effort to bridge the hostile gap between man and his creator was planned in eternity past, they had to adapt in order to facilitate the process. Man could not reach God if this adaptation of the triune God had not taken place. Similarly, I could not lead during this project without becoming a robust adaptive leader, who was willing to incarnate into a diverse neighborhood of people to form relationships.

In so doing, there was a shift in the ecclesiology of this local church (see chapter 2). Though not perfect, we are learning to practice love and peace with each other and our neighbors, including the Zoegoes and those at the margin. Also, this PAR project has been designed in a way that we were motivated to move forward and learn/adopt new ways in order to accommodate new challenges in this 21st century. Thus, our ecclesiology now contains opportunities for a Spirit-led partnership between our local church and neighbors, especially those who are on the margin.

Therefore, it became obvious that we established a link between "taking on the nature of a stranger in need and our capacity to discern what God was up to in our world today."[3] When we had to improve the way we do church and carry out the social practice of hospitality and receive hospitality in return, and cross boundaries by visiting where the poor, hungry, and broken hearted can be found, we became like the triune God who

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[3]Roxburgh, 131.

incarnated by taking on the form of man to meet us where we were to redeem us. We included our neighbors in the discerning process and made them see their relevance in our neighborhood. In the process, we were very hospitable to them during the discerning process and focus group discussions. During the *ataye* shop visit, my neighbors were hospitable to me and I returned their hospitality by underwriting the cost of the entertainment for the night. Absolutely, in a way, this was missional theology which was *expressed* in missional ecclesiology, and they both have their roots in Trinitarian theology.

The Biblical Lenses

From the biblical perspective, the findings and the outcomes came as a result of practicing neighborliness, as it is being demonstrated in the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35) and the intentional practice of boundary breaking. What were the underlying factors behind these intentional practices? As a local church, we had to reclaim the language of love, unity, and communion, as tools for building a relationship with our neighbors and proclaiming love within and beyond our community. The extent of our neighborliness broke traditional boundaries and affected those on the margins, like the Good Samaritan in the Bible (Luke 10:30-35). Again, we were intentional about this. We established a new form of ministry that transcended the many traditional and cultural boundaries, which deepened our local church's theological, ecclesiological, and missional conversations and perspectives. This, of course, led us to an associational lifestyle that affected our identity. According to Peter Block, John McKnight, who studied communities for thirty years, discovered that community is built most powerfully by what he calls an associational life, referring to the countless ways citizens come together

to do good work and serve the public interest (irrespective of color, race, tribe, or social status).[4] In doing this, we became willing to love as God so loved us, and have communion within our community and neighborhood. We were willing to unite and associate with those outside our community as the triune God is united in purpose and were also willing to engage in fellowship with those outside of our comfort zones who have not joined us, just as the triune God is united in diversity. By doing this during this PAR project, we broke boundaries that served as hindrances for building relationships with neighbors. Moreover, consistent with this conversation, there were several missional practices and habits we incorporated in this PAR project and the life of our local church which assisted us in becoming neighborly and in boundary breaking (see chapter 5).

The Theological Lenses

Finally, from the theological perspective, the divine *perichoresis* and incarnational lenses contributed immensely to this study and assisted us to cultivate relationships with our neighbors. The economic trinity, the doctrine that teaches how the persons of the triune God relate to each other in the arrangements of their activities, roles, in relationship to the world, became one of the supporting doctrines, from which divine *perichoresis*, the relational attribute of the triune God, helped us foster and build relationship with our neighbors. Most of the interventions were participatory and relational in nature. In the Trinitarian relationality, the Father sent the Son and the Son and Father sent the Holy Spirit.[5] Therefore, it became clearer during my research that Trinitarian theology, the foundation for missional theology, is based on being in

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[4] Block, 43.

[5] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016), 399.

relationship.[6] Accordingly, where the Trinity is a relational and participatory or a

perichoretic community of three divine persons who are mutually depending on each

other with a shared life, our local church had to learn to participate in this shared life with

our neighbors in concrete terms. I discovered that for leadership to be effective and

successful during this research, it had to be about fostering relationships between the

local church and its neighbors. This Trinitarian relationship, which sets the basis for this

"paradigm of participation,"[7] has its roots in the economic trinity and the social doctrine

of the Trinity. It is the core component of missional leadership that our local church has

been practicing during the various interventions designed for this PAR project.

> Participation is also God's mutual, *perichoretic* participatory life in the trinity;
> Christ participation in human life and suffering in the incarnation and passion; our
> participation through Christ and the power of the spirit in mission in the lives of
> our neighbors and our promised participation in Christ's resurrection and eternal
> communion with the Trinity.[8]

Missional leadership is participatory and *perichoretic* in the sense that leadership

and the neighborhood or world must move together in a dance. This demonstrates the

kenotic nature of God, where the three persons empty themselves into one another, and in

turn into humanity and all of creation. Therefore, the incarnational lens in my study

which draws its strength from missional theology and Trinitarian theology assisted our

community to incarnate and immerse in our neighborhood of diverse cultures (Zoegoe,

Muslims, Vais, Americo-Liberians) of people for the purpose of participating in *missio*

Dei by ministering to their needs and subsequently build relationships in a hostile

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[6] LaCugna, God for Us, 57.

[7] Dwight J. Zscheile, *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 25.

[8] Ibid., 26.

environment. If leadership is not *perichoretic*, participatory and incarnational then it is not missional. The universe is a participatory habitation, where variety and diversity must coexist for the mutual benefits of the entire race.

This is why, during this PAR project, the relationality and the participatory nature of the Trinity challenged us, as a community, to positively engage our neighbors or context with much flexibility, anticipating that we were going to cultivate missional leadership, participate in *missio Dei* by ministering to the Zoegoes and the less fortunate in our context, and build mutual relationships with our neighbors and beyond. I have discovered very well that missional leadership is about shaping the imagination of the congregation, for the sole purpose of changing a culture through adaptive leadership, where a local church can discern God's activities amongst them and their neighborhood, adapt and be involved in the practice of social hospitality with their neighbors, in order to effect positive change within their context. This change, as I saw it, was brought about by the Holy Spirit and the ability of our local church to be willing to break traditional, geographical, social, and religious boundaries and incarnate into our neighborhood to form *perichoretic* relationships with our neighbors. Consequently, our ecclesiology is now beginning to foster a trinitarian fellowship, which is being enriched by several components of missional theology.

This type of "Trinitarian fellowship" or *koinonia*,[9] enhances the missional ideology for today's church. It is expedient to note that the nature of the church, as a "communion" of people, is related to the very being of the triune God.[10] Therefore, this

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[9] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 189.

[10] Cheryl M. Peterson, *Who is the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 9.

fellowship among the congregants was fundamental to the social life of this church and was evidenced by sporting activities, visits to the *ataye* (tea) shop, parade, community service, and focus group meetings held during this research period. So, what is this local assembly learning from her neighbors about what God is up to in the world? The result emanating from this study suggests that God is already ahead of us in the world and in our neighborhood. The qualitative data have shown that our neighbors have helped us to see areas in which we need to help partner with our neighbors in this transformation.

In addition, love, unity, communion, *perichoresis* (relationship), and *koinonia* are closely related and they are what helped us to attend to the local church's missional ecclesiology. Volf calls this, "trinitarian fellowship."[11] I have learned that the ecclesiology of this local assembly should include three factors of the doctrine of divine *perichoresis*: (1) the relationship, love, unity, and *koinonia* between God and His People (the local church); (2) the relationship, love, unity, and *koinonia* amongst God's people (the local members themselves); and (3) the relationship, love, unity, and *koinonia* between God's people (the local church) and our neighbors, especially those on the margin or periphery of our neighborhood and community who may be hostile towards us. From the theological perspective, these three factors are being interwoven into our ecclesiology, as we strive to model our ecclesiology based on the communion of the three persons within the Trinity, with emphasis on both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of our *perichoretic* relationship with our triune God. Our neighbors will know that we are Christians by our love, unity, and communion/*koinonia*. These have become the driving

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[11] Volf, 189.

force behind our missionality, thus assisting us to break boundaries and incarnate into our context and the world, in order to participate in *missio Dei*.

In neighborhoods and communities in Liberia I would like to agree with Lamin Sanneh, who believes that "Christianity is a preferential option for the poor."[12] The poor are most often opened up to the Gospel. The conversion of Africans to Christianity came predominantly from among the poor and marginalized.[13] It is this space we have been incarnating into, in order to transform our neighbors and world through our love, fellowship, and humanitarian services. The poor can be found in our markets, burial grounds, streets corners, tea shops, schools, etc. Again, the word "incarnation" denotes the *kenosis* or self-emptying. This is a true identity of the triune God and His missional church. In this emerging ecclesiology, a true sense of humility has begun helping us to cultivate the space where people can see what God is doing among us. During this PAR project, going to the graveyards and fellowshipping with our neighbors had to require breaking boundaries or going beyond neat boundaries to join God in our neighborhood. God is about something in the world and our neighborhood that is far bigger than the confines of our church.[14] Therefore, our neighbors have actually helped us to know how we can listen to outsiders for their hunger, dreams, and aspirations. This poverty-stricken neighborhood, which is being heavily influenced by substance abuse, is already in need of help. The Lord has called us to have shared life with the poor in our neighborhood. The implication is, in missional theology, God moves towards us, so that in missional

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[12] Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity*? (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. EerdmansPublishing Company, 2003), 81.

[13] Ibid., 15.

[14] Roxburgh 113.

ecclesiology, we can move toward each other and others on the periphery or margin. Such a situation provides us the opportunity to create a space and partner with our neighborhood in alleviating some of the struggles they have identified as being a potential threat to their existence, communities, and neighborhoods.

This implies that in order to incarnate into our neighborhood, we had to take the culture and society of those not yet within our community of faith as seriously as we do those who are already part of us. Therefore, in the process of incarnating amongst our neighbors, planning with those persons outside of our community of faith who are yet to become a part of the community of the faithful, but whom we believe God is calling us to serve in mission, was essential to faithful congregational life.[15] Therefore, during some of the interventions and this doctoral program, we had the opportunity to sit with them and learn their stories, sometimes with tears setting in my eyes. When we arrived at the tea shop during one of the interventions, I was quick to take responsibility for providing tea for the night, but I was quickly halted temporarily by the moderator for the night. I was then offered a glass of tea as a tradition which was usually observed by this forum. I had previously thought of carrying my mug in order to observe hygiene purposes, but my wife advised me not do so because the act would have defeated my purpose. Therefore, I broke neat boundaries, incarnated, and became very relational as I drank from their mug. Praise God the mug was clean. I had a fruitful discussion with them. It is obvious that I had to adapt in order to participate and receive hospitality. Thereafter, I became hospitable, as I took responsibility for the cost of the entire evening.

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[15]Keifert, *The Trinity and Congregational Planning*, 290.

Limits of Generalizing from these Findings

The results of these social science experiments are unique to the Jordan Fellowship Church, considering the short duration of this PAR project (8 months). The internal and external circumstances surrounding the context of this local church may differ from any other church that may decide to replicate these experiments, with the same interventions outlined in this research. Therefore, no portion of this research may be replicated in any context by carrying out the same interventions and be expected to yield the same results. Any congregation having a similar research question to answer will need to carefully study its context, find lenses and methodology that are unique and applicable to them, and can provide answers to their research question.

This study emerged from the lead pastor of this local church and was supported by the church executive committee and the entire membership, with the intention of cultivating relationships with neighbors or people who may be hostile to their faith community. Therefore, this research was limited to the study of one local church in relationship with her neighbors in a particular locale. This local church has a very unique history, which contributed to understanding the complexities surrounding the research question and the internal and external context of this church. All data were gathered from the full and associate members of the Jordan Fellowship Church (internal context) and the Solapee neighborhood (external or broader context). The local church provided the insider perspective, while the neighborhood provided the outsider perspective.

Other Questions Raised by this Research

Looking at the findings in this chapter, several questions for further research emerged. From the perspective of cultivating relationship with hostile neighbor, what

further steps can the church take to continue to cultivate relationships with neighbors who may still be in hostility with the church? It is apparent that all will not be won over and we will need to live with them in the same neighborhood. Since this local assembly exists in collaboration with other churches, how can she network with neighboring churches in order to cultivate relationships amongst them and their neighbors?

At the end of this research, I continue to wonder whether other churches are experiencing this same hostility from their neighbors in similar context. If yes, what results would emerge if other churches within this same context carry out the same social science study in their neighborhood?

Conclusion

In this Participatory Action Research project, it has been affirmed that the missional practices or interventions during the various stages of this study were effective ways of cultivating the missional practice of neighborliness, and bringing about adaptive change that resulted in enhancing interpersonal relationships, and solving the problem of hostility between the Solapee neighborhood and the Jordan Fellowship Church. Seeing these missional interventions from the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses, and practicing them became the answers to the research question. The research also revealed that the solution to this adaptive challenge is coming about by deep cultural changes within our church, which is assisting us to begin bridging the gaps between us and our neighbors.

Two major factors have been at the center of this adaptive change. They are the divine and human factors. First, for the divine, the Holy Spirit was instrumental in opening various spaces in order to engage our neighbors. To play sports, parade with our

hostile neighbors, serve the community through relief, and social and community services, it had to be the working of the Holy Spirit. In addition, three interventions emerged in the middle of the research which brought about a positive shift in our relationships with our neighbors. This can be attributed to the working of the Holy Spirit in the process.

The second is the human factor. While it is true that the Triune God is the ultimate source of reconciliation, and He works through the Holy Spirit to break boundaries, and assist the church to incarnate in complex cultural environments, there will always be a human factor in our participation in *missio Dei*. This human factor cannot be carried out by angels. God in His ultimate wisdom has destined the human race to partner with Him in fulfilling *missio Dei* on earth. We are partners with the Triune God in fulfilling God's mission in our neighborhoods and beyond. Therefore, as a leader, depending on the Holy Spirit, the human factor called for me to become a robust adaptive, biblical, and theological leader in leading in context to bring about this adaptive change between our neighbors and us.

My response in taking this adaptive leap of faith has been, here am I. Use me! (Isaiah 6:8, paraphrased). As a missional leader, I became willing and robust in leading this adaptive change, and grounded in this missional hermeneutics of leadership. The research clearly shows this human factor in play when answering the research question. In so doing, this Participatory Action Research and D.Min. program has influenced me, as a person and my leadership as well.

EPILOGUE

Ways in Which This Research and D.Min. Process Has Influenced Me

Without a doubt, this research and D.Min. process has influenced me greatly. I consider the opportunity of attending Luther Seminary as one of the best and greatest things that happened to me in my theological, educational, and leadership journeys. Listed below are some of the ways I was influenced.

Opened up to Diversity

First, I have learned to open up to people who may be having diverse opinions and perspectives. For me to engage some of my neighbors who may have hated and persecuted us or to provide leadership in the midst of hate became my growing edge. I once felt that it was impossible to reach them with the gospel or feed those Zoegoes that stole and looted our generators, musical instruments, and other properties and fellowshipped with people who we may have considered as sinners. From every indication, I am at one of my growing edges, where as a missional leader, I am beginning to pay back their hatred and resentment with love and kindness. As a local church, we never dreamed of engaging our neighborhood and visiting our brothers and sisters at the cemeteries, visiting the ataye (tea) shops, playing the Solapee Oldtimers, and most of all engaging in a reconciliatory parade and tournament with our former archrivals, Sonie High School. All of these are happening because of what the Holy Spirit is doing during this study. This D.Min. research is assisting this local church to nurture/sustain a

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missional imagination, which is already helping to shape our ecclesiology. Thus, change is becoming visible.

Learn to Adapt First

If the people must change, I must change first and this change must be reflected in my values, characters, behavior, and pastoral identity. I have begun to rethink my spiritual journey and identity in this anxious and insecure age wherein we are experiencing this adaptive challenge, environmental insecurity, loss of common spaces, vanishing and hostile neighbors, family disintegration, etc. I am receiving fresh breath from "*Ruach*" that will enable me to accommodate this change. I am strongly convinced that this is our season to impact this township in a very meaningful way that even people who hated us will have the space to be heard. This spiritual formation has begun enabling me to discern God's reign in this township, especially this target group, and also assist me to be conformed to Christ through the power of the Spirit that will adequately prepare me to participate in God's missional life, the way of the cross.[1]

Learning to Become a Listening Leader

As a person, my ability to listen has been poor. I have always seen discernment in light of one of the nine spiritual gifts (the discernment of spirits). But as we engaged in "dwelling in the Word," during each cohort's session and this PAR project, I have begun appreciating this exercise and how it has broadened my discernment. My improved listening ability has impacted the way I listen to God in prayer, the Word, to one another, strangers, and to the world. The Spirit of God has been speaking through these

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[1] Dwight J. Zscheile, "Spiritual Formation for Mission" (lecture and Discussion, Doctor of Ministry in CML Cohort Session, Luther Seminary, Minnesota, January 23, 2017).

instruments. I am now aware that the "the first step to reconstructing what we think we know about the world is listening to the voices—the stories—of those at the margins"[2] (the helpless, hungry, destitute, sick, and the homeless). This is the very essence of missional leadership, in which I am now being prepared to serve primarily not the church alone, but also help the church engage my neighbors and the world.

The Ways This Research and D.Min. Process Has Influenced My Leadership

I cannot over-emphasize how this PAR project and DMin study has greatly influenced me as a person and my ability to serve as a missional leader. I am not the way I enrolled at Luther Seminary four years ago. I now have a new perspective and approach to leadership, a new leadership philosophy that is participatory and interpretative, and I have integrated three fundamental concepts into this new missional leadership paradigm.

A New Perspective and Approach to Leadership

I now have a different perspective or approach to leadership. Gleaning from the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses of this research, I am persuaded that a biblical and theological framework for missional leadership in this post-modern era must be theoretically informed. This research and D.Min. study have proven that social sciences and other related fields have made significant contribution to this emerging leadership paradigm for the 21st century church. From the merger of the theoretical, biblical, and theological lenses in this research, I have discovered that adaptive leadership and the social practice of hospitality are the bedrock upon which the biblical and theological lenses, these various leadership theories and the missional leadership, rest. The point is,

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[2] Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1977), 351.

the game has changed![3] In contrast to the old leadership paradigm, I have developed a mindset, "that leading requires new leadership skills around adaptability to deal with change."[4]

<p style="text-align:center">Participatory and Interpretative Leadership</p>

The practice of providing missional leadership which facilitated a trinitarian and missional ecclesiology during this study and interventions became a high point as I engaged myself in this doctoral project. It is worth noting that the success of any organization or community depends on the paradigm of leadership which is in place. It is not possible to apply leadership methodologies of the 17th and 18th centuries in leading in context for the 21st century. Times, contexts, and people are changing, and at the same time the world is experiencing cultural integration, where cultural contexts of many places are being influenced by other cultures. Absolutely, from success rating in my nation and community, the old paradigms where "the clergy were often understood to representing Christ to the congregation, rather than the whole congregation representing Christ to the world in the power of the Spirit"[5] has expired. Hierarchical, priest, pedagogue, and professional styles of leadership, must give way to what Van Gelder and Zscheile call participatory leadership.[6] This type of leadership can make the missional

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[3] Hunter III, 11.

[4] Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation*, 201.

[5] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 155.

[6] Ibid., 155.

church more versatile and can also easily engage her neighbors to ascertain their perspectives. "There is power in knowing other perspective-multiple perspectives."[7]

My approach to this kind of leadership for the missional church is now grounded on the premise of *missio Dei,* trinitarian ecclesiology, or the missional conversation. As a leader in the missional paradigm of leadership, I must not seek to control, dictate, or monopolize the church's ministry, but rather intentionally cultivate an authentic Christian community to enhance spiritual and missional discernment for the mission of God in our neighborhood, the larger community, and the world. Not with a high passing mark, nevertheless, I tried to practice this leadership during this research period. This style of leadership is also considered interpretative leadership. In the interpretative leadership paradigm, the leader creates intentional spaces, as was practiced during our interventions. I love the way Zscheile puts it in his book, *The Agile Church*:

> Interpretative leadership entails cultivating intentional spaces for the practice of listening, storytelling, and peer learning. It means inviting people across differences together into common spaces of deliberation and inquiry for the sake of discerning who we are in God, where we are in our context, and where God is calling us to God.[8]

This type of leadership is reflected in the triune God, where the Trinity is seen as a divine leadership community and how each person of the Trinity shares deeply in the other's life and work. All three persons of the triune God exercise authority in complimentary ways, just as the trinitarian missional theology points toward *koinonia* or communion, a collaborative leadership paradigm in which different persons together use

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[7] Jennifer G. Berger and Keith Johnson, *Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 21.

[8] Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Agile Church* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), 125.

their God-given gifts to manage, lead, and influence the community toward deeper involvement in what God is doing in our neighborhood and the world.[9]

Missional Leadership as an Integration of Three Fundamental Concepts

My focus now is to be able to see missional leadership as an integration of missional ecclesiology, missional theology, and trinitarian theology, where the view of God, church, ministry, and leadership must be seen from a missional perspective; or God, church, leadership, and ministry must be integrated in forming this new missional leadership paradigm. It is this integrated ecclesiology that makes leadership missional. When the church, leadership, ministry, and God get into conversation, within the framework of trinitarian theology, missional ecclesiology becomes the product and the environment for the birth of missional leadership.

In addition, the missional conversation encourages trinitarian relationships, with relational influence, interpretative or participatory kind of leadership, and providing freedom and open spaces for the congregants, our neighbors, and the voices of the people at the margin. Moreover, I am also beginning to view missional leadership in terms of the trinitarian hermeneutics, which should lead a missional leader to think and lead in terms of relationships and internal (local church) and external (neighborhood) communities.[10] All these collective actions result in multiple efforts that have assisted our local church to answer the research question. It is therefore certain that as a leader in this century, I can

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[9] Van Gelder and Zscheile, 157.

[10] Moltmann, 19.

obtain better results by promoting or creating stronger relationships with all persons within and without my domain.[11]

Providing Leadership that Creates Intentional Spaces for Congregational Discernment

I have continued to facilitate the creation of intentional spaces for the Jordan Fellowship Church community to carry on congregational discernment and enhance learning, while embracing imperfection and failures, trying things out or experimenting and pushing boundaries. This is intended to create spaces that will incorporate those who we suppose do not love us to be heard - but all within shared structures and patterns. Furthermore, as a Spirit-led adaptive leader, my goal is to cultivate an environment in which the people can engage in learning, discovery, experimentation, and adaptation to address this challenge. All of this is about collaboration and accompaniment and freedom and innovation.[12]

The Spirit has been a major factor in the discernment process during this project; and since the church is always forming (missional) and reforming (confessional),[13] congregational discernment then becomes a major factor that fosters deeper participation in the Spirit's movement in our midst. As I had the opportunity to go through this study, the Spirit of God has been at work in me, shaping me into an academic and leadership vessel of honor. In addition, the missional movement, in collaboration with this study,

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[11] Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 343.

[12] Zscheile. *The Agile Church*, 107.

[13] Craig van Gelder , *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 54.

has also challenged me to use communicative practices of discernment as the Spirit leads me.[14]

My leadership has been influenced to the extent that our local church is beginning to engage our external context continuously, in order to re-contextualize our ministries due to the constant change in our demography and context. Hence, the Spirit is already at work in our local church and neighborhood, to the point that this church has begun to discern what God has been up to or doing in our neighborhood. Therefore, my approach to ministry is now refined. This is where, as a faith community, and more importantly, I am now beginning to look at our context with theological lenses, in order to lead the church in seeking to discern the work of God in relation to the dynamic changes that are taking place within the Solapee neighborhood context.[15]

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[14] Mary Sue Dehmlow Dreier, *Created and Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2013), 148.

[15]Ibid., 59.

APPENDIX A: IMPLIED CONSENT LETTER FOR THE BASELINE AND END
LINE SURVEYS

October 13, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

You are invited to participate in a study of how the Jordan Fellowship Church can cultivate the practice of neighborliness in order to live in *a perichoretic* relationship with our neighbors. I hope to learn why a number of our neighbors appears to be hostile towards us, and in the wake of this hostility, learn how to adapt a change process which will assist us to become and behave neighborly towards them. You were selected as a possible participant on the basis that you are an integral part of this community and neighborhood and on your willingness to be interviewed.

If you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed survey. Your return of this survey is implied consent. It will take about thirty minutes to complete the survey. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to cultivate neighborliness between our neighbors and us. Any discomfort or inconvenience to you derives only from the amount of time taken to complete the survey.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with the JFC or Luther Seminary. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask. If you have additional questions later, you may contact me at the JFC

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Abenda F. Tamba

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Cultivating the practice of Neighborliness in the Jordan Fellowship Church: A Missional Practice of Living in a Perichoretic Relationship with Neighbors

You are invited to be in a research study about how the Jordan Fellowship Church can cultivate the practice of neighborliness in order to live in a *perichoretic* relationship with their neighbors. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an integral part of this community and neighborhood, and based on your willingness to be interviewed. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by me, in collaboration with my Participatory Action Research team, as part of my Doctor of Ministry thesis project in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary".
My advisors are Dr. Daniel Anderson and Dr. Alvin Luedke

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to identify reasons why our neighbors appears hostile towards our community and come up with interventions which will assist us to live in *perichoretic* relationship with them. :

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to be aware of the followings:
1. Be available to participate in two focus groups discussions. The focus group discussion will be an hour long in which participants will be gathered to discuss questions relevant to the study. I will serve as the facilitator for the panel or focus group discussions.

2. The focus group discussions will be recorded and subsequently transcribed, observing confidentiality of personal identity.

3. Responses from the questionnaires and excerpts from the focus groups' discussions which will be helpful to this project will be quoted anonymously.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
The study has a minor risk: First, there may be a display of emotional expressions, as I seek to bring into conversation our community and neighbors or people of diverse religious and cultural make-ups around the table, who may have been hostile towards us. Care will be taken in making sure that these friendly panel discussions do not go out of hand. If for any reason any of these sessions get out of hand, they will be cut off and rescheduled, with appropriate measures taken to avoid the repetition of any emotional and psychological expression during the next session.

As a result of this project, it is hoped our community and neighborhood will eventually become united. Also, our goal is to be able to design means or opportunity that our community can become the hands and feet of Jesus in this virtual township.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept confidential. If I publish any type of report, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All data will be kept in a locked file in pastor's office; only my advisor, Dr. Daniel Anderson and Dr. Alvin Luedke , and I will have access to the data and, if applicable, any tape or video recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed. While I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality, anonymity cannot be guaranteed (due to the small number to be studied. All members of my PAR team will sign a confidentiality form.

If tape recordings or videotapes are made, only I and my advisors will have access to it for a duration of one year and the half, after my thesis defense and will be destroyed three years after my graduation. However, if I decide to retain the recordings, video tapes or excerpts of any confidential material, the raw material will be retained but all identifying information removed by the April 30, 2022.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Luther Seminary and/ or with other cooperating institutions, if any. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher(s) conducting this study is Abenda F. Tamba.   You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at the JFC.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____   Date _____

Signature of investigator _____Date_____

(If audiotaping or videotaping is used, add :)

I consent to be audiotaped (or videotaped):

Signature _____ Date_____

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations in the published thesis document.

Signature _____ Date_____

APPENDIX C: A BASELINE CONGREGATIONAL QUANTITATIVE
QUESTIONNAIRE

A Baseline questionnaire for a Quantitative research for the Jordan Fellowship Church's
relationship with their neighbors

I have read the information about this survey and have participated in the orientation
designed to further clarify questions I have had and have therefore consented to
participate in this survey without pressure or force.

PLEASE CHECK OR FILLED IN THE RIGHT ANSWER IN THE BLANK SPACES
PROVIDED

1. What is your age range?
   - _____ 18-20 years old
   - _____ 21-25 years old
   - _____ 26-30 years old
   - _____ 31-35 years old
   - _____ 36-40 years old
   - _____ 41-45 years old
   - _____ 46-50 years old
   - _____ 51-55 years old
   - _____ 56-60 years old
   - _____ 61-65 years old
   - _____ 66 and above

2. What is your gender?
   - Male _____
   - Female _____

3. What is your religious affiliation
   - Christianity _____
   - Muslim _____
   - African Traditional Religion _____
   - Other_____ Provide Name _____
   - Does not have a religion _____
   - If Christianity, provide the name of the denomination
     _____

4. What is your Tribe?
   - Please name the tribe you belong to _____
   - Americo- Liberian _____

5. The Jordan Fellowship Church ministry has positively impacted the township in some way (s)?
   - ____ Agree strongly
   - ____ Agree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree strongly

6. Please explain how

   _____
   _____
   _____

7. This ministry has positively impacted me in some ways?
   - ____ Agree strongly
   - ____ Agree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree strongly

8. How? _____
   _____

9. How effective has the JFC been in doing the following:

	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not at all effective
Biblical preaching on Neighborliness	_____	_____	_____
Teachings	_____	_____	_____
Dwelling in the word	_____	_____	_____
Seminar	_____	_____	_____
Soccer fellowship b/w Jordan Fellowship Church and Old Timers Of our neighborhood	_____	_____	_____
Hospitality to neighbors	_____	_____	_____
Witnessing	_____	_____	_____
Relationship with neighbors	_____	_____	_____

10. Where incarnational ministry is when a person or community immerses in a culture or a diverse neighborhood of people for the purpose of ministering to their spiritual and physical needs, can we affirm that the Jordan Fellowship Church is an incarnational ministry in Solapee?
    - ____ Agree strongly
    - ____ Agree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree strongly

11. How would you rate the importance of our church involvement in community services?
    - ____ Extremely important
    - ____ Very important
    - ____ Somewhat Important
    - ____ Not at all important

12. Which one of the following statements best describes why our neighbors hate or resent us?
    - ____ The way we preach the word is irritating
    - ____ Because they envy or jealous us
    - ____ Because we do not fellowship or identify with them
    - ____ Because we are not friendly or neighborly
    - ____ Because we are mean and not hospitable to our neighbors
      - Other Options
        _____

13. How effective has our church been in our witness to our neighbors?
    - ____ Strongly effective
    - ____ Somewhat effective
    - ____ Somewhat not effective
    - ____ Strongly not effective

14. I recommend that the church invest resources in the ministry to the Zoegoes (drug addicts that live in the grave yards in our neighborhood and are related to our neighbors)?
    - ____ Recommend strongly
    - ____ Recommend somewhat
    - ____ Somewhat do not recommend
    - ____ Strongly do not recommend

15. I Support the idea that we build a tea shop for entertainment and recreational purposes, as a way of bridging gaps between our neighbors and us?
    - ____ Agree strongly
    - ____ Agree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree strongly

16. I recommend that we continue to practice Dwelling in the word, as we had practiced in recent times?
    - ____ Recommend strongly
    - ____ Recommend somewhat
    - ____ Somewhat do not recommend
    - ____ strongly do not recommend

17. I recommend that we continue to practice Dwelling in the world, as we had practiced in recent times?
    • _____ Recommend strongly
    • _____ Recommend somewhat
    • _____ Somewhat do not recommend
    • _____ strongly do not recommend

18. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate the Jordan Fellowship Church love for their neighbors?
    No love   1   2   3   4   5 Great deal of love

19. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate our neighbors love for our community?
    No love   1   2   3   4   5 Great deal of love

20. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means not hostile and "5" means very hostile, how would you rate our neighbor's hostility towards our community?
    Not hostile towards us   1   2   3   4   5 Very hostile towards us

21. Is there anything you would like to tell us that may not have been covered in this questionnaire?_____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

An End line questionnaire for a Quantitative research for the JFC's relationship with their neighbors

PLEASE CHECK OR FILLED IN THE RIGHT ANSWERS IN THE BLANK SPACES PROVIDED

1. What is your age range?
   - _____ 18- 20 years old
   - _____ 21-25 years old
   - _____ 26-30 years old
   - _____ 31-35 years old
   - _____ 36-40 years old
   - _____ 41-45 years old
   - _____ 46-50 years old
   - _____ 51-55 years old
   - _____ 56-60 years old
   - _____ 61-65 years old
   - _____ 66 and above

2. What is your gender?
   - Male _____
   - Female _____

3. What is your religious affiliation
   - Christianity _____
   - Muslim _____
   - African Traditional Religion _____
   - Other _____ Provide Name _____
   - Does not have a religion _____
   - If Christianity, provide the name of the denomination _____

4. What is your Tribe?
   - Please name the tribe you belong to _____
   - Americo- Liberian _____
   - Nationality _____

5. The Jordan Fellowship Church ministry has positively impacted the township in any way?
   - _____ Agree strongly

- ____ Agree somewhat
- ____ Disagree somewhat
- ____ Disagree strongly

6. Please explain how

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. This Ministry has positively impacted me in some way(s)?
   - ____ Agree strongly
   - ____ Agree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree strongly

8. How?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How effective has the following interventions affected our relationship with our neighbors

	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not at all effective
Biblical preaching on Neighborliness	_____	_____	_____
Teachings	_____	_____	_____
Dwelling in the word	_____	_____	_____
Seminar	_____	_____	_____
Soccer fellowship b/w Jordan Fellowship Church and Old Timers Of our neighborhood	_____	_____	_____
Hospitality	_____	_____	_____
Witnessing	_____	_____	_____
Relationship	_____	_____	_____

10. Now we can confirm that the Jordan Fellowship Church is becoming an incarnational ministry in Solapee
   - ____ Agree strongly
   - ____ Agree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree somewhat
   - ____ Disagree strongly

   Do you care to explain further? _____
   _____

11. After five months of incarnational ministry, the Jordan Fellowship Church ministry positively impacted the township in some ways or become neighborly?
- _____ Agree strongly
- _____ Agree somewhat
- _____ Disagree somewhat
- _____ Disagree strongly
- Do you care to explain

  _____

  _____

  _____

12. How would you rate the importance of our church involvement in community services?
- _____ Extremely important
- _____ Very important
- _____ Somewhat Important
- _____ Not at all important

13. Which one of the following statements best describes why our neighbors hate or resent us?
- _____ The way we preach the word is irritating
- _____ Because they envy or jealous us
- _____ Because we do not fellowship or identify with them
- _____ Because we are not friendly or neighborly
- _____ Because we are mean and not hospitable to our neighbors
- Other opinion_____

  _____

  _____

14. How effective has our church been in our witness to our neighbors?
- _____ Strongly effective
- _____ Somewhat effective
- _____ Somewhat not effective
- _____ Strongly not effective

15. I recommend that the church invest resources in the ministry to the Zoegoes (drug addicts that live in the grave yards in our neighborhood and are related to our neighbors)?
- _____ Recommend strongly
- _____ Recommend somewhat

- ____ Somewhat do not recommend
- ____ Strongly do not recommend

16. I Support the idea that we build a tea shop for entertainment and recreational purposes, as a way of bridging gaps between our neighbors and us?
    - ____ Agree strongly
    - ____ Agree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree somewhat
    - ____ Disagree strongly

17. Please explain your answer

    _____

    _____

    _____

18. I recommend that we continue to practice Dwelling in the word, as we had practiced in recent times?
    - ____ Recommend strongly
    - ____ Recommend somewhat
    - ____ Somewhat do not recommend
    - ____ strongly do not recommend

19. How would you evaluate the positive outcome of the sporting fellowship intervention which was held between our community and the Old Timers Sports Association of our neighborhood and our school versus Carr's high school, in order to build good neighborliness?
    - ____ Strongly effective
    - ____ Somewhat effective
    - ____ Somewhat not effective
    - ____ Strongly not effective

20. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate the Jordan Fellowship Church love for their neighbors?
    No love   1   2   3   4   5 Great deal of love

21. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means no love and "5" means a great deal of love, how would you rate our neighbors love for our community?
    No love   1   2   3   4   5 Great deal of love

22. On a 5 point scale, where "1" means not hostile and "5" means very hostile, how would you rate our neighbor's hostility towards our community?
    Not hostile towards us   1   2   3   4   5 Very hostile towards us

23. Which intervention (s) did you participate in?

_____

_____

24. Is there anything you would like to tell us that may not have been covered in this questionnaire?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E: A CONGREGATIONAL QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP
PROTOCOL

Interview protocol/ discussion for my focus group 1 (Jordan Fellowship Church
church)

- How have we proclaimed the Gospel in our neighborhood?

- From the perspectives of the bad economic and impoverished situation in
  our neighborhood, how can we join God in our neighborhood which will
  be appreciated by our neighbors?

- What have you heard about why our neighbors dislike us?

- What opportunity do you see for our ministry amongst our neighbors?

- What challenges do you see about us cultivating neighborliness with our
  neighbors?

- Based on our discernment and dwelling in the word from the passage of
  the Good Samaritan, how can we evaluate how neighborly we are in this
  neighborhood?

- Where do we see God ahead of us in our neighborhood?

- We assumed that our neighbors have a hostile behavior against us; do we
  also have similar behavior? If yes, how can we describe ours?

- Is there anything you would like for us discuss that may not have been
  covered in this protocol

APPENDIX F: A QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL FOR THE NEIGHBORS

Interview protocol/ discussion for my focus group 2 (Neighbors)

- How long have you lived in our neighborhood?

- What tribe or group do you belong to?

- What do you know about the JFC?

- How would you evaluate our relationship with our neighbors?

- How has the church positively or negatively impacted you?

- What are some of the things you would love to see us do in this neighborhood?

- What do we need to change in how we as a community live and exist in our neighborhood?

- What do you see as challenges our neighborhood faces, and how can we join God and our neighbors in solving these challenges?

- What do you like or dislike about the JFC?

- Explain any bitter experience you may have had with any of our members, pastor, or church.

- Is there anything you would like for us discuss that may not have been covered in this protocol

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